

Open Letter to the Editor-in-Chief of The Guardian

Summary

Humans and the environment are silently being poisoned by thousands of untested and unmonitored chemicals. But the UK Media are also being silent about the Agrochemical Industry

An Open Letter from America was sent on 11 November 2014, warning countries in Europe and EU regulators not to authorize GM crops because of the devastating effects on human health and the environment. David Cameron ignored that advice on behalf of England. He and Defra concealed the letter from the British public. The European Commission and the European Food Safety Authority ignored it as well and have continued to approve GM Crops for growing and for food and feed in the EU. Defra dismissed the complaints of Crop-sprayed rural residents in the UK of ill health: cancers, neurological conditions, allergies *etc.* just as the Argentinian Government dismissed the health complaints of rural communities in Crop-sprayed towns. In their re-assessment the German Rapporteur Member State, EFSA and the European Glyphosate Task Force excluded papers from Latin America where cancers, birth defects, infertility and DNA changes were shown. Exposure of the brains of unborn and young children in the UK to chemicals is reflected in OECD PISA figures for declining educational achievement in 2013. A 2016 study also shows that in England the young have lower basic skills than their counterparts in Europe. The global élite may be able to survive by eating organic food, but not by the pollution of water, soil and air by genotoxic and teratogenic herbicides, insecticides and other industrial chemicals.

Governments and Regulators only measure a small fraction of them. The chemical industry has created a toxic environment from which none can escape. The devastating effects of these silent killers in our environment do not distinguish between farmers or city dwellers, the wealthy or the poor, between media moguls, editors or their reporters, Monsanto or Syngenta Executives, Prime Ministers or Presidents. Many people in the UK are no longer reaching the biblical age of three-score-years-and ten because they are dying of cancers.

Are some journalists in the Guardian unwittingly protecting the Pesticides Industry?

Guardian Health Editor Dennis Campbell reported a study by Connor from New Zealand that appeared to confirm that alcohol was a direct cause of seven forms of cancer.¹ He implied it was NEW research. He quoted Prof Alan Boobis, an expert from the Science Media Centre² who gave a link to Cancer Research UK. He also reported Dr Penny Buykx, who had been commissioned by CRUK to undertake a study...but he did not quote Prof Dorothy Bennett who said this wasn't a NEW study from New Zealand but a review by Connor purporting to be a new study. Campbell appeared to be reinforcing the pesticides industry's assertion that cancers are caused by alcohol and there is no safe dose: the CMO's phrase, lifestyle choices.

Alan Boobis claimed he had no conflicts of interest, but Arthur Neslen *The Guardian's* European Environment Editor showed that his organisation had received industry money

Alan Boobis, who claimed he had no conflicts of interest, is Vice President of the International Life Science Institute (ILSI) Europe, an organisation that had received money from both Monsanto the and CropLife International. The following report was from

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/jul/22/alcohol-direct-cause-seven-forms-of-cancer-study>

² <http://www.sciencemediacentre.org/expert-reaction-to-research-on-alcohol-and-cancer/>

Guardian journalist Arthur Neslen.³ “A UN panel that on Tuesday ruled that glyphosate was *probably not carcinogenic to humans* has now become embroiled in a bitter row about potential conflicts of interests. It has emerged that an institute co-run by the chairman of the UN’s joint meeting on pesticide residues (JMPR) received a six-figure donation from Monsanto, which uses the substance as a core ingredient in its bestselling Roundup weedkiller. *Professor Alan Boobis, who chaired the UN’s joint FAO/WHO meeting on glyphosate, also works as the vice-president of the International Life Science Institute (ILSI) Europe. The co-chair of the sessions was Professor Angelo Moretto, a board member of ILSI’s Health and Environmental Services Institute, and of its Risk21 steering group too, which Boobis also co-chairs. In 2012, the ILSI group took a \$500,000 (£344,234) donation from Monsanto and a \$528,500 donation from the industry group Croplife International, which represents Monsanto, Dow, Syngenta and others, according to documents obtained by the US right to know campaign.*” When Glyphosate was reassessed in 2002, Alan Boobis was also Chairman of the UN’s JMPR meeting on pesticide residues.⁴ Prof Boobis is current Chairman of Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT), which is said to be an independent scientific body. Why are Denis Campbell’s reports always in the main paper, whereas environmental journalists’ reports are tucked out of sight on line?

Cancer Research UK: Chairman of Cancer Research UK works for the Agrochemical Industry

Michael Pragnell Chairman of Cancer Research UK was founder of Syngenta and former Chairman of CropLife International (that paid money to Prof Boobis’ organization). It was formed in 2001 from BASF, Bayer, Dow, DuPont, FMC Corp, Monsanto, Sumitomo and Syngenta. The CRUK website says that there is no convincing evidence that pesticides cause cancer. Syngenta has strong interests in suppressing evidence that the increases in cancer are linked to pesticides. Syngenta is a member of the Glyphosate Task Force and of ILSI.

