

When Will Co-opted Figures and Board Members of Companies Like Monsanto and Bayer Be Hauled into Court?

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The public is being poisoned, disease rates are spiraling, waterways are contaminated, soil is being degraded, insects, birds, invertebrates and plant diversity are in dramatic decline. Humanity and the planet are [being poisoned](#) for profit.

We are experiencing an assault on life by the agROTOXINS industry, which is in fact contributing to a [sixth mass extinction](#). Armed with a harmful chemical cocktail of highly profitable agROTOXINS, ranging from disease-causing glyphosate to bee-killing neonicotinoid insecticides, biocide manufacturers are waging biological and chemical warfare on us all under the guise that they are serving humanity by helping to feed the world.

They promote the message that their products are essential to our survival. They promote a fundamentally ecologically, socially and economically [damaging model of agriculture](#) facilitated by Washington, the World Trade Organization, World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

They say that without their agROTOXINS and chemical-dependent (GM) seeds, crops would be ravaged by pests or yields would be too low. They use [smear campaigns directed towards critics and employ public relations and corporate-funded science in](#) an attempt to mask their sheer ignorance of the real, [long-term damage](#) their proprietary inputs are having.

And all the while, research is being shaped to sideline what is really happening. Drugs companies and biocide manufacturers are joined at the hip. They fund research and research institutes and help shape a narrative about disease courtesy of [compliant media organisations](#) or media organisations which they actively fund, such as the Science Media Centre.

The integrity of public institutions is comprised due to the political influence and financial clout of corporations like Monsanto and Bayer. They distort science, hijack agencies co-opt or position people in key roles (for example see [this](#) and [this](#) regarding the Trump administration) and engage in forms of criminality that should in a better world see their CEOs being hauled into court for [their part in facilitating crimes](#) against humanity and the natural environment (see [this](#) too, which provides some graphic images of the consequences of agROTOXINS in South America).

Evaggelos Vallianatos worked for the US Environmental Protection Agency for 25 years and says that morally bankrupt governments and regulatory agencies have allowed companies to destroy honeybees, essential pollinators, for decades. He says that the triumph of the

aggressive form of farming promoted by the agROTOXIN corporations has meant the sidelining of science and the formal, state-supported addiction of farmers to pesticides. He adds that the petrochemicals industry drafted the pesticide laws in the US and Europe and [stated](#):

“Such blatant power grab infused everything about pesticides with loopholes, secret to the public but crystal clear to the industry and most regulators, politicians, and environmentalists. Testing pesticides for health and ecological effects became a brutal abuse of science. It is a display of concern in a strategy of deception. For example, the massive fraud of the Industrial Bio-test Laboratory made no difference to the corruption engulfing the “registration” of farm sprays. Registration equals government approval with little if any reliable data. From the 1950s to the 1970s, IBT made up most of the results of testing hundreds of pesticides, drugs, and a myriad of other chemicals. Despite the public revelation of the gangster-like behavior of this American lab, and no doubt questionable practices in countless other labs all over the world, nothing happened to eliminate lab corruption.”

Lapdog politicians and prominent agencies and individuals protect the culprits. Some attack critics for fear-mongering, pretending to care for people while their actions [expose them as hypocrites](#). Well-paid people in public office serve these companies, not the public. Equally well-paid [career scientists](#) and [pseudo-journalists](#) act as corporate mouthpieces.

Little wonder then that on 28 June 2016, the unelected European Commission unilaterally announced that the license for glyphosate was to be extended for 18 months without meaningful restrictions. This was after member states repeatedly could not reach an agreement to renew the approval.



Biocide chemical (Source: [TORAY](#))

Unfortunately, the biocide industry is a growth industry (which of course neoliberal apologists – regardless of the consequences – will no doubt hail as [being good for ‘growth’ or ‘development’](#)). From the [US](#) and [Argentina](#) to [India](#), the industry has rolled out its seeds and poisons with devastating impacts on people’s lives and the environment.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food Hilal Elver criticises global agricultural corporations. She [concurs with others](#) by saying their pesticides are unnecessary for feeding the world. In response, these companies engage in fear mongering and smears in an attempt to denigrate [alternative approaches](#) to agriculture that have no need for such companies and their chemicals.

In a [recent report](#), Elver and Baskut Tuncak were severely critical of the global corporations that manufacture pesticides, accusing them of the “systematic denial of harms”, “aggressive, unethical marketing tactics” and heavy lobbying of governments which has “obstructed reforms and paralysed global pesticide restrictions”.

The authors say pesticides have “catastrophic impacts on the environment, human health and society as a whole”, including an estimated 200,000 deaths a year from acute poisoning. They conclude:

“It is time to create a global process to transition toward safer and healthier food and agricultural production.”

Elver says,

“The corporations are not dealing with world hunger, they are dealing with more agricultural activity on large scales.”

In other words, they are not feeding the world but shaping global agriculture to [suit their interests](#), regardless of the impact on world hunger, food security, health and the environment.



