The FDA Announces They Will Now Test For Glyphosates

Glyphosate, the extra secret ingredient in the majority of our food supply, will now have a harder time going incognito. After the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) published a criticism of the FDA and the USDA's current herbicide monitoring practices, the FDA, the highest food safety administration in the land, announced they have finally developed a "streamlined method" designed for testing foods like corn and soy for glyphosate, the active ingredient in the world's most popular herbicide, Roundup.

Roundup use has been on the rise since its introduction in 1974, and the amount of glyphosate residue considered "safe" has ballooned by a factor of 17. The EPA allows fifty times more glyphosate to be sprayed on corn now than they allowed in 1995. Continued claims that Roundup is safe, though it was recently labeled a possible human carcinogen by the World Health Organization, and claims that residue levels are of no concern, though the FDA wasn't even testing glyphosate residue levels on crops, has further tarnished the reputations of the EPA, the USDA, and the FDA.

Reasons or Excuses?

It's kind of crazy that the FDA, the organization tasked with monitoring herbicides, has not been testing for the world's most used herbicide. It's like getting an STD test at a clinic and not testing for syphilis. The FDA cites the cost of testing as the reason for excluding glyphosate from their testing. Adding glyphosate testing to six of the FDA's facilities has an estimated cost of 5 million. Monsanto makes 5 billion dollars a year in revenue from glyphosate while also supplying the FDA with some of the highest ranking individuals

working there. Is it too far of a stretch to wonder if neglecting to test for Roundup residue was really an issue of cost? Or was it an excuse to allow one of the largest corporations to keep selling massive amounts of a substance increasingly recognized as detrimental to human health?

Living in the Now

The study by the WHO that identified glyphosate as “probably carcinogenic” has been a game changer. It’s possible we wouldn’t know about the lack of reliable glyphosate testing without that study, as the GAO report criticizing the FDA’s lax practices was actually released in 2014. While that timeline definitely fits, there are also other factors prompting this announcement from the FDA.

Independent testing companies like Abraxis and MIcrobe have seen an uptick in requests for glyphosate testing after the WHO study was published. Small companies, advocate groups, and doctors are among the customers asking for this information more than ever before. Test requests at some labs have increased from a few a year to a few a week, indicating that food transparency is a rising interest. Test results showed glyphosate residues in a variety of products from honey to soy sauce to infant formula.

Keep the Ball Rolling

Here’s the good news: public pressure can produce results. We still don’t know the extent to which herbicides like glyphosate can affect our health, but we’ll never know without proper study of all available information. The push for food transparency is on its way to making a big difference in our health and our quality of life.

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Sources:

- *FDA to Start Testing For Glyphosate in Food* – Civil Eats
- *Fears Over Roundup Residue Prompt Private Testing* – Reuters
- *The FDA Will Began Testing Food For Glyphosate, the Most Heavily Used Farm Chemical Ever* – Newsweek