Alcohol is linked with seven forms of cancer: this ‘alleged fact’ is endlessly reinforced by the UK media until people in the UK are brainwashed and believe it to be true

An article was published in the *British Medical Journal* on 9 April 2016⁵ reporting a survey commissioned by **Cancer Research UK** ‘People lack awareness of link between alcohol and cancer.’ The Report produced by researchers at the University of Sheffield ‘comes ahead of the consultation closing on how well new drinking guidelines proposed by the UK’s Chief Medical Officers in January 2016, are communicated.’⁶

“Almost 90 per cent of people in England don’t associate drinking alcohol with an increased risk of cancer” Alison Cox, **Cancer Research UK**’s Director of Cancer Prevention. She said: “The link between alcohol and cancer is now well established, and it’s not just heavy drinkers who are at risk. Drinking alcohol is linked to an increased risk of seven different cancers - liver, breast, bowel, mouth, throat, oesophageal (food pipe), laryngeal (voice box) - but when people were asked “which, if any, health conditions do you think can result from drinking too much alcohol?” just 13 per cent of adults mentioned cancer.” Dr Penny Buykx, a senior research fellow at The University of Sheffield and lead-author of the report, said: “We’ve shown that public awareness of the increased cancer risk from drinking alcohol remains worryingly low. People link drinking and liver cancer, but most still don’t realise that cancers

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/may/17/unwho-panel-in-conflict-of-interest-row-over-glyphosates-cancer-risk>

⁴ http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2006/9241665203_eng.pdf?ua=1

⁵ <http://www.bmj.com/content/353/bmj.i1881>

⁶ <http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-us/cancer-news/press-release/2016-04-01-9-in-10-dont-link-alcohol-and-cancer>

including breast cancer, mouth and throat cancers and bowel cancer are also linked with alcohol, and that risks for some cancers go up even by drinking a small amount."

The UK Science Media Centre is hosted by the Wellcome Trust and is financed by industry

Colin Macilwain, a science policy writer from Edinburgh who has worked as a reporter and an editor from both sides of the Atlantic⁷ wrote about plans to replicate Britain's Science Media Centre (SMC) in the United States, which he said was "*fraught with danger.*"

Extracts: "*The London SMC was set up because UK scientific leaders were upset that environmentalists had successfully fought the introduction of genetically modified food; they felt that the UK media were too susceptible to environmental scare stories about new technologies.... Despite the fears of the SMC founders, the British press — led by the BBC, which treats the Confederation of British Industry with the deference the Vatican gets in Rome — is overwhelmingly conservative and pro-business in its outlook. It is quite unperturbed by the fact that SMC sponsors include AstraZeneca, BP, Coca-Cola, L'Oreal, Monsanto, Syngenta (as well as Nature Publishing Group) but not a single environmental non-governmental organization (NGO) or trade union.*

Monsanto scientists rally in the SMC to dismiss the GMO and Roundup® study as fraudulent and it went largely unreported by the British Media

In September 2012 Prof Gilles-Eric Séralini and his team (France) published a 2-year rat feeding study with GMO Roundup®-tolerant maize and Roundup®. This diet provoked chronic hormone and sex dependent pathologies in rats; males developed tumours at 4 months and females at 7 months.

Highlights: "*A Roundup®-tolerant maize and Roundup® provoked chronic hormone and sex dependent pathologies. Female mortality was 2–3 times increased mostly due to large mammary tumours and disabled pituitary. Males had liver congestion, necrosis, severe kidney nephropathies and large palpable tumours. This may be due to an endocrine disruption linked to Roundup® and a new metabolism due to the transgene. GMOs and formulated pesticides must be evaluated by long term studies to measure toxic effects.*"

The Séralini study was pronounced as fraudulent by the Industry-financed UK Science Media Centre.⁸ It was hardly reported in the British Media... However, the study had worldwide coverage particularly in France.

John Vidal Environment Correspondent in the Guardian did report it, but who read it?

Vidal said:⁹ "*Trial suggesting a GM maize strain causes cancer has attracted a torrent of abuse, but it cannot be swept under the carpet...But it was a triumph for the scientific and corporate establishment which has used similar tactics to crush other scientists...*" Vidal examined the credentials of the 'experts' and found that they were pro-GM activists and some had worked for Monsanto.

Fiona Fox boasted that the UK SMC had prevented the British public from hearing adverse reports and studies concerning Monsanto and GMO technology¹⁰

Ms Fox took this as evidence that the 10-year-old centre was fulfilling its remit to prevent a repeat of incidents such as the uncritical reporting in 1998 of the claim - heavily criticised by the scientific community - made by Árpád Pusztai, a former researcher at the Rowett Research Institute in Aberdeen, that rats fed on GM potatoes had stunted growth and a

⁷ <http://www.nature.com/news/two-nations-divided-by-a-common-purpose-1.10224>

⁸ http://www.sciencemediacentre.org/pages/press_releases/12-09-19_gm_maize_rats_tumours.htm

⁹ <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2012/sep/28/study-gm-maize-cancer>

¹⁰ <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/research/research-intelligence-shock-troops-check-poor-gm-study/421361.article>

repressed immune system. She said that the relatively muted coverage in the UK contrasted with how the story was reported in other countries, particularly France, where it was "*front-page news everywhere*", prompting the French government to launch an inquiry into the study's findings. According to Ms Fox, the Science Media Centre's ability to gather a lot of expert comment quickly was particularly valuable in this instance because journalists who were shown the paper in advance of its publication were required to sign a highly unusual agreement that prevented them from sharing it with third parties. Critics claimed that this minimised the time journalists had to gather potentially negative commentary.

