

**SUSTAINABLE TAMALMONTE
215 JULIA AVENUE
MILL VALLEY, CA 94941**

January 21, 2015

Mr. Dave Phelps, Chairman
Marin County Integrated Pest Management Commission
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Re: Glyphosate

Dear Marin County Integrated Pest Management Commission,

We understand you oversee the implementation of the Marin County Integrated Pest Management policy and plan, and advise and make recommendations to the IPM Coordinator and the Marin County Board of Supervisors as needed. In so doing, you advise which herbicides/pesticides should be used in Marin County.

We strongly urge you to remove the toxic herbicide Glyphosate (the main ingredient in Roundup) from your list of approved herbicides/pesticides.

Adequate weed control in Marin County is necessary for preventing wildfires and preserving biodiversity. This can be achieved through safe methods, such as mechanical mowing, hand removal, controlled burning, high-intensity heat, goat grazing, soap-based heat foam, and planting beneficial plants to compete with and replace the weeds. Unfortunately, in addition to safe methods, Marin County Parks and Marin County Open Space are using toxic Glyphosate to help control weeds.

We recently attended a lecture about the risks of using Glyphosate given by Don Huber PhD (Emeritus Professor of Plant Pathology at Purdue University) and other experts. We also spoke with Dr. Huber personally at a subsequent meeting. Dr. Don Huber's credentials are impressive. He has studied Glyphosate and Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) for 40 years. To read his bio, please visit:
http://www.nvlv.nl/downloads/Dr_Huber_bio.pdf

According to Dr. Huber, Glyphosate is the most chronically toxic chemical in our environment. The experts demonstrated that Glyphosate has a half-life of up to 22 years (depending on conditions) and travels easily through the soil, air and water. They further showed that, if it were applied to weeds, then it would not only kill the weeds but would also travel to and kill nearby beneficial plants and trees, harm wildlife and, jeopardize pets and residents' health.

Glyphosate Use Would Harm Beneficial Vegetation

Dr. Huber explained that besides being a patented herbicide, Glyphosate is also a patented mineral chelator, antibiotic, and desiccant. It disrupts plants' metabolic shikimate pathway, which starves plants of essential nutrients and weakens their

immune systems. Moreover, Glyphosate's desiccating effects reduce a plant's ability to uptake water. It essentially gives the plants a condition similar to "Aids". As a powerful antibiotic, Glyphosate also kills beneficial bacteria and other microorganisms in the soil. Beneficial organisms fix atmospheric nitrogen for plants' consumption and are necessary for healthy plant growth. Without these beneficial microorganisms in the soil to compete with and suppress harmful plant soil-borne pathogens, the lethal soil-borne pathogens take over and ultimately kill the weakened plants.

One of the problems with using Glyphosate is that it won't just kill the weeds but will kill adjacent beneficial vegetation too. It does this by traveling from the root system of the targeted weed into the soil where it is picked up by adjacent roots of desirable plants and trees, ultimately killing them. Glyphosate use could also foster herbicide-resistant super weeds and lead to Sudden Oak Death, Oak Wilt, and Scorch Diseases in plants, which would greatly INCREASE the risk of fire.

The Amount of Glyphosate Used When Sponge Dabbing the Herbicide Is Equal To Or Greater Than The Amount Used When Spraying The Substance

According to Bob Streit (Crop, Seed, Technology and Soil remediation Consultant), sponge dabbing typically uses a much higher concentration of Glyphosate than spraying. Therefore, when sponge dabbing weeds, the amount of Glyphosate per acre would be similar to the amount typically used on a Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) crop because of selected site application, BUT the amount entering the soil at a particular site would be much greater!

Glyphosate Use Would Jeopardize The Health and Safety Of Wildlife, Pets And Residents

Using Glyphosate in our parks and open space would not only harm beneficial vegetation but would also jeopardize the health and safety of wildlife, pets and residents. As mentioned previously, Glyphosate travels easily through soil, air and water. Wildlife, pets and residents could be exposed to Glyphosate by walking through public open space and breathing in contaminated airborne dust particles. Children could be exposed while playing on a contaminated field. Wildlife and pets could also be exposed by drinking water from contaminated streams and ponds.

Besides Dr. Don Huber, many other scientists have also studied Glyphosate. Numerous respected independent scientific studies show that there is a strong correlation between Glyphosate and serious health and environmental hazards, including possible endocrine disruption, cell death, DNA damage, cancer, birth defects, autism, kidney failure and neurological disorders.

