

Monsanto escalates attack on decision classifying glyphosate as ‘probably carcinogen’

Today, Monsanto Company further addressed last week’s assessment on glyphosate by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC).

“We are outraged with this assessment,” said Dr. Robb Fraley, Monsanto’s Chief Technology Officer. “This conclusion is inconsistent with the decades of ongoing comprehensive safety reviews by the leading regulatory authorities around the world that have concluded that all labeled uses of glyphosate are safe for human health. This result was reached by selective ‘cherry picking’ of data and is a clear example of agenda-driven bias.”

The repeated safety assessments by regulatory authorities over the last three decades have formed the foundation for the long history of safe, highly effective use of this [important agricultural tool](#) in more than 160 countries around the world.

Decisions regarding product safety and approvals for pesticides are governed by regulatory agencies such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the European Commission, as well as independent scientific advisory bodies such as the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). IARC has no regulatory authority and its decision does not impact glyphosate’s label, current registration or use.

“Safety is the top priority for every person who works at Monsanto. Glyphosate-based herbicides on the market meet the rigorous standards set by the regulatory and health authorities who work every day to protect human health, and we want our customers and consumers to be assured of these evaluations,” Fraley added.

In contrast to the comprehensive review that regulators around the world have completed over three decades, IARC issued its classification based on a limited data review after hours of discussion at a one-week meeting. Further, IARC is one of four programs within the World Health Organization (WHO) that have reviewed the safety of glyphosate and their classification is inconsistent with the assessments of the other programs. Two of the WHO programs – the Core Assessment Group and the International Programme on Chemical Safety – both concluded glyphosate is not carcinogenic. The WHO Guidelines for Drinking-Water Quality program concluded glyphosate does not represent a hazard to human health.

“IARC’s work is not a study, and it references no new data or studies,” said Fraley. “Instead, IARC only looked at a limited number of existing studies. Respected agencies around the world have looked at the same studies, plus many more, and determined that all labeled uses of glyphosate are safe. IARC’s process is not transparent, its decision is irresponsible, and it has the potential to cause confusion about such an important issue as safety.”

Monsanto joins other members of the EU Glyphosate Taskforce and Joint Glyphosate Taskforce in disagreement with IARC’s classification for the following reasons:

- **IARC's classification is not a study. There is no new data here.** As recently as January, the [German government](#) completed a rigorous, four-year evaluation of glyphosate for the European Union. The German regulators reviewed every study IARC considered, plus significantly more, and concluded "glyphosate was unlikely to pose a carcinogenic risk in humans."
- **Relevant, scientific data were excluded from review.** IARC disregarded and failed to acknowledge dozens of scientific studies that support the conclusion glyphosate is not a human health risk. One particular study they disregarded was the [Agricultural Health Study](#) – a 20-year, multi-million dollar study funded by U.S. taxpayers to study cancer and other health outcomes among farmers and their spouses. More than 89,000 people have participated in this study since 1993, and 20 years of study data support the conclusion that there is no credible evidence that glyphosate can cause cancer.
- **The conclusion is not supported by scientific data.** IARC's classification is inconsistent with the numerous, comprehensive assessments conducted by hundreds of scientists from countries worldwide who are responsible for ensuring public safety. In addition, IARC egregiously misrepresented the results and conclusions of a [2004 Joint United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization /WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues \(JMPR\)](#). In its March 20 online summary in Lancet Oncology, IARC specifically cites one sentence from the 2004 FAO/WHO report, when – just several sentences away – the report clearly states, "In conclusion, administration of glyphosate ... produced no signs of carcinogenic potential at any dose." This study also has been reviewed by numerous regulatory agencies around the world, and all have concluded there is no evidence of carcinogenicity.
- **IARC's classification does not establish a link between glyphosate and an increase in cancer.** IARC's review is limited and the process is designed to result in possible and probable classifications. IARC's assessment of glyphosate is similar to their contested assessment of other everyday items such as coffee, cell phones, pickled vegetables and occupations including barber and fry cook.

"Conclusions about something as important as human safety and health must be based on a non-biased, thorough and rigorous scientific process that adheres to internationally recognized standards," Fraley added. "Unfortunately, in this case, IARC's review did not meet the standards used by respected regulatory agencies around the world. I would ask that people not take our word for it, but look at the decades of conclusions from respected regulators. Given the importance of the safety of glyphosate to consumers and growers alike, we will continue to urgently pursue our request that the WHO provide transparency on the IARC process and account for the studies both used and disregarded in drawing its conclusion."

Additional Resources:

- [Glyphosate and Roundup Brand Herbicides](#), Monsanto.com
- [What Others are Saying](#), Monsanto.com

Read original release: [Monsanto Reinforces Decades of Data and Regulatory Review Clearly Document Safety of Glyphosate](#)