

Chemophobe activists vilify glyphosate, herbicide less toxic than many 'natural' alternatives

The latest scare tactic of the chemophobe lobby promotes the fear of chemicals in food. They seem oblivious to the fact that we exist in a sea of chemicals, the names of which may sound esoteric or even intimidating. Dihydrogen monoxide or sodium bicarbonate may sound scary if you don't realize that those chemicals are commonly known as water and baking soda, respectively.

Conversely, just because a chemical is naturally derived doesn't make it "safer" than a man-made one. Arsenic or botulinum toxin, anyone?

The reality is that new chemicals we come in contact with through food have been tested and found safe before they reach a grocery store or dinner table. In the same way, modern fertilizers and herbicides are safer and more effective than ever before, making it possible for growers to use better chemicals to produce our food than in the past.

Chemicals have spurred progress in agriculture dramatically over the past 20 years, and farmers' fields are more productive and sustainable than previously. Before the availability of effective herbicides to control weeds that compete with crops and reduce productivity, farmers tilled their fields, which resulted in unsustainable environmental impacts like the loss of topsoil and release of CO₂. Now, chemical weed control enables farmers to till less, with reduced soil erosion, cleaner water, less energy use and lower greenhouse gas release into the atmosphere.

Glyphosate is a non-selective, broad-spectrum herbicide that targets an enzyme in plants not found in humans and has the ability to bind to soils, which prevents it from leaching into ground water. And when it unbinds, it is degraded by soil microbes. Because of its safety profile and value to farmers, it has become the most popular herbicide worldwide.

It is especially strange that a herbicide in the EPA's "most favorable" safety grouping is the object of so much antagonism. Glyphosate is, in fact, less toxic to humans than some "natural" pesticides used in organic production, such as [rotenone](#) and [copper sulfate](#).

Read full, original article: ['Allergic To All Known Chemicals?'](#)