Among the multitude of studies are the following examples:

Sri Lanka ordered a ban on Glyphosate in March 2014. The order was based on a study by the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, which examined a mysterious form of kidney disease (CKD) that has killed tens of thousands of agricultural workers in Sri Lanka, Central America and India. The study laid out a theory that the use of Glyphosate in areas with heavy metals in drinking water is causing chronic kidney disease.

A recent study by Emilie Clair and her colleagues at the University de Caen Basse-Normandie Institute of Biology in France, which was published in the Journal of Toxicology in Vitro, has found that even at very low levels, Glyphosate, the active ingredient in Monsanto's herbicide formula Roundup, destroys testosterone and ultimately leads to male infertility.

A paper published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health entitled; "Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma and Occupational Exposure to Agricultural Pesticide Chemical Groups and Active Ingredients: A Systemic Review and Meta-Analysis", found that Glyphosate exposure was positively associated with a common subtype of Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma, namely, B cell lymphoma.

More examples can be found in the attached article entitled; "A Round-up of Round-up" by the Institute of Science in Society. If desired, we can make even more studies available to your commission. These studies demonstrate that there is a strong correlation between the increased use of Glyphosate and the increase of chronic health conditions.

Conclusion

Using toxic Glyphosate in Marin County could not only harm beneficial vegetation and wildlife but could also jeopardize public health and safety. This risk is unnecessary and unacceptable.

In accordance with the Marin County Precautionary Principle, which requires "the selection of the alternative that presents the least potential threat to human health and the County's natural systems", please help us stop the use of Glyphosate in Marin County by removing it from your list of approved herbicides/pesticides.

Thank you in advance for your conscientious consideration.

Very truly yours,

/s/

Sharon Rushton, Chairperson

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Attachment

Here's the link to the below article:

http://www.i-sis.org.uk/Roundup_of_Roundup.php

Institute of Science in Society (ISIS) Report 19/01/15

A Roundup of Roundup® Reveals Converging Pattern of Toxicity from Farm to Clinic to Laboratory Studies

What is glyphosate?

Glyphosate, perhaps surprisingly for a chemical so ubiquitously associated with our food, was not first used as an agricultural chemical but instead first patented as a metal chelator in 1964 by Stauffer Chemical company (US 3160632 A) [1] and used as an industrial pipe cleaner. It was later patented by Monsanto as an herbicidal agent in 1974 (US3799758 A) [2] based on its ability to block the shikimate pathway involved in the production of aromatic amino acids in both plants and bacteria. It has become the most popular herbicide in the world especially since glyphosate tolerant genetically modified (GM) crops were commercialized in the mid-1990s, together with the assumption (perpetrated by Monsanto) that the herbicide is safe for health and the environment. In 2010, it was also patented by Monsanto as an antibiotic agent. Moreover, it is being increasingly used as a pre-harvest desiccant for drying seeds, a process that results in contamination of non-GM grains, one of the main exposure routes in the EU where GM crops are not commonly grown. Thus, an estimated 70 % of UK oil seed rape (canola) and 50-60 % of EU sunflowers are sprayed with glyphosate [3], resulting in products of major food brands in the UK testing positive for glyphosate residues in a 2014 analysis by GM Freeze, with glyphosate the most commonly detected of all chemicals [4].

All of glyphosate's chemical properties already mentioned have implications for the health of both people and planet. Scientific research has additionally implicated glyphosate as an endocrine disruptor and a DNA mutagen; and it affects over 291 different enzymes in the body [5]. It is increasingly linked with a wide variety of illnesses, the sharp rises in illnesses occurring in parallel with glyphosate application across various GM cultivating regions of the world.

The most convincing evidence of glyphosate toxicity is the consistent pattern of diseases associated with glyphosate that has emerged from the farm to the clinic and from scientific studies to citizen testimonials.

Glyphosate widespread in the environment and in our bodies

Glyphosate's popularity is due in large measure to its concomitant use with the most widely planted type of GM crops, those tolerant to glyphosate-herbicides. Monsanto commercialised the first Roundup-ready crop in 1996 (Roundup being the commercial formulation containing 'adjuvants' that make it much more toxic than the active ingredient glyphosate alone, see later). In countries such as Argentina where large swaths of the country have been dubbed soy deserts, GM soybean cultivation has resulted in an 858 % rise in glyphosate use (see [6] Devastating

Impacts of Glyphosate Use with GMO Seeds in Argentina, to appear). Similarly, the US has seen even greater rises of 2 500 % from 1987 to 2007 [7].

