

Cape Town farmers plead with SA government to ban glyphosate

Livestock producer, Farmer Angus, is pleading with the South African government to ban the use of glyphosate. The herbicide is widely used by the agricultural industry on genetically modified (GM) crops as well as by landscapers and home gardeners. Glyphosate is thought to be linked to some forms of cancer and other diseases.



In 2015, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) reported that glyphosate is a "probable human carcinogen"; the uncertainty of its use has dominated international news headlines daily.

In the most recent study, researchers at the University of Washington in the USA found a direct link between glyphosate and non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL), a cancer of the immune system. Just last week the city of Miami in the USA announced its ban on glyphosate as did the Indian State of Kerala in February and France in January.

Many other governments around the world have already either placed restrictions on, or have issued a statement of their intention to ban the chemical.

Angus McIntosh of Farmer Angus says: "With glyphosate receiving so much attention around the world, I want to know why our government isn't doing anything about it? South Africa is the only country in the entire world where the population's staple diet, that being maize, is genetically modified. These maize crops are just one of the many crops including wheat, soya, cotton, vegetables, wine, fruit, nuts and sugarcane, that are being sprayed with glyphosate and eventually ending up in our food and water sources."



"When South Africa first began farming with GM crops in 1997, it was without the public's permission or knowledge. Today, there is still no mention of glyphosate content on any packaging either. People don't know what they are eating. Essentially they are being forced to eat genetically modified food, laced with poison that no-one actually knows the long-term effects of. For me, the most shocking find was its presence in mother's breast milk and babies' nappies."

South Africa currently uses glyphosate in all agricultural sectors: GM cotton, soya and maize seeds designed to withstand the killing effect of glyphosate are planted in soil already prepared with the poison.

During germination it's sprayed liberally to keep the weeds at bay. At harvest time a farming method called "green burndown" is used on all of these crops as well as wheat. Here glyphosate is sprayed directly onto the crops one to two weeks before harvesting to speed up the drying down process that occurs when the crops begin to die.

Glyphosate is absorbed by the plant and cannot be removed by washing.

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