Roundup Resistance is a Growing Problem and Syngenta Offers a Problematic Solution

Tolerance to things is built up over time, although some tolerances develop more quickly than others. The development of Roundup resistance in weeds is a quick one, in large part due to the popularity and frequent usage of the chemical. From the release of Roundup in 1974, it took 15 years for the first documented case of Roundup-resistant weeds to appear. The response to that resistance didn't actually address the problem. The introduction of genetically modified, Roundup resistant crops allowed farmers to increase the amount of the herbicide sprayed, therefore increasing the opportunities for naturally resistant weeds to thrive and pass on their wayward genes. The growth of Roundup-resistant weeds is upon us, and Big Agriculture needs an answer.

Paraquat – A Potential Answer

Paraquat is a controversial product. While one of the most popular herbicides in the world, it has been banned in the European Union due to its toxicity. Paraquat is so toxic to mammals that it's often said, "just one sip will kill you." It has been used to commit suicide in many third world countries due to its easy availability and low price. Despite the fact that it has been banned in the European Union, the herbicide is still manufactured there. The E.U. is not the only country that has reservations regarding paraquat, as China is also in the process of phasing out paraquat for agricultural use. Countries like the U.S. and Australia are still using the herbicide, as it's a fast-acting product that kills a wide range of weeds.

The Herbicide Always Knocks Twice

If one is good, two must be better…or something like that. One of the suggested uses of paraquat is to use it as a clean up herbicide after glyphosate. This is known as the "double knock" system, and it's commonly used in Australia. Many scientists and insiders have predicted that this system has the potential to double the amount of time before herbicide resistant weeds appear again. While this system might be ideal from the manufacturer's standpoint (twice as many products bought), the health and environmental concerns are more worrying.

Everyone Agrees That Paraquat is Toxic

The E.P.A. has classified paraquat as category I, the highest level of toxicity. So we know it's toxic. That itself is not up for debate. What is in debate is whether or not paraquat causes Parkinson's. And by debate, that is to say Syngenta is not willing to publicly accept the role of paraquat in increasing the rates of Parkinson's and the company has subsequently funded studies refuting that link.

But Seriously, Everyone Knows

Syngenta continues to defend paraquat in the face of 20 years of studies presenting increasing links between the herbicide and Parkinson's. As the number of glyphosate-resistant weeds continues to increase, the agricultural market is looking for the next option in herbicides. With nature as it is, who knows how long before that herbicide will cease to work and the next chemical in line will step up?

One of the advantages of paraquat is the fact that it is partially inactivated once it hits the ground. But what about

the part that isn’t? Imagine the rings of a mature oak tree. At what point will we be able to tell the age of our soil by the layers of herbicides and pesticides built up throughout?

Recommended Reading:

- *Scientists Against GMOs – Hear From Those Who Have Done the Research*
- *Understanding and Detoxifying Genetically Modified Foods*
- *Naturally Treat Multiple Sclerosis – Therapies, Diet, Pain Management, Alternative Medicine*
- *Monsanto Company Profile*

Sources:

- *This Pesticide is Prohibited in Britain. Why is it Still Being Exported?* – NY Times
- *Glyphosate Resistant Weeds* – paraquat.com
- *Safety to Humans* – paraquat.com
- *This Pesticide is Prohibited in Britain. Why is it Still Being Exported?* – Organic Consumers Association