This widespread and massive application of glyphosate herbicides has resulted in almost ubiquitous contamination of the environment. A 2014 study on US water systems across 38 states found glyphosate and its principle metabolite AMPA (aminomethylphosphonic acid) not only in rivers, lakes and streams, but also rain, soil and sediment, ditches and drains and groundwater (see [7]). Some 70 % of rain samples tested positive for glyphosate. Similarly in Europe, (in Catalonia, a large region of Spain) it was found that all 11 groundwater sites were positive for glyphosate despite it being a region free from glyphosate-tolerant crop cultivation; 41 % of samples were above detection limits [8]. ***The detection in groundwater goes against one of the claims on glyphosate safety that its propensity to bind to soil and sediment means it will not leach into our fresh water supplies.*** In Argentina, new data of rain sample measurements averaged an extreme 6.5 $\mu\text{g/L}$ and reaching as high as 67 $\mu\text{g/L}$ (67 ppt) across four regions from October 2012 to April 2014 [9]. These levels are far higher than those seen in US rain samples where the average and maximum concentrations were 0.11 $\mu\text{g/L}$ and 2.5 $\mu\text{g/L}$ respectively [7].

Tap water and rivers also test positive for glyphosate with UK samples coming up (30 parts per trillion (ppt) and 190 ppt respectively) at concentrations within range of those found to be toxic in lab studies (see [10] [How Roundup Poisoned my Nature Reserve](#), SiS 64). Urban areas also get sprayed, prompting London citizens to organise banning campaigns of glyphosate spraying in public areas including child-friendly zones [11]. Even oceans are not spared from glyphosate poisoning, with run-offs into the sea persisting for up to 267 days in sea water obtained from the Great Barrier Reef and tested in the lab [12].

Due to the official 'safe' status of glyphosate, data on how much we are being exposed have been scarce, forcing citizen activists and civil society organizations to find out for themselves. Friends of the Earth Europe commissioned an analysis of 182 volunteers across 18 EU countries and found detectable levels in 44 % of urine samples [13] with concentrations ranging from 0.16 $\mu\text{g/L}$ average in Switzerland, to 1.82 $\mu\text{g/L}$ in Latvia. Of the UK citizens tested, 7 out of 10 were positive. In the US, urine samples show concentrations 8 times those in Europe [13]. The analysis, commissioned by Moms Across America, also tested 10 mother's breast milk, which came up positive for glyphosate with levels ranging from 76 $\mu\text{g/L}$ to 166 $\mu\text{g/L}$ (76-166 ppb) (see [14]). These levels are 760 to 1600 times higher than the European Drinking Water Directive allows for individual pesticides, and raise obvious concerns as they fall within the range of concentrations at which developmental toxicity has been observed in animal studies (see below). This analysis is the only study on breast milk to date, as no government or public health body has found it necessary to carry out any study on bioaccumulation in internal organs and tissues or in breast milk fed to infants.

Recent independent scientific studies have backed up the work of activists and civil society organisations. Awad Shehata and colleagues in Germany looked at glyphosate levels in the urine of both chronically ill and healthy people, and found significantly higher levels in ill people in samples taken from 102 and 199 healthy and chronically ill people respectively [15]. Those who ate predominantly organic food had lower levels, along with livestock that were fed conventional versus genetically modified feed. The study also looked at levels in cow tissues as well as urine. ***Detection of glyphosate in the tissues contradicts one of the assumption-based arguments used by industry and regulators that due to glyphosate's high water solubility, it is rapidly excreted from the body and therefore risks of harm are negligible.*** In such a case, the levels of glyphosate in urine would be expected to be much greater than levels found in the tissues. However, urine

levels in cows averaged 27-42 $\mu\text{g/ml}$ (27-42 parts per million (ppm)), while the level in tissues (intestine, liver, spleen, kidney and muscle) averaged between 14-20 $\mu\text{g/ml}$, which is within range of urine levels. Though they did not compare glyphosate levels in urine and internal organs of the same cow, the average levels across all cow samples dispute the assumptions taken by regulators that glyphosate does not remain in the body at levels that can cause harm.

