

After Bayer settles glyphosate-cancer suits, Australian farmers pledge to defend the herbicide

In spite of the fact Bayer made no admission of guilt when settling with plaintiffs that alleged its glyphosate-based herbicides caused their cancer, Grain Growers chairman Brett Hosking said the news highlighted the need for the production sector to talk about the herbicide's benefits.

"It just shows we really need to talk about what glyphosate means for us in terms of environmental stewardship, in terms of reducing erosion and the critical role it plays in allowing us to produce safe, healthy food," Mr Hosking said.

He said he did not think Bayer's decision regarding cases in the US would impact the Australian glyphosate market or Australian-based class actions against Bayer on similar grounds.

"The US legal system is very different and settling cases over there does not reflect how such cases would go here," he said.

"The crux of the matter from my perspective is still that the regulators say that glyphosate is safe to use when it is done in accordance with the label instructions."

Stephen Powles, former director of the Australian Herbicide Resistance Initiative, said increased regulatory pressure was one of two major threats to glyphosate.

"One threat is biological, and that is weed resistance, that is a manageable threat provided we stop overusing the product," Prof Powles said.

"The other threat is political," he said.

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