

About Time! FDA Will Begin Testing Foods for Toxic Weedkiller Residue

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Amid growing international concern over the health risks posed by Monsanto weedkiller glyphosate, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will reportedly begin testing for the herbicide this year.

After speaking with FDA officials, *Civil Eats* [reported](#) Wednesday that the agency will begin testing for residues of glyphosate in certain foods, marking the first time in FDA history that it has tested for the chemical, despite its [status](#) as the most heavily-used herbicide ever, and having been [declared](#) “probably carcinogenic to humans” by the World Health Organization (WHO).

“FDA officials dubbed the issue ‘sensitive’ and declined to provide details of the plans,” according to *Civil Eats*, but FDA spokeswoman Lauren Sucher confirmed that the agency “is now considering assignments for Fiscal Year 2016 to measure glyphosate in soybeans, corn, milk, and eggs, among other potential foods.”

As reporter Carey Gilliam notes, both soybeans and corn are “common ingredients in an array of food products and genetically engineered (or GMO) varieties are commonly sprayed with glyphosate,” which is the key ingredient in Monsanto’s Roundup spray.

Independent studies have [found](#) glyphosate residues in honey and soy products, as well as in breastmilk and infant formula samples.

Last year, the International Agency for Research on Cancer

(IARC), WHO's research arm, published a groundbreaking report connecting glyphosate, among other insecticides, with various human cancers. The IARC concluded that "limited evidence" shows the herbicide can cause non-Hodgkins lymphoma in humans and cited additional "convincing evidence" that it can cause other forms of cancer in both rats and mice.

"In the wake of intense scrutiny, the Food and Drug Administration has finally committed to taking this basic step of testing our food for the most commonly used pesticide. It's shocking that it's taken so long, but we're glad it's finally going to happen," [said](#) Dr. Nathan Donley, a scientist with the Center for Biological Diversity, in a statement on Wednesday.

"More and more scientists are raising concerns about the effects of glyphosate on human health and the environment," Donley continued. "With about 1.7 billion pounds of this pesticide used each year worldwide, the FDA's data is badly needed to facilitate long-overdue conversations about how much of this chemical we should tolerate in our food."

Food industry transparency group U.S. Right to Know issued a [statement](#) Wednesday calling the FDA's plan a "good first step," but added that "testing must be thorough and widespread." The group's co-founder Gary Ruskin also advocated for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to "get on board," and increase glyphosate monitoring in its own pesticide testing program.

Only once, in 2011, has the USDA conducted a test for glyphosate and reportedly found residues in 271 of the 300 soybean samples.

"The alarm bell is ringing loud and clear," Donley declared. "The current cavalier use of glyphosate, and lax regulation, cannot remain in place. It's long past time to start reining in the out-of-control use of this dangerous pesticide in the United States and around the world."

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