Tony Blair, Monsanto and the Royal Society combined to discredit Dr Árpád Pusztai when he found that rats fed GM potatoes had complications. His lab was closed down

The Pusztai scandal mentioned above involved Prime Minister Tony Blair and the Royal Society.¹¹ On 10 August 1998 in a Granada '*World in Action*' broadcast¹² Dr Árpád Pusztai (a GM expert leading the team at the Rowett Institute) explained his research that showed that rats fed with genetically modified potatoes had suffered immune damage. He raised questions about the safety of GM food in the human diet on the basis of the study. The news flashed around the world. Professor Robert Orskov OBE who had worked at the Rowett Institute for 33 years was told that phone calls went from Monsanto, the American firm that produces 90% of the world's GM food, to Clinton and then to Blair. "*Clinton rang Blair and Blair rang James*" (Professor James, Director of the Rowett Institute). "*There is no doubt he was pushed by Blair to do something. It was damaging the relationship between the USA and the UK, because it was going to be a huge blow for Monsanto.*" As a result, Dr Pusztai lost his job and his Laboratory in the Rowett Institute was closed down.

Prof Séralini won an award for his rat feeding studies on GMOs, glyphosate and tumours

On 16 October 2015 Prof Gilles-Eric Séralini was awarded Whistleblower of the Year by German Scientists for his work on GMOs and Glyphosate. Citation: "*He was the first to publish animal test results demonstrating the toxic and carcinogenic properties of the most commonly used herbicide worldwide, the glyphosate-based "Roundup" by carrying out a two-year feeding test on rats. After the research was published, Prof Séralini was attacked by a vehement campaign by 'interested circles' from the chemical industry as well as the industry-financed British Science Media Centre.*"¹³

Le Monde journalist examined emails between Monsanto & Food and Chemical Toxicology

French Journalist Stéphane Foucart examined a series of emails obtained under FoI and found that Monsanto was deeply involved in the retraction of Séralini study from *Food and Chemical Toxicology*.¹⁴ There are also accounts of academic fraud and corruption: University scientists caught conspiring with Monsanto to manipulate public opinion on GMOs such as Bruce Chassy and University of Florida plant scientist Kevin Folta who had denied links with Monsanto.¹⁵ Aug. 6 2015, international science journal *Nature* reported that more than 4,600 pages of emails from University of Florida plant scientist Kevin Folta "*reveal his close ties to the agriculture giant Monsanto ... and other biotechnology-industry interests*" ...

¹¹ <http://www.psrast.org/pusztblair.htm>

¹² <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/149882.stm>

¹³ http://neu.vdw-ev.de/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Presseinformation-Whistleblower-Preisverleihung-2015_150917_eng.pdf

¹⁴ <https://gmwatch.org/news/latest-news/17121-emails-reveal-role-of-monsanto-in-seralini-study-retraction>

¹⁵ <http://www.ecowatch.com/monsantos-tobacco-files-university-scientists-caught-conspiring-with-b-1882095786.html>

Little in *The Guardian* about scandals involving the re-assessment of glyphosate

A report from Patrick van Zwanenberg *The Guardian* in May 2015:¹⁶ “Readers might be astonished, for example, to learn that much of the German government’s recent evaluation of glyphosate - favourably compared to the IARC’s evaluation by the agrochemical industry - was not actually written by scientists working for the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR), but rather by the European Glyphosate Task Force, a consortium of agrochemical firms.

BfR officials explained that due to the quantity of evidence they did not have the time to report the original studies in detail, but instead based their evaluation on descriptions provided by the agrochemical industry. But those descriptions also contained the industry’s assessment of the reliability and interpretation of each study, which involves exactly the kinds of choice-laden decisions described earlier. BfR regulators commented, in italics, on the industry text, but this falls well short of what most people would understand as an independent review.”

A Yougov poll states that two thirds of Europeans support a ban on glyphosate¹⁷

A prohibition on the herbicide ingredient was backed by three-quarters of Italians, 70% of Germans, 60% of French and 56% of Britons, in a survey of more than 7,000 people across the EU’s five biggest states.

The Amazing Glyphosate Revolt Grows¹⁸

Veteran US Journalist William Engdahl reports: “To date the EU Commission has received a staggering 1.5 million citizen petitions demanding they not re-approve glyphosate. The opposition to EU Commission approval of glyphosate has taken on a self-expanding character and that has the agribusiness weed-killer cartel alarmed. The process is exposing to the general public, for the first time in such a clear manner, the degree of corruption in not only Brussels but also in the so-called scientific bodies that advise it on what is safe and what not. ... So a group of manifestly immoral scientists (Boobis & Moretto) led the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR).” Vito Buonsante, a lawyer for the ClientEarth group, in reference to the suspiciously-timed FAO/WHO report stated, “There is a clear conflict of interest here if the review of the safety of glyphosate is carried out by scientists that directly get money from industry.”