In summary, glyphosate is almost ubiquitous in our environment and in people and livestock; it has even been discovered in hospital feeding tubes for child cancer patients in the US [16]. The impacts are described below.

A birth defect epidemic in people and animals

Argentina is one of the biggest cultivators of GM soybeans and the country has witnessed a sharp increase in serious illnesses since cultivation began. Concerned doctors and health practitioners founded the Network of Physicians of Crop Sprayed Towns and met in 2010. They presented data showing increased incidence of birth defects, spontaneous abortions, infertility, still births, cancers, Down's syndrome, mental disability, immune and endocrine disorders, as well as acute effects such as increased convulsions in epileptic patients at time of fumigation, respiratory and dermatological problems (see [6]) and [17] [Pesticide Illnesses and GM Soybeans, SiS53](#)) [18].

The Network, together with a large citizen movement, is pushing for a complete ban on aerial spraying of agrochemicals plus a ban of its use within a kilometre of residential areas. They documented a 2-5 times increase in birth defects in sprayed towns compared to before spraying began. Common defects include neural tube defects, which are replicated in laboratory studies on glyphosate (see later).

A 2013 report from the Centre of Congenital defects claims that nationally, the number of cases has not gone up, but a closer scrutiny gives a different picture. Data gathered during a 6 month period from the hospital Maternidad Provincial in Córdoba showed that despite recording a low level of birth defects of 36 out of a total of 2140 births (1.68 %), 22 of those came from mothers living in crop-sprayed towns, which accounts for 61 % of all the birth defects (see [6]).

The US has seen a surge in neural tube birth defects (anencephaly) in the Yakima River, Washington State. The source remains a mystery to officials who have ruled out common causes such as low folic acid and lifestyle choices. Rates have reached 8 cases per 10 000 births from 2010-2013 compared to a national average of 3 cases per 10 000 births. Glyphosate has emerged as a prime suspect as the state of Washington use herbicides, most often glyphosates, to kill noxious weeds in both land and water. An estimated 146 pesticides were applied in the area in the year 2000, and studies are now needed to confirm whether or not glyphosate, either alone or in combination with other chemicals is responsible for neural tube defects in the area [19].

Reproductive problems such as miscarriages and infertility have also risen in Argentina (see [20] [Glyphosate/Roundup & Human Male Infertility, SiS 62](#)). Physicians of sprayed towns have recorded as many as 23 % of women suffering from miscarriage in the last 5 years [18].

The latest victims of Argentina's chemical agricultural system, of which GM cultivation is an extreme example, could very well have been spared if the evidence of the teratogenic properties of glyphosate produced by industry since the 1980s had not been dismissed [21]. Monsanto's own toxicology tests submitted to the EU commission showed evidence of teratogenicity (see [22][EU](#)

[Regulators and Monsanto Exposed for Hiding Glyphosate Toxicity](#), *SiS*51). The submitted test reports describe rats and rabbits with skeletal abnormalities including the development of a 13th rib in offspring, as well as cardiac abnormalities. Scientific studies such as that of the late Professor Andrés Carrasco reporting neural tube birth defects in frog and chick embryos exposed to agricultural concentrations of glyphosate [23] have validated both Monsanto's findings and clinical observations (see also [24] [Lab Study Establishes Glyphosate Link to Birth Defects](#), *SiS*48). Probing into the mechanisms underlying the defects, Carrasco discovered that glyphosate disrupted retinoic acid activity, a well-known regulator of developmental processes.

Epidemiological studies have linked increased incidence of birth defects (spina bifida, circulatory/respiratory anomalies, tracheo-esophageal defects, gastrointestinal defects, urogenital defects, cleft lip, adactyly, clubfoot, musculoskeletal anomalies, Down's syndrome and other birth defects) and reproductive toxicity in those who live near agrochemical-sprayed fields [25-27] while other lab studies are accumulating evidence of birth defects and reproductive toxicity in a range of animals from rats to catfish [28-31].

