

Is glyphosate unsafe? European Food Safety Authority rejects accusations of ‘undue industry influence’ in rejecting carcinogenic designation

Editor's note: Bernhard Url is the Executive Director of the European Food Safety Authority

The job of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is to assess what might make food unsafe. That's hard enough. It is even harder when the agency is at the centre of a public debate that goes far beyond science.

This has happened with artificial sweeteners, genetically modified (GM) organisms and glyphosate, the world's most ubiquitous herbicide.



Bernhard Url

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The glyphosate controversy began in earnest two-and-a-half years ago, when EFSA and experts designated by European Union members concluded that the product is unlikely to be carcinogenic.

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Other independent assessments — by the European Chemicals Agency and regulatory bodies in the United States, Canada, Japan and Australia — agreed with EFSA. So [did an expert body on pesticide residues](#) convened by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization.

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Why the frenzy? Agencies that find low risk of regulated products are often accused of undue industry influence. We at EFSA believe that some campaigners are unwilling to accept any evidence that certain regulated substances are safe, and [will tout weak scientific studies showing the opposite](#).

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It seems to us that some campaigners contest the science of safety assessments in pursuit of greater political arguments. These arguments deserve airing — but they belong with policymakers.

Read full, original post: [Don't attack science agencies for political gain](#)