

International Agency for Research on Cancer



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Dr Philip W. Miller
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800 North Lindbergh Boulevard
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CPW/mg

16 April 2015

Dear Dr Miller,

Thank you for your letter of 20 March 2015, to which the WHO Director-General has asked me to reply. I have taken note of the concerns you expressed with regard to the Agency's recent assessment of the carcinogenicity of glyphosate, as part of the classification of five organophosphate pesticides.

I would like to assure you of the technical, scientific and ethical integrity of IARC's processes, which are recognized and respected internationally. The Agency's programme of Monographs on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans applies the highest standards of scientific evaluation to its assessment of agents. Its conclusions are based on high-quality science, are thorough and unbiased. Evaluations are performed by panels of independent international experts, selected on the basis of their knowledge and experience as well as an absence of real or apparent conflicts of interest.

For Volume 112 of the IARC Monographs, a Working Group of 17 experts from 11 countries met at IARC on 3-10 March 2015 to assess the carcinogenic potential of tetrachlorvinphos, parathion, malathion, diazinon and glyphosate. Monsanto initiated contact with the IARC Secretariat approximately five months before the meeting in response to the Request for Observer Status and the Call for Data, first announced on the IARC Monograph website in March 2014 and updated in July 2014 listing individual agents for evaluation.

The eight-day meeting in Lyon followed nearly a year of review and preparation by the IARC Secretariat and the Working Group, including a comprehensive review of the latest available scientific evidence. In line with the established procedures and criteria for the selection, evaluation and integration of evidence, as defined in the Preamble of the IARC Monographs on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans, the Working Group considered "reports that have been published or accepted for publication in the openly available scientific literature" as well as final versions of "data from government agency reports that are publicly available".

I would emphasize that the IARC Monographs programme provides scientific evaluations of cancer hazards based on a comprehensive review of the scientific literature; it remains the responsibility of governments and other international organizations to recommend regulations, legislation or public health interventions.

IARC can re-evaluate substances when a new significant body of data becomes available in the public domain. When this happens, it is possible for a classification to be changed to a higher or lower category.

I thank you for your interest in the work of the Agency and trust that this additional information regarding the evaluation of glyphosate is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Wild', with a horizontal line underneath.

Christopher P. Wild, PhD
Director

cc: Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General, World Health Organization, Avenue Appia, 1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland

Dr Francis S. Collins, Director, US National Cancer Institutes, 1 Center Drive, Bethesda MD 20814, USA

Dr Douglas Lowy, Acting Director, US National Cancer Institute, 9609 Medical Center Drive, Bethesda MD 20892-9760, USA

Mr José Graziano da Silva, Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy