

GMO Industry Set To Flood U.S. Food Supply With Toxic Chemicals

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture's recent approval of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) resistant to new herbicides will soon unleash a flood of new toxic chemicals across the nation's agricultural heartland, observers have warned.

Previously, nearly all GMO crops approved for planting were engineered for resistance to a single herbicide: Monsanto's blockbuster product Roundup (glyphosate). The widespread adoption of these crops led to an explosion in Roundup use, which in turn spurred the evolution of Roundup resistance in agricultural weeds.

In response to the proliferation of Roundup-resistant "superweeds," GMO companies have turned to engineering multi-herbicide resistance into their crops. Specifically, GMO crops are now available resistant to both Roundup and the Dow herbicide 2,4-D, or Roundup and another herbicide, Dicamba.

But as critics of biotechnology have repeatedly noted, the adoption of these new GMOs will merely exacerbate the problem – encouraging still more herbicide use and the evolution of ever-tougher superweeds. In a recent article, Dr. Jonathan Latham of the Bioscience Resource Project referred to the process as "a vicious cycle that threatens both our environment and our food supply."

Poisonous to plants and people

The adoption of herbicide-resistant GMOs always leads to an increase in herbicide use, because farmers feel free to spray poison in higher concentrations to kill off more weeds, no longer worried about harming their crop. As weeds start to develop resistance (within a few generations), the [herbicide](#) doses needed to kill them begin to increase. Inevitably, residue from these herbicides makes its way into the food supply.

Unsurprisingly, chemicals designed to poison plants are not benign for animals, either. Roundup has been linked with endocrine disruption, birth defects and organ failure. An ingredient in the infamous Vietnam War-era defoliant Agent Orange – 2,4-D – has been linked with hypothyroidism, Parkinson's disease, reproductive problems and suppressed immune function. The World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer has declared both chemicals "probable carcinogens."

According to government documents, Dicamba can cause neurological damage in mammals and is also classified as a "developmental toxin." This latter effect is particularly troubling given that a recent Environmental Working Group report counted more than 5,600 schools

within 200 feet of agricultural fields likely to be planted with the new [GMO](#) crops.

Both Dicamba and 2,4-D are considered at high risk for environmental contamination, the former in the soil and the latter by drifting through the air.

Government protects industry, not health

People hoping that government regulatory agencies will step in and protect the public from this chemical violence are likely to be disappointed. Rather than taking measures to prevent the predicted explosion of 2,4-D use near schools throughout the Midwest, Congress is currently working hard to pass the DARK (Deny Americans the Right to Know) Act, which would ban GMO labeling initiatives and potentially even prevent state or local governments from regulating herbicide use on GMO crops.

And while the White House recently ordered a multi-agency update of the rules governing [GMOs](#) in the United States, the priorities of that review are made clear by a single sentence from the memorandum: "The objectives are to ensure public confidence in the regulatory system and to prevent unnecessary barriers to future innovation and competitiveness by improving the transparency, coordination, predictability, and efficiency of the regulation of biotechnology products while continuing to protect health and the environment."

That is, the first priority is to make sure that people trust the government, specifically its GMO regulations (or lack thereof). The second priority is to protect the profits of the biotech industry by preventing "barriers to future innovation and competitiveness."

Only at the end is there a mention of protecting health or the environment – with a presumption that these are already being protected.

Given the already astonishing rates of Roundup use nationwide, that presumption is certainly open to question.

Notes:

<http://www.anh-usa.org>

http://www.naturalnews.com/050396_Dow_herbicide_GMOs_cancer.html

<http://www.naturalnews.com>

<http://www.naturalnews.com>

www.organicconsumers.org

<http://www.naturalnews.com>

<http://www.toxipedia.org/display/toxipedia/Dicamba>

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