

Viewpoint: How WHO's IARC set off a global panic that threatens science and agriculture around the world

It's not just in Europe that glyphosate divides governments: the very same molecule is responsible for a string lawsuits and counter-lawsuits in California that have attracted national attention and have prompted 11 American states to go toe-to-toe with Sacramento.

It's hard to believe that the panic and vitriol exhibited over the last few years could derive from a single organization's study. Yet glyphosate's most vehement opponents on both sides of the Atlantic point to a sole document to justify their strong opinions: a 2015 [report](#) by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), classifying the herbicidal agent as "probably carcinogenic to humans". This determination made the IARC an outsider in the international scientific community, as every other major organisation, from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), has [concluded](#) that there is no evidence that glyphosate is linked to cancer in humans.

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The IARC's dubious report not only threatened glyphosate's relicensing in the EU but provoked serious repercussions in the U.S. as well. The IARC's Group 2a classification required California to include glyphosate on the list of chemicals "known to the state to cause cancer", triggering swift and severe consequences.

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