UK strongly backed a new license for glyphosate: France has banned it¹⁹

The EU Standing Committee failed to take a decision today, **the UK strongly backed a new license for glyphosate.** Germany abstained, along with Sweden and Italy. Opposition to the relicensing is thought to have been led by **France, which has banned the substance.**

The German public is contaminated with glyphosate residues: what about the UK?

The European journal *Euractiv* reported: “A worrying three-quarters of the German population have in fact been contaminated by the controversial herbicide, according to a study carried out by the Heinrich Böll Foundation. The report analysed glyphosate residue in urine and it concluded that 75% of the target group displayed levels that were five times higher than the legal limit of drinking water. A third of the population even showed levels

¹⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/science/political-science/2015/may/13/chemical-reactions-glyphosate-and-the-politics-of-chemical-safety>

¹⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/apr/11/two-thirds-of-europeans-support-ban-on-glyphosate-says-yougov-poll>

¹⁸ <http://journal-neo.org/2016/05/23/the-amazing-glyphosate-revolt-grows/>

¹⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/may/20/monsanto-weedkiller-faces-recall-from-europes-shops-after-eu-fail-to-agree-deal>

that were between ten and 42 times higher than what is normally permissible.²⁰ Glyphosate residue was recorded in 99.6% of the 2,009 people monitored by the study. The most significant values were found in children aged from zero to nine and adolescents aged 10 to 19, particularly those individuals raised on farms. Meat eaters also displayed higher levels.”

The European Commission negotiates secret deals with Monsanto, the GTF and farmers

The Guardian Europe reporter Arthur Neslen reveals that the [European Commission](#) is planning secretly to relicense glyphosate for a full 15 years following pressure from Monsanto and the Glyphosate Task Force despite opposition from several countries and the European parliament.²¹

The [Green party](#) called it a betrayal of the [precautionary principle](#) that which obliges regulatory caution if there is scientific doubt. Bart Staes, the Green party’s environment and food safety spokesman, said: “*It is scandalous that the commission is seeking to bulldoze through an EU approval for glyphosate to be used with no restrictions, despite the very serious concerns about the impact of this toxic substance on public health and the environment. Banning glyphosate would be the responsible course of action.*”

A letter reveals that European Legislation is set up for the benefit of the Pesticides Industry: the European Commission gives glyphosate a last minute reprieve

Monsanto Europe replied to Health Commissioner Andriukaitis on 04/04/2016 to say that the 24 GTF members were prepared to grant [very limited access to the data](#).²²

From this we learn that the current EU legislation is set up to “*protect intellectual property and confidential information from public disclosure.*” “*All confidential data ...shall be deleted or redacted (Regulation 1107/2009, Article 63).*” Much of the [industry data submitted to the German RMS was redacted](#).

“*The European Commission has given a last-minute reprieve to glyphosate, the key ingredient in Monsanto’s bestselling Roundup weedkiller, just hours before it faced a recall from shops across the continent.*”²³

A row over the health risks posed by the substance has divided [scientists](#), [governments](#) and [international agencies](#), and led to [the threat of lawsuits](#) against the commission.

Glyphosate will now be given an 18-month extension until a new ruling on its safety is provided by the European Chemical Agency, by the end of 2017.

ADAS recommended pre-harvest crop spraying with Roundup® in 1980²⁴ and spraying on grassland in 1985. Researches showed two Monsanto scientists wrote the first papers

Healthy Harvest-safeguarding the Crop Protection toolbox: June 2014

The National Farmers’ Union (NFU), the Crop Protection Association (CPA) and Agricultural Industries Confederation (AIC) launched *Healthy Harvest – safeguarding the crop protection toolbox* in June 2014. The NFU and pesticide companies continually defend the use of pesticides [for economic reasons](#) and complain at any attempt to restrict the 320 at their

²⁰ <http://www.euractiv.com/section/agriculture-food/news/overwhelming-majority-of-germans-contaminated-by-glyphosate/>

²¹ <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/apr/22/european-commission-glyphosate-weedkiller-leaked-proposal>

²² <https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/6366131/letter%20to%20Commissioner%20Andriukaitis.pdf>

²³ <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/jun/29/controversial-chemical-roundup-weedkiller-escapes-immediate-ban>

²⁴ <http://www.hgca.com/media/185527/is02-pre-harvest-glyphosate-application-to-wheat-and-barley.pdf>

disposal. One farmer defended aerial spraying of bracken with a herbicide.²⁵ CPA, AIC and the NFU commissioned Andersons to write a Report: The effect of the loss of plant protection products (i.e. pesticides) on UK Agriculture and Horticulture that predicted dire economic effects on UK farming if pesticides were restricted.²⁶

Soil Association's campaign NOT IN OUR BREAD:²⁷ the UK's position is anomalous
Meeting on 15 July 2015 in London between the Soil Association and a Scientific Panel²⁸

