

Monsanto's Roundup (Glyphosate) Damages DNA, Says World Health Organisation Expert

Roundup is 1,000 times more toxic than glyphosate alone

By [GMWatch](#)

Global Research, July 16, 2015

[GMWatch](#) 15 July 2015

Theme: [Biotechnology and GMO](#), [Science and Medicine](#)

Glyphosate is "definitely genotoxic", says Prof Chris Portier, a co-author of the report by the World Health Organisation's cancer agency, which classed glyphosate as a probable carcinogen

Prof Christopher Portier, one of the co-authors of the recent report by the World Health Organisation's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), which determined that glyphosate is a probable carcinogen, said at a scientific briefing today, "Glyphosate is definitely genotoxic. There is no doubt in my mind."

"Genotoxic" means it damages DNA. It is widely believed by regulators that for genotoxic chemicals that are also carcinogenic, as glyphosate appears to be, there is no safe level of exposure.

Prof Portier was speaking today at a scientific briefing in London organised by the Soil Association.

The Soil Association is calling for a UK ban on the use of glyphosate sprayed on UK wheat as a pre-harvest weedkiller and its use to kill the crop to ripen it faster. New figures analysed by the Soil Association from government data were released at a scientific briefing in London on 15 July 2015. This revealed that glyphosate use in UK farming has increased by 400% in the last 20 years and it's one of the three pesticides regularly found in routine testing of British bread - appearing in up to 30% of samples tested by the Defra committee on Pesticide Residues in Food (PRiF).

At the briefing, Dr Robin Mesnage of the Department of Medical and Molecular Genetics at Kings College in London presented data showing Roundup is 1,000 times more toxic than glyphosate alone. He said, "Glyphosate is everywhere throughout our food chain - in our food and water. The lack of data on toxicity of glyphosate is not proof of safety and these herbicides cannot be considered safe without proper testing. We know Roundup, the commercial name of glyphosate-based herbicides, contains many other chemicals, which when mixed together are 1,000 times more toxic than glyphosate on its own."

Claire Robinson, an editor at GMWatch.org, said that the international response to the IARC finding had been dramatic: "Some retailers in Switzerland and Germany have removed glyphosate products from their shelves; France has committed to stop selling them to consumers via self-service by 2018. German states are calling for an EU wide ban. The

Danish Working Environment Authority has declared glyphosate a carcinogen. El Salvador and Sri Lanka have banned it and the Colombia government has banned aerial spraying of the herbicide on coca crops.”

Three months ago, the World Health Organisation’s International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), concluded, “Glyphosate is probably carcinogenic to humans”. The newly recognised dangers of glyphosate come against a background of increased use in the UK. Glyphosate is used in public parks and other urban areas to kill weeds. In the last year for which government figures are available, nearly a third of UK cereals, wheat and barley, were sprayed with glyphosate – a total of just over one million hectares.

Peter Melchett, Soil Association Policy Director, said; “If glyphosate ends up in bread it’s impossible for people to avoid it, unless they are eating organic. On the other hand, farmers could easily choose not to use glyphosate as a spray on wheat crops – just before they are harvested. This is why the Soil Association is calling for the immediate ending of the use of glyphosate sprays on wheat destined for use in bread.”

Claire Robinson said at the meeting that people cannot rely on regulators to protect their health: the battle will be won by consumers pressuring retailers to remove glyphosate from their shelves.

In the case of bread, a Soil Association statement said retailers and manufacturers should insist their products don’t contain any glyphosate. Although the quantities found are below the official safety level, that limit was agreed before the latest scientific findings about the dangers of glyphosate. The glyphosate spraying season starts now. In the interests of human health and the quality of British bread, the government must call a halt to the spraying before it starts.

A recent European study on city dwellers found that in the UK, 7 out of 10 people had traces of this weedkiller in their urine. The food industry tells us that the levels of glyphosate in food poses no danger to the British public. But the findings from IARC, and the cocktail of chemicals often found in bread, call this into serious question.

The levels of glyphosate found in bread are well below the Maximum Residue Level (MRL) set by the EU. However, the MRL was set well before this latest determination by the WHO. In addition, the MRL for glyphosate has always been a matter of controversy because if glyphosate is an endocrine disrupter, as some scientists suggest, there may be no safe lower level for human consumption. Whatever the MRL, research into public opinion shows that the presence of any chemicals in food is one of the main health concerns for consumers, especially those with children.

Notes

1. The Soil Association has written in recent weeks to the Farming Minister at Defra, George Eustice MP, the President of the National Farmers’ Union, Meurig Raymond, the National Association of British and Irish Flour Millers, all the major supermarkets (ASDA, Co-op, M&S, Morrisons, Sainsbury’s, Tesco and Waitrose) and bread manufacturers (Hovis, Warburtons, Allied Bakery and Brace’s) calling for them to ensure no British wheat destined for bread-making is sprayed with glyphosate before this year’s harvest, and that none of the bread that they sell contains glyphosate weed-killer.

2. Professor Portier, Dr Mesnage and Claire Robinson were speaking at a Soil Association scientific

briefing in Westminster on 15 July.

The original source of this article is [GMWatch](#)

Copyright © [GMWatch](#), [GMWatch](#), 2015

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [GMWatch](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca