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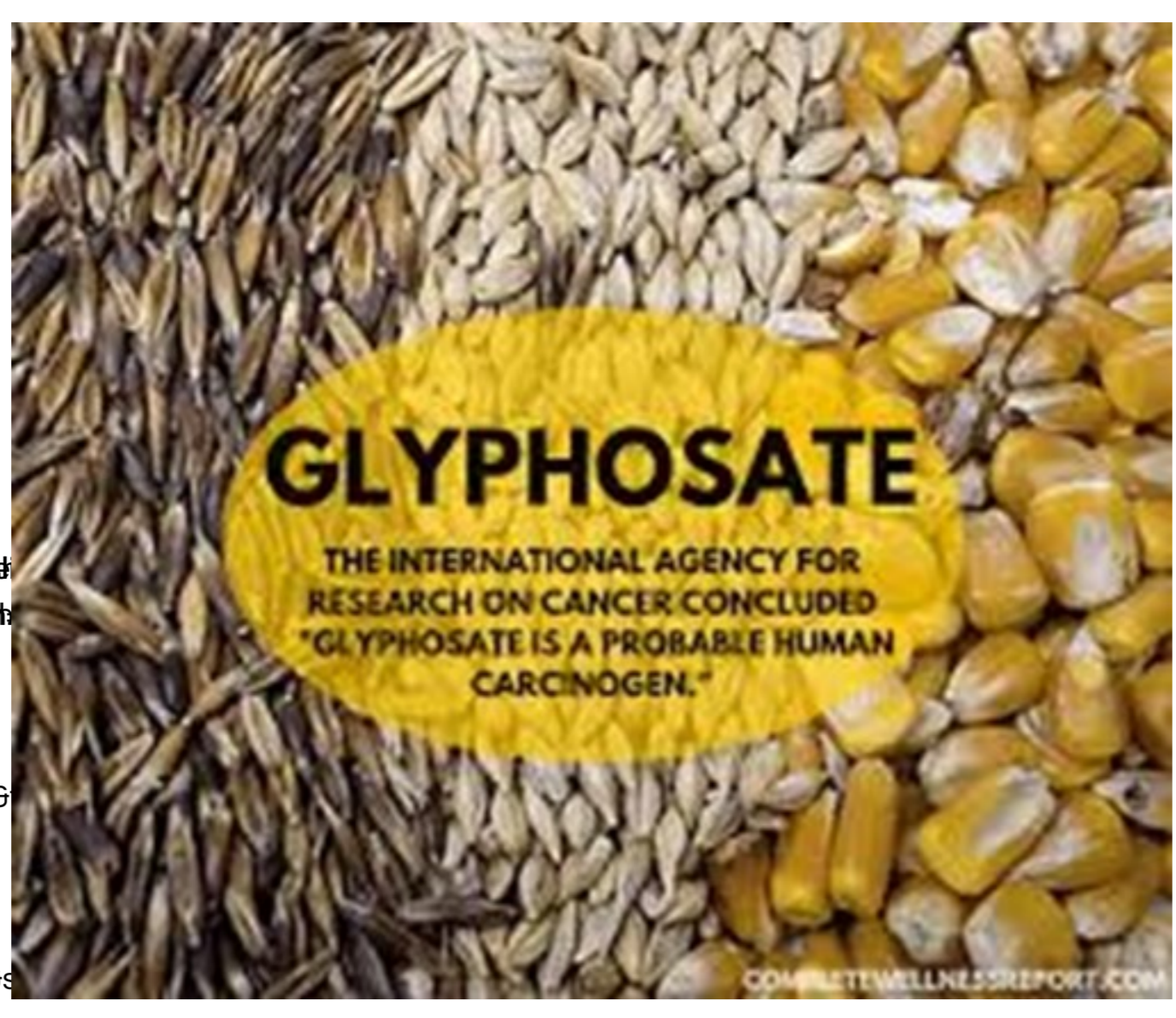
Glyphosate as a Probable Human Carcinogen

NEWS (/news/)



by **Nishant**
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Glyphosate is a broad-spectrum, non-selective herbicide that destroys plant tissue by inhibiting photosynthesis, cellular growth, and nucleic acid production and is the world's largest selling herbicide. Monsanto, the world's fourth-largest seller of agrochemicals and the largest seed corporation, is the major manufacturer of glyphosate, selling the product under the trade name Roundup. Glyphosate is considered highly toxic.