The scientific panel included Professor Christopher Portier one of the co-authors of the World Health Organisation's International Agency for Research on Cancer's (IARC) recent report that determined Glyphosate's status as a probable carcinogen. Portier reiterated the IARC's conclusions, and said: ***"Glyphosate is definitely genotoxic. There is no doubt in my mind."***

Dr Robin Mesnage of the Department of Medical and Molecular Genetics at Kings College in London, revealed new data analysis showing Round Up[®], the most common brand of Glyphosate-based herbicides, is 1,000 times more toxic than Glyphosate alone due to the inclusion of other toxic chemicals in its mix. Claire Robinson, an editor at GMWatch.org gave the international perspective looking at moves by other countries to ban Glyphosate; *"Outside the United Kingdom, the reaction to the WHO IARC report has been dramatic. Some retailers in Switzerland and Germany have removed Glyphosate products and France has committed to do so by 2018 and German states are calling for an EU-wide ban. The Danish Working Environment Authority has declared it as a carcinogen and El Salvador and Sri Lanka have banned it and the Colombia government has banned aerial spraying on coca crops."*

Peter Melchett, Soil Association policy director said; *"If Glyphosate ends up in bread it's impossible for people to avoid it, unless they are eating organic. On the other hand, farmers could easily choose not to use Glyphosate as a spray on wheat crops – just before they are harvested. This is why the Soil Association is calling for the immediate ending of the use of Glyphosate sprays on wheat destined for use in bread."*

Pesticide residues in non-organic food in Britain are increasing year on year

A Report by Pesticides Action Network- UK has shown that 46% of non-organic food in 2013 contained residues of one or more pesticides and this had increased from 25% in 2003.²⁹ A further Report by PAN-UK: Pesticides in your daily bread showed that nearly two-thirds of bread contained one or more pesticides and the three most frequently found were glyphosate, chlormequat and malathion.³⁰

UK Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA) survey of pesticides 1988 to 2014

This review of pesticides active substances and number of times treated from 1988 to 2014 confirms that Pesticide Residues on British food are increasing annually. A survey of pesticide (active substances) usage on Oil Seed Rape (OSR) 1988-2014 showed that the number of active substances applied had increased from 5 in 1988 to 15 in 2014 (Fig 1) and

²⁵ https://www.nfonline.com/healthyharvest_final_digital/ The impact of losing plant protection products on UK Food Production

²⁶ http://www.cropprotection.org.uk/media/89364/andersons_final_report.pdf

²⁷ <http://www.soilassociation.org/notinourbread>

²⁸ <http://www.soilassociation.org/news/newsstory/articleid/8110/soil-association-calls-for-ban-on-glyphosate-the-world-s-most-widely-sold-weedkiller>

²⁹ http://www.pan-uk.org/files/pesticides_on_a_plate_2013_final.pdf

³⁰ [http://www.pan-uk.org/files/Pesticides%20in%20Your%20Daily%20Bread%20guide%20-%20FINAL%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.pan-uk.org/files/Pesticides%20in%20Your%20Daily%20Bread%20guide%20-%20FINAL%20(1).pdf)

the number of treatments had increased from 5 in 1988 to 12 in 2014. (Fig 2) In 2014, herbicides were used on 98.4% OSR and seed treatments on 95.8%. In 2014 glyphosate was used on Wheat (601,330 kg) Winter barley, Spring barley, Oats, Rye, Triticale, Oilseed rape (577,969 kg), Linseed, All potatoes, Peas, Beans, Sugar beet, with a total of 1,765,465 kg glyphosate on all crops. The total weight of pesticides (herbicides and desiccants, fungicides, growth regulators, molluscicides and repellants, insecticides and seed treatments) applied to farmland in 2014 was in excess of 16,000 tonnes.

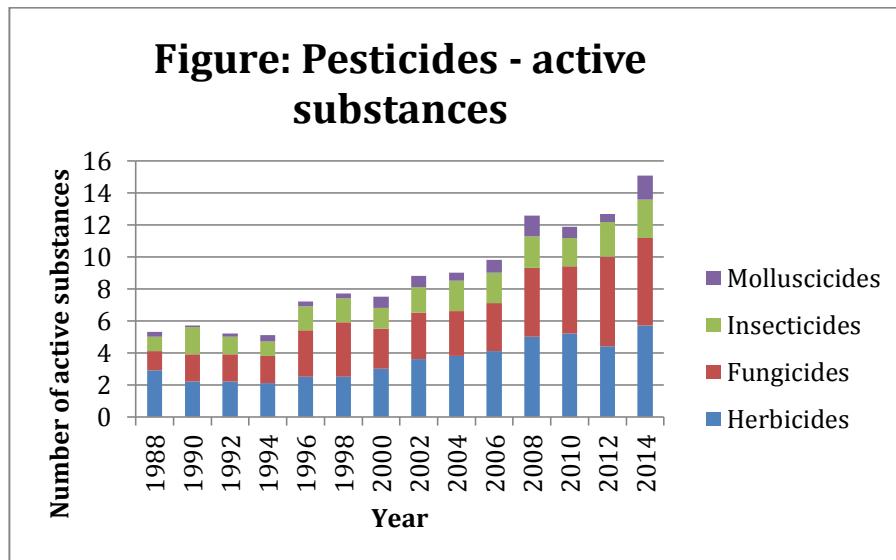


Fig. 1 PESTICIDES: Number of active substances used on Oil Seed Rape in the UK between 1988 and 2014: By kind permission of John Hoar, Hampshire Beekeeper’s Spray Liaison Officer. Figures supplied by FERA

