

What you need to know about glyphosate

What is glyphosate?

Glyphosate is the active ingredient in the popular weed killer RoundUp, and about 500 other herbicide products. It's widely used by farmers, gardeners and other land managers. When applied, glyphosate prevents weeds from making the proteins they need to grow.

Why is glyphosate important?

Glyphosate allows farmers to control weeds from above the ground – doing away with the need to plough or till the soil. Reducing tillage maintains soil nutrients and improves water use efficiency.

Healthier soils mean higher yielding crops – a win for farmers and the environment.

Glyphosate is also used to control aggressive, noxious weeds such as serrated tussock and African lovegrass. If not controlled, these weeds can rapidly take over a landscape – at the expense of native pastures and biodiversity.

In 2015, the International Agency for Research on Cancer found that

glyphosate poses the same risk as:



Drinking hot beverages



Frying food at high heat



Working as a hairdresser

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Why is glyphosate under pressure?

In the United States, during the past 12 months there have been a number of legal cases which have found in favour of plaintiffs who claimed exposure to glyphosate was the catalyst for their non-Hodgkinson Lymphoma. The decisions are subject to appeal.

In these cases the juries have drawn on a study by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), which identified exposure to glyphosate, as well as activities such as drinking hot drinks, frying food, and hairdressing, as 'probable carcinogenic' activities.

In 2016, the APVMA evaluated the IARC report and other contemporary scientific assessments as part of an established chemical review nomination process. The APVMA concluded that glyphosate did not pose a carcinogenic risk to humans and that there were no grounds to place it under formal reconsideration. The APVMA is a globally recognised, science-based regulator.



What does the science say?

No other agricultural chemical has been tested to the extent that glyphosate has. The scientific evidence supporting glyphosate's safety is clear and overwhelming.

In the past three years alone, regulatory authorities in the European Union, South Korea, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States have publicly reaffirmed that exposure to glyphosate does not cause cancer.

More than 800 scientific studies and reviews, including numerous independent regulatory safety assessments, have informed and confirmed these regulators' stance.

A recent longitudinal study by the United States' National Institute of Agriculture followed 57,000 farmers and registered applicators of glyphosate for more than 20 years. The study found no connection between cancer and glyphosate.

Farmers take these issues seriously

Australian farmers are renowned across the world for producing high quality, safe, sustainable produce. It is a role they take very seriously.

Farmers put their faith in the regulator (the APVMA) to only approve for use products that are safe for the environment and human health.

Farmers care about their own health and that of their families, farm workers, communities and consumers.

Science-based regulators around the world have repeatedly determined

glyphosate is safe to use.



UN



USA



EU



CANADA



AUSTRALIA

Busting the myths on glyphosate

Glyphosate causes cancer.

 **MYTH.**

Every regulator in the world, including the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority has approved glyphosate as safe to use. A longitudinal study followed 57,000 registered users of glyphosate over 20 years and found no connection between cancer and glyphosate. The findings of a study by the World Health Organisation's International Agency for Research on Cancer, identified exposure to glyphosate, drinking hot drinks, frying food, and hairdressing, as 'probable carcinogenic' activities. In 2016, the APVMA evaluated the IARC report and other contemporary scientific assessments as part of an established chemical review nomination process. The APVMA concluded that glyphosate did not pose a carcinogenic risk to humans and that there were no grounds to place it under formal reconsideration. In April this year the United State Environment Protection Authority declared glyphosate was not a carcinogenic.

Food grown in farming systems where glyphosate is used, is safe to eat.

 **FACT.**

Glyphosate is typically not applied directly to food crops. Nevertheless, as with all other agricultural chemicals, farmers must adhere to maximum residue levels (MRLs) for glyphosate. In May 2016, the Joint World Health Organisation (WHO)/ Food & Agricultural Organisation (FAO) Meeting on Pesticide Residues concluded that "glyphosate is unlikely to pose a carcinogenic risk to humans from exposure through diet".

Australian farmers could use an alternate herbicide.

 **MYTH.**

Currently, there is no product approved for use in Australia that is as safe or as effective as glyphosate for weed control.

Glyphosate is good for the environment.

 **FACT.**

Glyphosate allows farmers to control weeds from above the ground, doing away with the need to plough fallow paddocks in preparation for a crop. This practice minimises soil disruption and maximises soil health and water use efficiency. Less tillage, means less machinery operation and therefore less emissions generation. Glyphosate is also used by farmers to control aggressive, noxious weeds such as serrated tussock and African lovegrass.

Products containing glyphosate should be used according to the directions on the label.

 **FACT.**

In the same way it is recommended users observe the directions for use on the labels of household products, users of glyphosate products should always follow directions for use. It is important to note that there is no level of exposure to glyphosate that has been deemed to be dangerous to human health.

Australian farmers could produce the food and fibre they do today, without using glyphosate.

 **MYTH.**

Through better weed control, improved soil health and water use efficiency, the addition of glyphosate has allowed farmers, in particular cotton, cereal, oilseed and pulse growers, to greatly improve their productivity per hectare. Australian farmers are trusted across the world for producing safe sustainable food and fibre – glyphosate plays an important role in making this possible.

GET THE FACTS AT FARMERS.ORG.AU

