

Agent Orange redux? Dr. Oz called out for fear-mongering on newest GMO products

Dr. Oz, infamous for his promotion of alternative medicine remedies and organic foods, and for his scaring people about chemical and conventional agriculture, is at it again. On Monday, he [aired a program](#) attacking the newest GMO trait to be approved, crops are resistant to an herbicide called [Enlist Duo](#), developed by DowAgro Sciences, that contains the common household herbicides 2,4-D and glyphosate, and would be used for a new generation of GMO corn and soybeans.

The Center for Food Safety (CFS) misleadingly spread the term, "[Agent Orange Corn](#)", because 2,4-D was part of the Vietnam War era chemical. Yet that term was immediately picked up by [bloggers](#), environmental and Organic organizations, and even "news outlets". 2,4-D was mixed with another totally separate chemical, 2,4,5-T, which was unknowingly contaminated with dioxin and eventually linked to injuries and deaths. But as [Biofortified.org](#) has explained, 2,4-D has been widely tested, is considered a relatively mild chemical herbicide and is an approved component of most consumer products for the control of weeds in lawns. It is used extensively in wheat. It can already be used on corn up to a certain growth stage. 2,4-D is NOT Agent Orange.

Steve Savage, a pesticide experts offered his analysis:

Virtually nothing in the episode was presented accurately. It is a prime example of fear-mongering around the issues of "GMOs" and pesticides. I'd like to respond, point by point, to what it says that is not true or misleading.

"The EPA is on the brink of approving a brand new toxic pesticide you don't know about."

The product in question, Enlist Duo is a combination of two very old herbicide products: 2,4-D and glyphosate. A great many consumers do know about these materials because they have been approved for homeowner use for decades and are common ingredients in products available at any neighborhood gardening center. These chemicals are still approved for use in more than 70 countries around the world and for use in high exposure settings like lawns, parks, sports fields and gardens. They are still used this way because after multiple rounds of increasingly sophisticated scrutiny by regulators, they have been confirmed to be quite low in toxicity to humans and to the environment. This product is neither "brand new" nor is it notably "toxic."

These products are for new GMO corn and soy crops that "survive even stronger pesticides."

What does "stronger pesticide" mean? The need for this mixture is that some weeds have evolved resistance to glyphosate. There is nothing unique about that associated with a biotech crop. [Weeds have evolved resistance to all manner of control methods](#) including mechanical tillage (some weeds like bindweed or Canada thistle are very well adapted to being chopped up and spread around a field by equipment). The issue isn't about something "stronger" but about something that is a mixture of two distinct "modes of action" which makes it harder for the weeds to adapt around the control. The term

“stronger” that Oz uses implies something about being more toxic or dangerous. That is not the case here.

Read full, original article: [Don't believe what Dr Oz is saying about an agricultural herbicide](#)