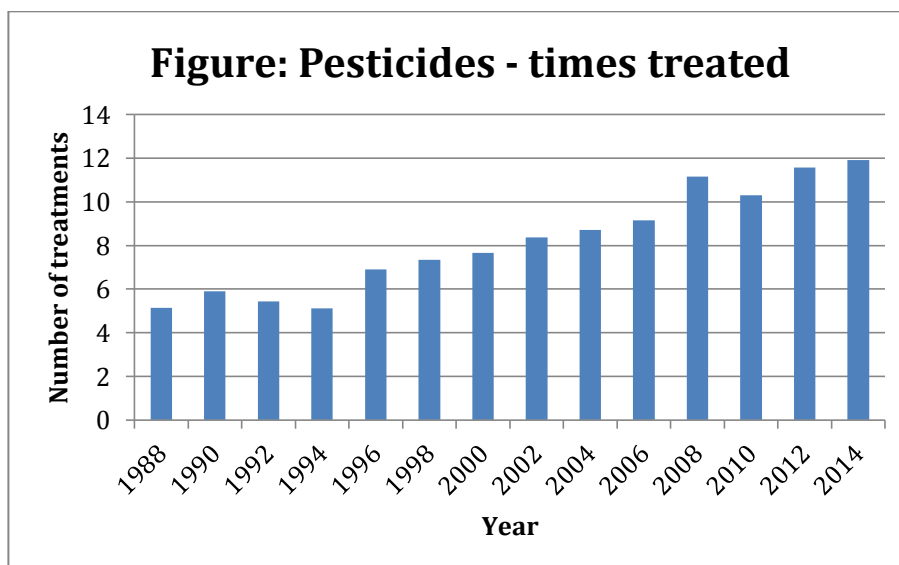


Fig. 2 PESTICIDES TIMES TREATED: used on Oil Seed Rape in the UK between 1988 and 2014: By kind permission of John Hoar, Hampshire Beekeepers Spray Liaison Officer. Figures supplied by FERA

An Open Letter from America³¹ was from 60 million American citizens to David Cameron (and the rest of the EU) warning them not to authorize GM crops because of the devastating effects on human health and the environment

³¹ www.theletterfromamerica.org

It was delivered to 10 Downing Street on 11 November 2014.³²

Extracts: "In our country, GM crops account for about half of harvested cropland. Around 94% of the soy, 93% of corn (maize) and 96% of cotton grown is GM. The UK and the rest of the EU have yet to adopt GM crops in the way that we have, but you are currently under tremendous pressure from governments, biotech lobbyists, and large corporations to adopt what we now regard as a failing agricultural technology...Studies of animals fed GM foods and/or glyphosate, however, show worrying trends including damage to vital organs like the liver and kidneys, damage to gut tissues and gut flora, immune system disruption, reproductive abnormalities, and even tumors.³⁵...These scientific studies point to potentially serious human health problems that could not have been anticipated when our country first embraced GMOs, and yet they continue to be ignored by those who should be protecting us. Instead our regulators rely on outdated studies and other information funded and supplied by biotech companies that, not surprisingly, dismiss all health concerns.

Through our experience we have come to understand that the genetic engineering of food has never really been about public good, or feeding the hungry, or supporting our farmers. Nor is it about consumer choice. Instead it is about private, corporate control of the food system.

Americans are reaping the detrimental impacts of this risky and unproven agricultural technology. EU countries should take note: there are no benefits from GM crops great enough to offset these impacts. Officials who continue to ignore this fact are guilty of a gross dereliction of duty. Most of the countries in the EU took that advice and opted out of GM (including Scotland, Wales and Ireland).

David Cameron ignored that advice on behalf of England. He and Defra concealed the letter from the British public. The European Commission and the European Food Safety Authority also ignored it and continued to approve GM Crops for growing and for food and feed in the EU.

This was despite these grave warnings from American citizens of their experiences (Living with GMOs) and from independent organisations in Europe, such as Testbiotech (Germany), CRIIGEN (France), Corporate Europe Observatory, Earth Open Source and Pesticides Action Network.