Indians are under great danger from the ill effects of Glyphosate, the world's most widely used herbicide, manufactured largely by the agrochemical seed corporation Monsanto under the trade name Roundup - said Santanu (better known as Tony) Mitra at an event organised by *Bhoomi Kaat* Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi, on 10th May. The speaker is the author of "Poison Foods of North America", a pioneering book exposing the severe harmful aspects of glyphosate in our food systems. The talk was well attended by farmer groups, agricultural scientists, civil society members and policy practitioners working in areas of food and nutrition security and concerned consumers. In India alone, the consumption of glyphosate was 148 million tonnes as per some report in 2014-2015.



'India for Eco Food' – a smallholder farmers food movement (www.bhoomika.com (http://www.bhoomika.com)) is an initiative that seeks to link all people in the food supply chain to ensure Clean, Green and Fair food that's responsibly grown and for which smallholder farmers get a fair price. *Bhoomi Ka* strives to bring like-minded citizens together for advocacy towards a common goal of safe ecological food as their right.

Santanu Mitra, an Indian born Canadian activist, has been fighting legal battles with the Canadian Government for the release of safety document and testing of Glyphosate in all food items. He suspects that a major source of toxicity in the Indian diet might come from imported pulses. "To know for sure, people need to force their Governments at all levels to start testing food for glyphosate and to reject foods that have it," he said.

. The most significant problem with Glyphosate is:

- Its ability to mimic Glycine (an essential amino acid) present in most proteins. Replacement of Glycine in protein chains results in rogue proteins, which is the main reason behind the increase in diseases.
- Its affinity to minerals which makes it steal mineral from food. Many proteins do not work without a metal ion. The absence of some minerals in the food can lead to vitamin deficiency.
- Its antibiotic property of killing gut microbiome - triggers cascading series of diseases such as leukaemia and other cancers, skin diseases, and birth defects, gastrointestinal problems, and alterations to the central nervous system interrupting the hormone system and triggering Auto Immune Diseases.

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Tony Mitra pointed out that in India too, Glyphosate is fast becoming one of the most widely used herbicides. Tests conducted by Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) in 2017 on food samples sourced from India showed high levels of Glyphosate residues, especially in pulses. Samples of Bengal gram (Chickpea) flour, for instance, showed high Glyphosate presence. He also warned that 93% of Yellow Peas (Matar) and 75% of Red Lentils (Masur) from Canada had Glyphosate residues of 199 and 485 ppb. Green gram (Mung) from Australia had a sky-high Glyphosate residue of 1500 ppb. India is one of the largest importers of pulses principally from Canada, Australia and Myanmar. About half of all yellow peas and red lentils consumed in India originate from Canada.

After decades of denial of any safety concerns with glyphosate by numerous agencies all over the world, it was only in 2015 that the World Health Organisation's IARC classified Glyphosate as a probable human carcinogen, subsequently leading to Sri Lanka, Denmark, France, Cambodia, Canada and UK banning it. In India, it appears that it is being used as a pre-harvest desiccant in several crops resulting in high residues in food. This is illegal and the pesticide regulators, as well as food safety regulators, have to address this urgently.

_Tony's recommendations for Indian citizens:

- Force all levels of government, from central to state to municipal, to start testing foods being sold for glyphosate, and to make results available to the public
- Force all levels of governments to either disclose safety test report and data on glyphosate, or disallow its use
- Demand labelling of all imported pulses and separate testing of glyphosate levels in each imported variety, for public disclosure
- Demand safety test data and right to independently check what levels are safe, irrespective of declared MRL set in exporting countries or by Codex Alimentarius, e.g. MRL for dry lentils for Canada = 4,000, Codex Alimentarius = 5,000 ppb

Chander Mohan

Krishi Jagran/ New Delhi

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