

# Poisoning the Public: Toxic Agrochemicals and Regulators' Collusion with Industry

By [Colin Todhunter](#)

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Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Biotechnology and GMO](#), [Law and Justice](#)

*In January 2019, campaigner Dr Rosemary Mason lodged a complaint with the European Ombudsman accusing European regulatory agencies of collusion with the agrochemicals industry. This was in the wake of an important [paper by Charles Benbrook](#) on the genotoxicity of glyphosate-based herbicides that appeared in the journal 'Environmental Sciences Europe'.*

In an unusual step, the editor-in-chief of that journal, Prof Henner Hollert, and his co-author, Prof Thomas Backhaus, issued a strong statement in support of the acceptance of Dr Benbrook's article for publication. In a commentary published in the same issue of the journal, they write:

"We are convinced that the article provides new insights on why different conclusions regarding the carcinogenicity of glyphosate and GBHs [glyphosate-based herbicides] were reached by the US EPA and IARC. It is an important contribution to the discussion on the genotoxicity of GBHs."

The IARC's (International Agency for Research on Cancer) evaluation relied heavily on studies capable of shedding light on the distribution of real-world exposures and genotoxicity risk in exposed human populations, while the EPA's (Environmental Protection Agency) evaluation placed little or no weight on such evidence.

Up to that point, Dr Mason had been writing to the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the EU Commission for an 18-month period, challenging them about ECHA's positive assessment of glyphosate. Many people around the world had struggled to understand how and why the US EPA and the EFSA concluded that glyphosate is not genotoxic (damaging to DNA) or carcinogenic, whereas the World Health Organisation's cancer agency, the IARC, came to the opposite conclusion.

The IARC stated that the evidence for glyphosate's genotoxic potential is "[strong](#)" and that glyphosate is a probable human carcinogen. While IARC referenced only peer-reviewed studies and reports available in the public literature, the EPA relied heavily on unpublished regulatory studies commissioned by pesticide manufacturers.

In fact, 95 of the 151 genotoxicity assays cited in the EPA's evaluation were from industry studies (63%), while IARC cited 100% public literature sources. Another important difference is that the EPA focused its analysis on glyphosate in its pure chemical form, or 'glyphosate technical'. The problem with that is that almost no one is exposed to glyphosate alone. Applicators and the public are exposed to complete herbicide formulations consisting of

glyphosate plus added ingredients (adjuvants). The formulations have repeatedly been shown to be more toxic than glyphosate in isolation.

### Rejection of Dr Mason's complaint

The European Ombudsman has now rejected Rosemary Mason's complaint who has in turn written a 25-page response documenting the wide-ranging impacts of glyphosate-based Roundup and other agrochemicals on human health and the environment. She also outlines the various levels of duplicity that have allowed many of these chemicals to remain on the commercial market.

Mason is led to conclude that, due to the rejection of her complaint (as with others lodged by her to the Ombudsman), the European Ombudsman Office is also part of the problem and is essentially colluding with European pesticide regulatory authorities. Mason has addressed this concern directly to Emily O'Reilly, who currently holds the post of European Ombudsman:

"In your rejection of all my complaints over the last few years, it is clear that The Ombudsman's Office is protecting the European pesticides regulatory authorities, who are in turn being controlled by the European Glyphosate Task Force.... You have turned a blind eye to the authorisation of many of the toxic pesticides that are on the market today because industry is being allowed to self-regulate."

Some of the key points, claims and issues raised in Mason's new report 'The European Ombudsman is colluding with the European Pesticide Regulatory Authorities' include:

- The European pesticide regulatory authorities and the European Ombudsman is colluding with industry, resulting in the poisoning of humans and the environment;
- Cancer Research UK is not addressing the impact of agrochemicals because it is heavily compromised by industry interests and therefore claims, "there is little evidence that pesticides cause cancer";
- The UK Science Media Centre is an industry lobby organisation, which feeds the wider media and its journalists with misleading and false information about agrochemicals;
- Industry group the European Glyphosate Task Force (GTF) has been instrumental in ensuring the re-licensing of glyphosate in the EU;
- Maladministration and criminal collusion with the agrochemicals industry resulted in the renewal of glyphosate registration in the EU;
- The report touches on the condemnation of the ECHA's positive classification of glyphosate by the judges of the International Monsanto Tribunal;
- The global insect apocalypse and the impact of intensive agriculture and pesticides is catastrophic;
- Children and adults have diminished mental acuity and exhibit increasing levels of mental health disorders, depression, suicides and anxiety as a result of exposure to agrochemicals;
- Monsanto's sealed secret studies shows the company knew about impact of its product on cancers and eye damage;
- The report mentions UN expert on Toxins Baskut Tuncak's call to put children's

health before pesticides;

- Mason outlines the poisoning of British food: breakfast cereals have shockingly high levels of glyphosate;
- She notes that 30,000 doctors and health professionals in Argentina have demanded a ban on glyphosate;
- Brazil's National Cancer Institute statement that genetically modified crops are causing of massive pesticide use is referred to;
- The independence of regulatory decisions made by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) has been marred by political donations to Labor and the Coalition. In the 2017-18 financial year, Bayer donated \$40,600 to Labor and \$42,540 to the Coalition, with CropLife donating \$34,271 to Labor and \$22,300 to the Coalition;
- As a result, APVMA is allowing clothianidin and Roundup to be applied to crops in low lying areas which drains into The Great Barrier Reef;
- In turn, the poisoning of The Great Barrier Reef is taking place due to the impact of herbicides and long-acting insecticides.

There are numerous other important points and issues tackled in the report, which readers are urged to read in full. Mason names key individuals and provides all relevant links to research, reports and papers. You can access the report below. You can also access Dr Mason's many other documents [here](#).

Read Rosemary Mason's new report [here](#).

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*Colin Todhunter is a frequent contributor to Global Research and Asia-Pacific Research.*



## Seeds of Destruction: Hidden Agenda of Genetic Manipulation

Author Name: F. William Engdahl

ISBN Number: 978-0-937147-2-2

Year: 2007

Pages: 341 pages with complete index

List Price: ~~\$25.95~~

Special Price: \$18.00

This skilfully researched book focuses on how a small socio-political American elite seeks to establish control over the very basis of human survival: the provision of our daily bread. "Control the food and you control the people."

This is no ordinary book about the perils of GMO. Engdahl takes the reader inside the corridors of power, into the backrooms of the science labs, behind closed doors in the corporate boardrooms.

The author cogently reveals a diabolical world of profit-driven political intrigue, government corruption and coercion, where genetic manipulation and the patenting of life forms are used to gain worldwide control over food production. If the book often reads as a crime story, that should come as no surprise. For that is what it is.

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