Evidence from the farm follows the same pattern. Ib Borup Pedersen recently documented personal experiences on his pig farm, where removing GM soybean feed from the diet resulted in pronounced improvement in the health of his pigs, reducing medicine use by a third and increasing his profits (see [32] ["Changing from GMO to Non-GMO Natural Soy, Experiences from Denmark](#), *SiS* 64). Profits were also increased due to his sows living longer and giving birth to more piglets. After researching glyphosate and GMOs Ib investigated further and collaborated with scientists in Germany who analysed 38 of his 1-day old deformed piglets, finding glyphosate in various organs of the pigs. Pigs suffered defects ranging from severe to mild, including spinal, cranial defects and others affecting limbs, gender, internal organs, tongue and more. Many appear to be neural tube defects as seen in the clinic and laboratory.

Cancer rates skyrocket in South American regions of GM cultivation

Neighborhood resident organizations such as the association of Mothers of Ituzaingo, in collaboration with the Network of Sprayed Towns have been mapping cancer incidence in their towns for many years to draw attention to the epidemic they are facing. It has reached the point where now, 30 % of all deaths in these regions are from cancers, affecting both adults and children. Cities such as Hernando have seen a 258 % rise in cases between 2001-2002 and 2010-2012 [6].

Rises in cancer rates can be explained by glyphosate's role in cancer-causing mechanisms including DNA damage and endocrine disruption. Endocrine disruption may well also underlie some of the reproductive and teratogenic effects of glyphosate described above. Lab studies show glyphosate damages DNA in lab animals as well as in people who were exposed to the chemical in Argentina [33-35]. It also disrupts cell cycle regulation that can lead to increased cell division and cancer development [36,37]. The glyphosate metabolite AMPA was also shown in a 2014 study to induce DNA damage in fish at concentration ranges previously documented in streams and surface water in N. America [38]. Glyphosate's carcinogenic potential has been documented since the 1980s (see [39] [Glyphosate & Cancer](#), *SiS* 62)

Distinct from DNA damaging properties, glyphosate also mimics oestrogen at very low levels and promotes the growth of hormone-dependent breast cancer cell lines [40]. Actually glyphosate is an endocrine disruptor and alters the expression of multiple hormones including testosterone,

leutinising hormone, follicle-stimulating hormone, and the aromatase enzyme complexes that convert testosterone to oestrogen [31, 42, 42].

Epidemiological studies corroborate lab studies and reports from local citizens in Argentina and the US [43-45]. The Ministry of Health of Córdoba in Argentina reported in June 2014 the doubling of cancer cases in high agrochemical use areas compared to the national average [46]. Consistently, a new meta-analysis found association between glyphosate and cancers following occupational exposure [47]. The study looked at all epidemiological papers on non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL) incidence that had been published in English since 1980 that reported agricultural, occupational exposure to specific pesticides. A total of 44 papers were analysed, covering 80 active ingredients and 21 pesticide chemicals, finding the strongest associations between pesticides and specific subtypes of NHL, including an association between glyphosate and B lymphoma. They also found that phenoxy herbicides, carbamate insecticides, organophosphorus insecticides and the active ingredient lindane, an organochlorine insecticide, were positively associated with NHL.

The most comprehensive GMO feeding study to date carried out by Gilles-Eric Séralini and his team, looked at the effects glyphosate and glyphosate tolerant maize NK603 on rats during their life-time (2 years). It showed increased incidence of tumours (including cancers), other illnesses, as well as reduced life-span and altered hormone status [48]. The 2012 publication was aggressively attacked by industry and its supporters and unilaterally and illicitly retracted a year after publication following the appointment of an ex-Monsanto employee as an editor for the journal (see [49] [Retracting Séralini Study Violates Science and Ethics](#), *SiS* 61). It has subsequently been republished elsewhere [50] after massive public protest (see [51] [Open Letter on Retraction and Pledge to Boycott](#), *SiS* 61).

Fatal kidney disease epidemic across continents foreseen by lab studies

Kidney disease has reached epidemic levels in regions that heavily use glyphosate such as farmers in Sri Lanka and sugar cane workers in Central America. Kidney problems have been highlighted by scientific studies, including Séralini's rat feeding study where kidney tumours were observed [50]. A meta-analysis of feeding studies conducted by Séralini's lab revealed kidney pathology in animals fed Roundup Ready soybeans, while *in vitro* studies have shown that glyphosate had cytotoxic effects on human embryonic kidney cell lines [52,53] (see [54] [GM Feed Toxic, Meta-Analysis Confirms](#), *SiS*52, [55] [Death by multiple poisoning ,glyphosate and Roundup](#), *SiS* 42).

