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Glyphosate & Monsanto

Chronological Background

Compiled from Published Reports and Media News Articles

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- Monsanto patented glyphosate as a weed killer in 1974
- **Glyphosate is currently the world's most widely used herbicide**
- **Glyphosate is the active ingredient in Monsanto's Roundup brands and in hundreds of others sold on the market**
- Monsanto lost its patent protection on glyphosate in 2002, and a large number of herbicides now use it as an active ingredient including: Roundup, Ortho Groundclear, KleenUp, Aquamaster, Sharpshooter, StartUp, Touchdown Total, Traxion, Vector, and Vantage Plus Max II
- **Monsanto has always asserted glyphosate does not cause cancer and is much safer for the environment than other pesticides**
- A growing body of research over the last several decades has contradicted Monsanto's claims, culminating in the classification of glyphosate as a probable carcinogen in 2015 by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)
- **The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment of the Cal/EPA added glyphosate to the Proposition 65 list of known cancer causing chemicals on July, 2017**
- In spite of this research and action by the IARC, **Monsanto (purchased by Bayer in June 2018)** denies any association between glyphosate and human cancer
- In recent years, **lymphatic cancer among humans, especially non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, has been linked to Roundup or glyphosate exposure** – and lymphatic cancers suffered by agricultural workers are now highly considered to have been caused directly or through side effects of chronic exposure to Roundup

- Other recent research has shown that glyphosate:
 - is found in many of our food products
 - is found in the bodies of Americans at greater than or equal to 400% higher levels when compared to those living in European Union countries with some restrictions on glyphosate
 - has been detected in the blood and urine of agricultural workers
 - can cause DNA and chromosomal damage to animal cells in the womb
 - can be absorbed easily through human skin
- **Based on the growing body of research and the IARC's determination, 13,400 cancer victims are now suing Monsanto** – alleging that Roundup and other glyphosate products sold by Monsanto resulted in their non-Hodgkin's lymphoma or other cancers
- **So far three trials have returned verdicts, none in Monsanto's favor:**
 - Johnson v. Monsanto (Oakland, California) – Jury returned a unanimous verdict in favor of the plaintiff, a Benicia, California school district groundskeeper, who was initially awarded \$289M which was later reduced to \$78M (8/10/2018)
 - Hardeman v. Monsanto (San Francisco, CA) – jury unanimously awarded a \$80.2M verdict in favor of the plaintiff (3/27/2019)
 - Pilliod v. Monsanto (Oakland, California) – Jury returned a \$2.055B verdict (\$2B in punitive damages) in favor of plaintiffs Alva and Alberta Pilliod (5/13/2019)
 - Monsanto is currently appealing all verdicts
- Trials are occurring in both state and federal courts
- 1,654 suits filed in the federal courts have been consolidated into what is called Multidistrict Litigation, and the federal judge overseeing these cases has chosen one completed and two ongoing trials as “bellwether cases” and will make judgments based on the outcomes of these three trials
- Another 485 (and growing) cases filed in California state courts have been consolidated into the Roundup Judicial Council Coordination Proceedings, within the California Superior Court for the County of Alameda – the first trial began on March 28, 2019
- Other trials soon to start are located in Missouri, Montana, and Delaware

- Many of these lawsuits assert that **Monsanto has long known about the cancer risks of exposure to glyphosate for decades but has kept that information from the public, partly by manipulating scientific data relied on by regulators**
- Evidence presented by the plaintiffs in the first three trials that appeared to have worked against Monsanto include:
 - Monsanto emails and strategic planning reports including revelations that:
 - **Monsanto never conducted epidemiology studies** for Roundup and its other formulations made with the active ingredient glyphosate to evaluate the cancer risks for users
 - The company internally **had worker safety recommendations** that called for wearing a full range of protective gear when applying glyphosate herbicides, **but did not warn the public to do the same**
 - Testimony about Monsanto's handling of sensitive scientific concerns about the perceived hazards of its herbicides
 - Evidence that **Monsanto engaged in ghostwriting certain scientific papers that concluded that glyphosate products were safe**
 - Evidence that **Monsanto spent millions of dollars on projects aimed at countering the conclusions by international cancer scientists** that glyphosate is a probable human carcinogen
 - Testimony that Roundup can be easily absorbed through human skin
 - Evidence that **Monsanto worked closely with the EPA to block the EPA's toxicity review of glyphosate conducted by a separate government agency**
- As a result of the verdicts in favor of the plaintiffs and of the number of suits filed against Monsanto, one financial analyst has warned Bayer shareholders to be ready for a global government settlement of between \$2.5 and \$4.5 Billion, saying **"It's not a matter of 'if' Bayer will reach a global Roundup settlement, it is a matter of 'when'"**
- Recently, **U.S. District Judge Vince Chhabria "has ordered Bayer to enter into mediation, to discuss just such a potential settlement of the Roundup question"**

- In response to the initial trial outcomes, the number of lawsuits, and the growing body of scientific evidence supporting the claim that glyphosate is a carcinogen, **cities have begun the process of banning or limiting the application of glyphosate products and other pesticides, including Miami, New York City, Leesburg, Virginia, and many California school districts and cities (Orinda, Concord, Benicia, Watsonville), counties (Marin, San Francisco, Santa Clara, and Los Angeles), HOAs and companies that have passed policies against using or selling glyphosate including Costco**
- **To date, 14 nations have severe restrictions on the use of glyphosate and some are planning for an entire ban over the next few years, such as Germany and France.**

Sources

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**Submitted to the Contra Costa County IPM Advisory Committee as a Public Comment
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