



Spinning Science

What happens when Monsanto doesn't like what the World Health Organization (WHO) has to say about its flagship product, Roundup weedkiller? The chemical company convinces U.S. lawmakers to hold a "smoke and mirrors" Congressional hearing, under the guise of "defending scientific integrity," but really to undermine the unanimous finding by 17 international scientists, based on their analysis of independent, peer-reviewed science, that Roundup is "probably carcinogenic to humans."

The hearing, which Monsanto asked Congress to hold, will be used to decide if WHO's International Agency for Cancer Research (IARC)—an unbiased scientific agency charged with protecting public health by warning the public about cancer-causing chemicals—will continue to receive federal funding.

"In Defense of Scientific Integrity: Examining the IARC Monograph Programme and Glyphosate Review," took place on February 6, in Washington, DC. The hearing was held by the Science, Space and Technology Committee, and led by its chair, Republican Rep. Lamar Smith of Texas. Smith was once described as "the most obnoxious climate change denier in Congress"—not exactly the ideal candidate to be passing judgment on the work of serious scientists.

The witness lineup was mostly stacked with chemical industry cheerleaders. Jennifer Sass, senior scientist at the Natural Resources Defense Council, was one of the few who were allowed to testify in defense of IARC. Sass ended her testimony with this question:

"Are we willing to sell out the public's right to know about harmful chemicals in the places we work, live, and play, just so that Monsanto Co. can sell more glyphosate?" orgcns.org/2nUZSVs

Promises, Promises

We launched our campaign to get Ben & Jerry's to go organic in July, after we broke the news about Roundup weedkiller contamination in Ben & Jerry's ice cream. In October, we announced that samples of Ben & Jerry's ice cream in four European countries also tested positive for glyphosate. This time, warned in advance, Ben & Jerry's countered with a promise to "launch glyphosate-free ice cream."

Ben & Jerry's said that by 2020, it would aim to eliminate glyphosate-contaminated ingredients from its supply chain—presumably by not sourcing ingredients from suppliers that use glyphosate to dry out crops before harvest. Ben & Jerry's also promised to introduce a line of organic ice cream in 2018, amounting to 6% of the brand's total ice cream production in the U.S.

We've heard no further news on either promise. But even if the ice cream maker makes good on those promises, Vermont's dairy farmers will still be feeding their cows GMO corn, and still polluting the state's waterways.

It's not just Vermont that's being poisoned by Ben & Jerry's. The company also sources dairy in western states—all from non-organic industrial dairy farms.

According to the latest pesticide data coming out of Vermont, as reported this week by Regeneration Vermont, the use of pesticides in Vermont is on the rise. And it's Vermont dairy farms, fueled by GMO corn, that are largely to blame.

According to Michael Colby, Regeneration Vermont co-founder, the "toxic stew" of pesticides polluting Vermont's waterways includes 34 different products. In 2016, the most heavily used product was glyphosate—62,458 pounds. That's a lot of Monsanto Roundup weedkiller dumped in a state that ranks 43rd in size. It makes for one "dirty dairy" industry. And Ben & Jerry's—owned by the international consumer products conglomerate, Unilever—is one of, if not the biggest player in that industry. orgcns.org/2BJ7xOY

Deadline February 20!

It's widely accepted that neonicotinoid pesticides harm bees. But here's a part of the story you may have missed: Monsanto, Bayer and Syngenta coat their GMO corn seeds with neonics, then charge farmers extra for them—even though studies



show that neonic-coated seeds provide no real benefit to farmers. Why do farmers pay extra for seeds that have no extra benefit? Because the biotech companies that have a monopoly on GMO seeds offer only neonic-coated seeds. That's not good for farmers. Or bees. It's also not good for humans, when neonics end up in our water and food.

After Obama's EPA admitted that neonics kill bees the agency began work on a docket that could be used to restrict the use of neonics.

But just before passing the baton to Trump, the EPA walked back an earlier proposal for mandatory rules on how neonics can be used while honeybees are pollinating crops.

A decade into the colony collapse crisis, politicians on both sides know better than to pretend there's nothing wrong with neonics. But will they do anything about it? So far, Trump's EPA has taken every opportunity to side with industry, including chemical and biotech companies, willfully ignoring the consequences for human health and the environment. All the more reason to keep up the pressure.

Take Action: orgcns.org/2n3JaTk

Farm Fumes

A new study published in the journal *Science Advances* attributes a large share of California's unhealthy smog to nitrogen oxide emissions directly related to the use of chemical fertilizers on croplands.

According to *Mother Jones*, which reported on the study, California's economically disadvantaged Central Valley region has suffered disproportionately from agriculture-related smog: "Many poor communities surround the Valley and bear the brunt of smog-related health effects, including an increased rate of asthma attacks, acute bronchitis, and missed days of school and work. Fresno, for example, is home to about 970,000 residents; 240,000 of them live in poverty and 70,000 have asthma and are at risk to ozone pollution (which is formed from nitrogen oxides), according to the American Lung Association. Between 2013 and 2015, Fresno residents saw, on average, about 93 high ozone days in unhealthy ranges per year."

As OCA's Ronnie Cummins wrote, at \$175 billion, the global fertilizer industry is the largest sector of global agribusiness. And the biggest player? None other than Koch Industries. But farmers can't grow crops without chemical fertilizers, right? The Koch brothers would love for us to think so—but that's because they make big profits, not because they're right.

There's a better way. Organic regenerative farming which uses techniques that build healthy, organic soil matter without the use of chemicals. orgcns.org/2nNohbw