Evidence in the archives of independent research on the toxic effects of pesticides: in the future, those who have protected and promoted industry will be exposed

The Institute of Science in Society (ISIS) was co-founded in 1999 by scientists Mae-Wan Ho and Peter Saunders to provide critical yet accessible and reliable information to the public and policy makers. The Institute of Science in Society ceased operation at the end of March 2016. The founder and co-director Dr Mae-Wan Ho died from terminal cancer on 24 March 2016. One of the last publications from I-SiS was an account of the devastating effects of glyphosate on human health and biodiversity.³³

Academia.edu³⁴ is a platform for academics to share research papers and preview papers

The company's mission is to accelerate the world's research. Dr Mae-wan Ho encouraged me to post all my correspondence with governments and regulators on the site so that in the words of Dr Don Huber:

"Future historians may well look back upon our time and write, not about how many pounds of pesticide we did or didn't apply, but by how willing we are to sacrifice our children and future generations for this massive genetic engineering experiment that is

³² https://twitter.com/beyond_gm/status/532224079605288960

³³ http://www.i-sis.org.uk/Banishing_Glyphosate.php Updated September 2015

³⁴ <https://www.academia.edu>

based on flawed science and failed promises just to benefit the bottom line of a commercial enterprise.”

In a little over 5 years, I posted 36 documents.³⁵ I had few replies. Surprisingly the President of the NFU **did** reply to my 13-page Open Letter to the NFU, but possibly he hadn't read it very carefully.³⁶ Meurig Raymond wrote to defend the right of farmers to use chemicals to protect their crops **even though I had informed him that they were damaging the brains of children in Britain.**

“Dear Ms Mason

The NFU firmly believes that technologies such as advanced plant breeding, biotechnology and chemical crop protection are a positive and essential part of British farming and food production. There are significant challenges inherent in providing safe, affordable and high quality food in a sustainable way in the context of growing populations, pressure on resources, volatility and a changing climate. We must therefore have all the tools in the box to source solutions to these challenges. The NFU is committed to basing its policies on the most robust scientific evidence and expertise from scientists and regulatory authorities around the world.

Meurig Raymond President”

TheSparc:³⁷ A floating knowledge archive for the survival of people and the planet

The acronym is chosen to resonate with spark (electric), arc (connection), ark (for survival) and archive (systematic knowledge); S for survival and science, P for people and planet.

“TheSparc is supported by a Founding Team with dozens of advisors from all over the world including eminent scientists and leaders from other sectors of civil society, who will help develop and improve the site.”

It was in response to corporate monopolization of science & governments shaping science to politics. Mae-wan Ho had reviewed the book by fearless Guardian journalist George Monbiot.³⁸

Proof that obesity is a problem related to glyphosate: a study showed that by 2025, the UK will have the highest obesity rates among both men and women in Europe, at 38%: in contrast in France women have had virtually no increase in BMI over 40 years

A study on obesity published in the Lancet in March 2016 says: *“About a fifth of all adults around the world and a third of those in the UK will be obese by 2025, with potentially disastrous consequences for their health”*.³⁹ The Lancet Study says there is zero chance that the world can meet the target set by the UN for halting the climbing obesity rate by 2025.

“Over the past 40 years, we have changed from a world in which underweight prevalence was more than double that of obesity, to one in which more people are obese than underweight,” said senior author Prof Majid Ezzati from the School of Public Health at Imperial College London. *“The English-speaking world is particularly badly affected. **The UK will have the highest obesity among both men and women in Europe, at 38%.***

In contrast: “Against the trend of steadily rising weight, women in some countries had virtually no increase in BMI over the 40 years – in Singapore, Japan, and a few European

³⁵ <https://independent.academia.edu/RosemaryMason>

³⁶ https://www.academia.edu/17144792/Open_Letter_to_the_National_Farmers_Union
<http://tinyurl.com/zrvshse>

³⁷ <http://www.thesparc.net/thesparc.php>

³⁸ Captive State: The Corporate Takeover of Britain by **George Monbiot**, MacMillan, London, 2000.

³⁹ <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/mar/31/one-fifth-of-worlds-adults-will-be-obese-by-2025-study-predicts>

countries including Czech Republic, Belgium, **France**, and **Switzerland**.”⁴⁰

The unelected European Commission unilaterally extended the license for glyphosate

On 28 June 2016, the unelected European Commission unilaterally announced that the license for glyphosate was to be extended for 18 months without meaningful restrictions to await the Report by the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA).⁴¹ This was after member states repeatedly could not reach an agreement to renew the approval.

My submission to ECHA for the reassessment of glyphosate

The German Rapporteur Member State (BfR) claimed that **glyphosate has minimal effects on biodiversity**. I challenged EFSA’s Dr José Tarazona and Dr Bernhard Url about this between November 2015 and February 2016. I sent them evidence to the contrary. Dr Tarazona said I wasn’t to worry because there were still ‘data gaps’. Yet, despite these ‘data gaps’, the unelected European Commission re-licensed glyphosate for 18 months while the European Chemical Association (ECHA) produced its verdict.

