

Lifting Sri Lanka's glyphosate herbicide ban welcomed by tea industry

Editor's note: The following is part of an editorial by The Island, a daily English-language newspaper in Sri Lanka

The reported decision of [Sri Lanka's] National Economic Council (NEC) to lift the ban on glyphosate, a weedicide that was widely used in this country previously, though not yet officially communicated to those concerned nor formally gazetted will no doubt be widely welcomed, mostly by the tea industry. Plantation Industries Minister Navin Dissanayake went on record when the ill-advised ban was first imposed several months ago that he hoped to have it lifted. But he did not succeed in his endeavour and the tea industry, beset by labour shortages that made expensive manual weeding near impossible, had to suffer production losses resulting in weed-choked fields. Given that tea prices were high in recent months, the national economy took a blow as a result.

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[T]he most recent risk assessment for glyphosate conducted by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in December last year had found that the chemical was not harmful to human health.

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Additionally the agency had performed a similar review of the glyphosate cancer database, including data from the epidemiological, animal carcinogenicity and genotoxicity studies and found no conclusive links to any ill effects.

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