In Sri Lanka, chronic kidney disease of unknown aetiology (CKDu) has afflicted the agricultural population in recent years. A study published in 2014 linked glyphosate-based herbicides to the epidemic. It appears that hard water in the agricultural regions leads to heavy metal toxicity in the kidneys via glyphosate's metal chelating activity, and is responsible for the 400 000 cases of the disease and 20 000 fatalities [56] (see [57] [Sri Lanka Partially Bans Glyphosate for Deadly Kidney Disease Epidemic](#), *SiS* 62). The government temporarily banned glyphosate from hard water areas, but this decision was reversed due to a lack of agricultural workers to take over the manual weeding required without the application of glyphosate. Similar health problems are widely affecting communities in Central America with one in four sugar cane workers reporting kidney disease in some areas [58, 59]. This epidemic forced the El Salvador government to call for international help after the epidemic began overwhelming the health systems. The El Salvadorian government has since approved legislation to ban glyphosate herbicides, though this is yet to be enforced.

Digestive illnesses widespread

Digestive illnesses plagued the pig farm in Denmark (mentioned earlier) while they were being fed GM soy. When GM produce and glyphosate were removed from their diet, the pigs no longer suffered chronic diarrhoea, which was so severe that 30 % of new born piglets were dying as a result (see [32]). Chronic botulism, caused by the *Clostridium botulinum* bacteria, has also been on the rise in livestock in Germany, the US, and UK since the 1990s [60]. The latest study shows that glyphosate results in dysbiosis of the cow gut, with a reduction of beneficial bacteria in the rumen of cows accompanied by a rise in *C. botulinum* microbes [61].

The digestive illnesses in livestock mirrors a growing health problem in the West, particularly in the US where food intolerances, allergies, celiac disease, bowel diseases, infections and other problems continue to become more common. Nancy Swanson and colleagues showed a clear correlation between spikes in both inflammatory bowel disease and intestinal infection with glyphosate in the US [62]. Deaths from intestinal infections have risen from less than 0.25 deaths per 100 000 in 1979 to over 80 deaths per 100 000 in 2010. Inflammatory bowel disease has risen from around 3 diagnosed cases per 100 000 in 1990 to almost 90 per 100 000 in 2010. Moms across America's testimonials reflect the evidence from the farm and science studies, with children who come off GM and glyphosate covered foods reducing the severity of allergy symptoms as well as other problems such as regular vomiting [63]. With glyphosate's antibiotic properties, it had already been previously shown to cause disruption of the gut bacteria in poultry, swine and cows [64-66]. *Salmonella* and *Clostridium* are highly resistant to glyphosate, whereas *Enterococcus*, *Bifidobacteria*, and *Lactobacillus* are especially susceptible. Perturbation in the balance of these microbial species is associated with digestive disorders such as celiac disease. Similarly, chronic botulism in cows is rectified in livestock by feeding fermented and pro-biotic foods along with charcoal and humic acids. These both bind to the toxins produced by the bacterial pathogen. This treatment also reduces the urinary content of glyphosate, suggesting its binding as an underlying mechanism in the recovery of the infection (see [66]).

Autistic people are well known to have disturbed intestinal function and dysbiosis of the gut. Autism rates are also spiking in parallel with glyphosate use in the US and glyphosate's antibiotic activity may well be an underlying mechanism behind this. Indeed, mothers have also documented much improved autism symptoms in their children upon giving them a glyphosate and GM-free diet.

Health of American citizens deteriorating

One argument for the safety of GM food and their associated pesticides is that the US has been consuming them for years without ill effect. However, in the absence of labelling GM foods, it is illegitimate to make such a claim. On the contrary, there has been a drastic deterioration of public health in the US since GM crops were introduced. A new publication by Swanson and colleagues plots the rise of 20 chronic diseases using available US government data, all correlating closely with increasing glyphosate application to corn and soy crops, especially over the past several years. The diseases included cancers, Parkinson's, autism, obesity, diabetes, heart disease, digestive disease and kidney failure [62]. Correlation does not prove causation, but such strong association certainly cannot be dismissed, especially in combination with the plethora of other evidence from laboratory studies, and the experiences of doctors in their clinics and farmers in the fields. For a detailed analysis of the study please see [67] [Marked Deterioration of Public Health Parallels Increase in GM Crops and Glyphosate Use, US Government Data Show](#) (SiS 65).

