

## New weed fighting herbicide-tolerant GMO trait approved

The Agriculture Department has approved the commercial planting of corn and soybeans genetically engineered to survive being sprayed by the herbicide known as 2,4-D.

Some corn and soybean growers have been pushing for approval, saying the new crops would give them a sorely needed new tool to fight rapidly spreading weeds that can no longer be killed by Roundup, known generically as glyphosate, the usual herbicide of choice.

But critics say that cultivation of the crops, which were developed by Dow AgroSciences, will mean a sharp increase in the spraying of 2,4-D, a chemical they say would be more damaging to the environment, nearby non-engineered crops and possibly human health, than Roundup.

Crops resistant to glyphosate, known as Roundup Ready crops, now account for the vast majority of corn and soybeans grown in the United States. That is because they make it easy for farmers to control weeds. Farmers simply spray glyphosate on their fields, killing the weeds while leaving the genetically engineered crops intact.

But it was so easy that farmers ended up relying too heavily on glyphosate, allowing many types of weeds to develop resistance. Weeds that can no longer easily be killed by glyphosate now infest about 70 million acres of American farmland, double the area in 2009, according to Dow.

Farmers have had to resort to using different chemicals, or higher doses of glyphosate, or to tilling their fields, which can increase soil erosion. Some farmers have had to go back to pulling weeds by hand.

**Read the full, original article:** [Altered to withstand herbicide, corn and soybeans gain approval](#)