Dr Rosemary Mason
(Source: [Chemical Concern](#))

Environmental campaigner Dr Rosemary Mason has been compiling evidence about agrotoxins and corporate influence for years. Her [numerous documents](#) cite peer-reviewed research, expert opinion and official reports and statistics. Her analyses are based on science and her findings and conclusions are placed into appropriate historical, political, economic and sociological contexts.

Most of her documents comprise open letters to key agencies and officials, and most of the responses she receives – when she does receive a response – are standard soundbite public relations or something that might well have been written by the pesticide industry.

Rosemary Mason writes to Guy Smith of the National Farmers’ Union

In a new [13,000-word open letter to the National Farmers’ Union \(containing all relevant supporting evidence\)](#), Mason outlines many of the issues discussed above. It would be pointless to attempt to cover everything Mason says in detail. Readers can access the letter themselves to look at the data and the arguments she puts forward to make her case.

She reiterates many of the points she has previously made, not least pertaining to the devastation of her nature reserve in South Wales and the corrupt practices of agencies in the US, UK and Europe that have ignored the science and impacts of glyphosate in order to ensure it remains on the commercial market.

In her letter, she notes that in June 2017 Guy Smith stated that there is no scientific consensus on a three-year study on neonicotinoid insecticides and bees. He quoted the UK Science Media Centre (SMC), an agency that calls upon lobbyists to pose as experts.

In discussing the SMC, Mason quotes Colin Macilwain, a science policy writer, who says:

“The London SMC was set up because UK scientific leaders were upset that environmentalists had successfully fought the introduction of genetically modified food; they felt that the UK media were too susceptible to environmental scare stories about new technologies. Despite the fears of the SMC founders, the British press — led by the BBC, which treats the Confederation of British Industry with the deference the Vatican gets in Rome — is overwhelmingly conservative and pro-business in its outlook. It is quite unperturbed by the fact that SMC sponsors include AstraZeneca, BP, Coca-Cola, L’Oreal, Monsanto, Syngenta (as well as Nature Publishing Group) but not a single environmental non-governmental organization (NGO) or trade union.”

Mason then proceeds to discuss the disturbing impacts on humans and the environment of endocrine and nervous system disrupting chemicals. She also highlights how numerous scientists and important scientific findings have been ignored or attacked because they offended industry interests.

As with her previous open letters, Mason brings to Guy Smith’s attention the verdict of the Judges of the International Monsanto Tribunal and the worrying findings about loss of biodiversity contained in State of Nature Report 2016 compiled by 50 organisations.

Mason quotes Guy Smith as having said

“intensification of farming had ended in the early 1990s.” that farmers “were using less fertiliser and pesticides than ever.”

However, Mason provides evidence to show that pesticide residues on British food are increasing annually. Moreover, pesticide usage statistics show a massive increase in glyphosate between 2012 and 2014.

Mason wrote to NFU President Meurig Raymond on 22 October 2015. In his response, Raymond defended the rights of farmers to use chemicals to protect their crops even though Mason had informed him that they were damaging the brains of children. Mason says that it is though the pesticides industry drafted the reply.

In her letter, Mason highlights the links between Cancer Research UK (CRUK) and the agrotoxin sector and how research funding and the narrative about disease has been distorted to protect the industry. She shows how Syngenta, AstraZeneca and the UK government have a mutually beneficial relationship with each other at the expense of the British people: one corporation promotes cancer, the other tries to ‘cure’ it.

Glyphosate and other pesticides earn billions for the industry, while pharmaceutical companies enrich themselves from the sales of statins, anti-hypertensives, antidepressants, diabetic medication, anti-cancer drugs, weight -reducing drugs, vaccines and drugs to treat dementia etc.

Mason a good deal of space to inform Guy Smith about the specific chemicals that cause various diseases. She notes that glyphosate is a carcinogen and refers to Prof Chris Portier of the International Agency for Research into Cancer who wrote to President Juncker to say that EFSA's studies on glyphosate were flawed.

Mason's take-home points include:

- 1) The EU has been brainwashed by industry as have UK farmers due to the industry's aggressive tactics.
- 2) Governments are more concerned with protecting industry interests than public health or the environment.
- 3) Monsanto is in big trouble. It faces many lawsuits in the US about glyphosate causing cancer and false advertising that glyphosate doesn't affect humans.
- 4) Monsanto is likely to end up in the International Criminal Court accused of ecocide and possibly genocide.
- 5) By the time Monsanto has been hauled through the courts, industry shills and agencies might think twice before saying glyphosate doesn't cause cancer.

The CEOs and board members of companies like Monsanto, Bayer and Syngenta, as well as key co-opted figures in various government and regulatory bodies, should be made to answer for the health- and environment-destroying actions they facilitate (see [this](#) on Bayer and [this](#) on Monsanto). While capitalism as a system fuels many of the problems outlined by Mason and we must [challenge it](#), when faced with potential long-term jail sentences, certain figures might begin to think twice about the devastating consequences of their actions.

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