Though heart disease had not been studied as extensively as cancers and birth defects in relation to glyphosate, the above study implicates its role in cardiac dysfunction. This is corroborated by the new finding that glyphosate formulations cause abnormal heart rhythms (arrhythmia) by interfering with the electrical activity of heart cells in rabbits [68].

A new study published in 2015 finds a correlation between glyphosate use and pineal gland pathology. The pineal gland is located in the brain and is known to regulate circadian rhythm through melatonin secretion. Glyphosate is hypothesised to disrupt melatonin metabolism, as well as induce pineal gland neuropathology through aluminium-induced hypoxia that results from the metal chelating properties of glyphosate. In this way, glyphosate use tightly correlates with the rises in sleep disorders as well as other disorders with symptoms of sleep dysfunction such as autism and dementia [69].

It is becoming clear that glyphosate has multiple toxicities that link it to many diseases through its metal chelating, antibiotic, endocrine disrupting, and genotoxic properties. Glyphosate also has the ability to block cytochrome P450 (CYP) enzyme activity, a class of enzymes involved in detoxifying xenobiotics amongst other things. Glyphosate therefore not only is a toxin in its own right, but enhances the toxicity of other chemicals by preventing the CYP enzymes from detoxifying the body [70].

Americans are definitely getting sicker in numerous ways highly correlated with adopting GM crops and rise in glyphosate use [67] and, as shown by all the testimonials from Moms across America, peoples' health improves after removing GMOs and glyphosate residues from their foods by buying organic [63].

Environmental toxicity a concern for biodiversity, agriculture and sustainability

The spread of glyphosate-resistant weeds is increasingly compromising the effectiveness of the herbicide. There are now a reported 31 species of resistant weeds, up from 23 a year ago as recorded by the Weed Science organisation in the US [71]. In Brazil, an aggressive spread of weeds prompted a former DuPont agronomist to acknowledge the difficulties faced by farmers cultivating glyphosate-tolerant GM crops both in Brazil and Argentina [72]. Monsanto now recommends an 'integrated weed management' strategy that includes tilling the soil (of previously no-till land) and using multiple herbicides. The main selling points of Monsanto's Roundup Ready (RR) GM crop system was to reduce environmental damage through no-tillage agriculture and glyphosate use – a supposedly 'safe' herbicide compared to older chemicals. Not only is glyphosate toxic to health and the environment, but a cocktail of even more lethal herbicides have to be deployed to deal with glyphosate-resistant weeds, and an end to no till agriculture, resulting in further soil erosion. In short, we have an ecological and agronomic disaster.

Glyphosate toxicity to wildlife is well-documented. Many species, including aquatic organisms, reptiles, beneficial soil organisms including certain microbes and worms have been shown in scientific studies to be affected by glyphosate exposure (see [73] [Ban GMOS Now](#), ISIS special report). This includes chronic and acute toxicity to the model aquatic organism *Daphnia magna* at below accepted thresholds for glyphosate presence in US freshwater [74]. Amphibians, the most endangered animals in the world, are so sensitive to glyphosate that 78 % of frogs died in one study on being exposed to Roundup herbicide [75]. Glyphosate has also been shown to stimulate

the growth of soil fungi, increase the pathogenicity of soil pathogens such as *Xylella fastidiosa* while numerous beneficial soil organisms have been decimated [76] (see [77] [Scientists Reveal Glyphosate Poisons Crops and Soil](#), *SiS* 47). The latest study on soil organisms concluded that non-target organisms are at risk of local extinction after finding sub-lethal doses of glyphosate reduced fertility as well as survival of juvenile and adult *E.fetida* worms [78]. Monarch butterfly decline has been linked to glyphosate destruction of the milkweed in the US, the only food source for its larvae. Their migration from the US is at an all-time low and has been declining for the last 17 years (1994-5 to 2010-2011) (see [79] [Glyphosate and Monarch Butterfly Decline](#), *SiS* 52) [80]. This decline has prompted a move to protect the butterflies under the Endangered Species Act by over 200 organisations and 40 scientists in November 2014 [81]. A new report on a Welsh nature reserve documents the decline in insects including beneficial pollinators such as bees as glyphosate levels increase (see [9] [How Roundup Poisoned my Nature Reserve](#), *SiS* 64).

