

2,4-D Media Backgrounder

About 2,4-D

2,4-D (2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid) is one of the most widely used selective herbicides in North America and worldwide. Since its discovery in 1945, 2,4-D has been used to control invasive and noxious weeds in agriculture, forestry, recreation and aquatic areas and for safety along highways, power line corridors and rail lines. 2,4-D has had an enormous impact on increasing world food production while reducing production costs for farmers and food costs for consumers.

2,4-D has been thoroughly and continually evaluated by health and safety regulators in more than 90 countries. Based on ongoing and continually updated scientific study, health and safety authorities – including US Environmental Protection Agency, Health Canada, the European Food Safety Authority and the World Health Organization – continue to find that 2,4-D meets modern safety standards.

A U.S. Department of Agriculture study concluded in 1996 that if 2,4-D were no longer available, the cost to growers and other users in terms of higher weed control expenses, and to consumers, in the form of higher food and fiber prices, would total \$1.6 billion annually in the U.S. alone. The U.S. Geological Survey reports that some \$20 billion in damages can be linked to invasive plant life.

In 2004, curators of The Henry Ford organization, a multi-venue destination founded by automotive pioneer Henry Ford, identified the discovery of 2,4-D as one of the 75 most important innovations in the past 75 years.

About the IARC Review

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (“IARC”) Working Group in Lyon, France included 2,4-D on a list of pesticides to be reviewed June 2-9. IARC working groups are comprised of academics and researchers with diverse backgrounds and specializations who meet to discuss a portion of published literature about multiple compounds over the course of seven days.

IARC is an agency under the World Health Organization (“WHO”) but is not responsible for regulating pesticides. The body responsible for conducting risk assessments of pesticides for regulatory purposes is the Joint Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (“JMPR”).

The JMPR has been reviewing pesticides since 1963, and has reviewed 2,4-D five times using the most recent and updated data. Most recently, the JMPR has concluded that 2,4-D is not genotoxic and that there is no evidence of carcinogenicity.

70
years
of and
RESEARCH
DISCOVERY

On this point there is widespread agreement among health and safety regulators. Not one health and safety regulator in the world considers 2,4-D to be a carcinogen.

The studies that IARC will consider have previously been reviewed by the EPA and other health and safety regulators around the world. IARC ranks substances based on their potential hazards, but one must look at how something is used in order to assess the real-world risk.

What Health & Safety Regulators Say About 2,4-D

2,4-D – like all crop protection products – has been assessed multiple times for health and safety by regulators around the world. They continue to study 2,4-D and remain in agreement that 2,4-D can be used safely according to label directions.

“...[B]ased on weight of evidence consideration of the available data, 2,4-D would be classified as “Not Likely to be Carcinogenic to Humans.”

US Environmental Protection Agency 2014

“The Agency determined, based on several reviews of epidemiological studies, in addition to the animal studies, that the existing data did not support a conclusion that links human cancer to 2,4-D exposure.”

US Environmental Protection Agency 2014

“No other international regulatory body considers 2,4-D to be a human carcinogen. Based on all available and relevant data, Health Canada agrees with this position....Health Canada found that 2,4-D does not increase the risk of cancer and can be used safely by homeowners, provided label directions are followed.”

Health Canada, 2008

“It was therefore agreed that 2,4-D, as currently manufactured, is unlikely to have a genotoxic potential or pose a carcinogenic risk to humans. ”

European Food Safety Authority, 2014

June 22, 2015

