



MEDIA RELEASE
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UN experts find herbicide glyphosate unlikely to cause cancer

Glyphosate, a herbicide widely used in agriculture and by gardeners, is unlikely to cause cancer in people, according to a new safety review by United Nations health, agriculture and food experts.

Experts from the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Health Organization (WHO) released an assessment this week concluding that glyphosate is "unlikely to pose a carcinogenic risk to humans from exposure through the diet."

The crop protection products Diazinon and Malathion were also reviewed by the committee, which met last week, and were also determined as unlikely to be carcinogenic.

The finding contradicts a 2015 assessment by the WHO's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), which classified these compounds as a "probable" cause of cancer.

Agcarm chief executive, Mark Ross says, The IARC's classification was misleading and caused a great deal of unnecessary concern amongst the public."

The recent findings back the assessment by the European Food Safety Authority, an independent agency funded by the European Union, who also concluded that glyphosate is "unlikely to pose a carcinogenic hazard to humans".

The discrepancy is because the IARC only identifies potential cancer hazards and bases its classification on a small selection of available data on the herbicides. The joint FAO and WHO assessment uses a much wider data-set to assess the health risk to consumers from dietary exposure to pesticide residues in food.

"IARC reviews published studies to identify potential cancer hazards," the WHO said. "It does not estimate the level of risk to the population associated with exposure to the hazard."

"It's a very important distinction," says Ross. "The IARC report is not a risk assessment. Actual risk is determined by the type and extent of human exposure."

Glyphosate has recorded over 40 years of safe use and been the subject of over 800 studies, all of which confirmed its safety. It continues to be rigorously tested by regulators in New Zealand and throughout the world, with more than 160 countries approving its safe use.

"Crop protection products are among the most highly regulated in the world. Regulatory and scientific authorities worldwide have concluded that glyphosate, when used according to label directions, does not pose an unreasonable risk to human health, the environment, or pets," says Ross.

Conclusions about a matter as important as our health must be non-biased, thorough and based on quality science that adheres to internationally recognised standards.

About Agcarm

Agcarm is the industry association of companies which manufacture, distribute and sell products that keep animals healthy and crops thriving. Member companies are committed to ensuring that these products are used safely, effectively and sustainably

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