Not only are non-target organisms negatively affected, but also the target crops. Glyphosate's metal chelating properties reduce the micronutrients available to the plant, which it needs to maintain a fully-functioning immune system, thereby increasing its susceptibility to disease. This mechanism is thought to underlie the spread of over 40 crop diseases in glyphosate-tolerant GM crops (see [82] [USDA scientist reveals All](#), *SiS*53). Indeed, USDA senior scientist Don Huber states that glyphosate's ability to kill plants is through the destruction of their immune system. This was clearly demonstrated by his experiments showing that non-GM plants grown in a sterile soil do not die when sprayed with glyphosate as the pathogens are not there to take advantage of the compromised immune system.

A reduction in mineral nutrients has health impacts on those eating the crops such as abnormalities in calves that are caused by manganese deficiency, which are on the rise and may well result from glyphosate chelation [83]. Farm animals are further suffering from other illnesses (and birth defects) as described by the Danish pig farmer earlier. Similar problems have been reported in Germany, where cows are suffering from chronic infections such as botulism [60] and in the US, with for example, the veterinarian Art Dunham reporting botulism in dairy cows, as well as reproductive problems, bloody bowels, rickets and viral diseases in hogs [84].

As a result of the problems faced by farmers, many are now moving away from GM and glyphosate-based systems. The US is seeing a growth in the non-GM seed market (see [85] [Global Status of GMO and non-GMO crops](#), *SiS* 62). Agriculture experts such as Howard Vlieger are helping 300-400 farmers in the US switch from GM to non-GM crops without glyphosate use due to its ill effects to soil, plants and animals [86]. Glyphosate-tolerant crops have also been shown to need more water and do worse in drought situations (see [87] [GM Crops and Water – A recipe for Disaster](#) *SiS* 56, and [88] [GM Crops Destroyed by US Drought but non-GM Varieties Flourish](#), *SiS*56). This is consistent with their health being compromised by glyphosate.

While GM crops are causing problems for farmers, non-GM crops are leading the way in providing drought- and salt-tolerant varieties, which makes sense when one considers that the majority of traits are highly complex, involving multiple genes and pathways and therefore too complicated to mimic with crude genetic engineering techniques (see [89] [Genetic Modification Trails Conventional Breeding By Far](#), *SiS* 64).

Regulatory science corrupt, ban glyphosate locally

Glyphosate re-assessment by the EU commission was performed in 2014, not only re-approving glyphosate, but approving increased residue levels for food and feed, with the final decision

expected in 2015. The reassessment was performed by industry, though Germany acted as the rapporteur state, submitting the renewal assessment report to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) (see [90][Scandal of Glyphosate Re-assessment in Europe](#)(SiS63). This report relied on summary assessments provided by the Glyphosate Task Force which consists of Monsanto and other chemical companies such as Syngenta UK and Dow Italy. Assessments were made on glyphosate excluding commercial formulations most frequently used such as Roundup, and focused on studies showing less toxic results.

It has been well-documented and previously explained in [Ban GMOS Now](#) [73], that adjuvants present in glyphosate formulation products such as POEA, as well as glyphosate metabolites like AMPA have their own toxicity and moreover, that glyphosate and the adjuvants together are far more toxic than glyphosate alone. A new 2014 study by Professor Séralini's group further confirms this, showing for the first time that glyphosate formulation products (as well as insecticide and fungicides) are far more toxic than glyphosate alone at concentrations well below agricultural dilutions [91]. Using human cell lines (HEK293, JEG3 and HepG2), they showed formulations to cause significant reductions in cell viability at concentrations 125 times less than glyphosate alone, challenging the relevance of the current acceptable daily intake (ADI). It is important to note that studies on the effects of pesticide cocktail mixtures, a far more likely scenario in real life, have yet to be properly investigated.

To conclude

The evidence of glyphosate toxicity to both human and animal health and the ecosystem has built up to such an extent that some governments are taking action. As mentioned earlier, both El Salvador and Sri Lanka have made steps towards banning the herbicide. The Netherlands successfully banned its sale to private individuals [92]. Russia has recently decided to ban the import and cultivation of all GM crops due to health and environmental concerns [93], while a section of the Chinese army has reportedly banned its consumption [94]. In Brazil a public prosecutor is also looking to suspend its use [95].

For those of us who are not being protected by our governments, it is time to start initiating our own campaigns, banning it first from our home, our community, our schools, local counties, regions.

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