Long-term exposure of a Nature Reserve to ultra-low dose Roundup® causes massive declines in biodiversity

We have done a 10-year (2006-2016) observational study of biodiversity on a small Nature Reserve exposed to ultra-low dose Roundup® sprayed on Japanese knotweed outside our area. Japanese knotweed has become a Roundup-resistant super-weed and just grows more strongly each year spray is applied (like super-weeds in GM cropping systems in the US). In 2006 we documented 143 different species of moth and from 2006 to 2010 four species of bush-cricket, 20 species of butterfly, six species of bumblebee and numerous dragonflies, damsel flies, grass-hoppers, many beetles including ladybirds and the rare oil-beetle, bats, many forms of hover flies and solitary bees, vigorous pond life including whirligig beetles, water boatmen, giant diving beetle, newts and dragonfly larvae. In 2013 biodiversity began to decline both in species and in numbers. This was documented in a paper in 2014.⁴² Moths have almost vanished and food-plants we had grown for caterpillars are uneaten. Declines in biodiversity continued in 2015 and 2016 because Swansea City and County Council had employed a commercial national contractor Complete Weed Control, to embark on a 3-year-programme of eradication of Japanese Knotweed with Dakar Pro, (a commercial form of Roundup®) in the Ilston Valley not far from our reserve. FOI revealed that 1440 kg was sprayed in 2015. A council official said they would continue ‘*while Roundup is still legal*’. Photographs taken of our bee hotel on 29/06/2015 and on 06/07/2016 show the disappearance of our solitary bees.

Our Nature Reserve will soon be a biological desert

By 2017 when ECHA has finally decided on whether or not to re-license glyphosate, our Nature Reserve will be a biological desert as described by Craig Childs in his book Apocalyptic Planet: Field Guide to the Future of the Earth.⁴³

The State of Iowa was just one area in which the US Geological Survey reported widespread contamination of soil, air, rainwater and river water with glyphosate and its longer-acting metabolite AMPA (α -amino-3-hydroxy-5-methyl-4-isoxazolepropionic acid).⁴⁴

⁴⁰ In Switzerland, spraying glyphosate pre-harvest is not permitted. Systemic neonicotinoid pesticides are not allowed. However the Swiss Government allows Syngenta to operate from Switzerland.

⁴¹ <http://gmwatch.org/news/latest-news/17071-eu-commission-extends-approval-of-glyphosate-without-meaningful-restrictions>

⁴² http://www.i-sis.org.uk/How_Roundup_Poisoned_My_Nature_Reserve.php

⁴³ <http://houseofrain.com/bookdetail.cfm?id=1344621970977>

⁴⁴ <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jawr.12159/abstract>

Grundy County Iowa was where Craig Childs spent a long weekend in a monoculture of GM "Roundup® Ready" corn looking for wildlife. *"I listened and heard nothing, no bird, no click of insect. Mr Owen was the farmer who had given us permission to backpack across his cornfields. He grew a combination of DuPont and Monsanto stock. We were in DuPont now. It didn't look any different to me."*

Robert Krulwich blog:⁴⁵ *Corn farmers champion corn. Anything that might eat corn, hurt corn, bother corn, is killed. Their corn is bred to fight pests. The ground is sprayed. The stalks are sprayed again. So, Craig wondered, "What will I find?" The answer amazed me. He found almost nothing. There were no bees. The air, the ground, seemed vacant. He found one ant "so small you couldn't pin it to a specimen board." A little later, crawling to a different row, he found one mushroom, "the size of an apple seed." Then, later, a cobweb spider eating a crane fly (only one). A single red mite "the size of a dust mote hurrying across the barren earth," some grasshoppers, and that's it."* Though he crawled and crawled, he found nothing else. *"It felt like another planet entirely," he said, a world denuded.*

One hundred years ago there was a rich biodiversity of species; now it has gone

Krulwich continues: *"Yet, 100 years ago, these same fields, these prairies, were home to 300 species of plants, 60 mammals, 300 birds, hundreds and hundreds of insects. This soil was the richest, the loamiest in the state. And now, in these patches, there is almost literally nothing but one kind of living thing. We've erased everything else.*

We need to feed our planet, of course. But we also need the teeny creatures that drive all life on earth. There's something strange about a farm that intentionally creates a biological desert to produce food for one species: us. It's efficient, yes. But it's so efficient that the ants are missing, the bees are missing, and even the birds stay away. Something's not right here. Our cornfields are too quiet."

A world in a cubic foot: a book review by John Vidal⁴⁶

Photographer David Liittschwager captures the beauty of biodiversity by placing a cube in a variety of habitats and recording whatever moves through it over 24 hours.

John Vidal says: *"The fate of humanity may depend on these micro-environments. Long live the creepy crawlies, the bugs, the tiny wigglers and wrigglers, the minuscule parasites and nematodes, the mites and oribatids and all the myriad life forms that buzz, crawl and throb below our feet. Most have barely been given a second thought by science, but biologists now think that these mostly named creatures make up the beating heart of the biosphere and that the fate of all life may depend on the wellbeing of their fragile worlds. Science is only slowly catching up with biodiversity, partly thanks to the great US biologist [EO Wilson](#), who, apart from studying ants, has best communicated the interlocking mechanisms of life. Earth, says Wilson, is the only planet we know that has a biosphere.*

Wilson says loss of biodiversity will create a sterile planet which will not sustain humans

"It alone is able to maintain the exact environment we ourselves need to stay alive. If all the organisms were to disappear from any one of the cubic spaces depicted, the environment in it would shift to a radical new state. The molecules of the soil or streambed would become smaller and simpler. The ratios of oxygen, carbon dioxide and other gases in the air would change. A new equilibrium would be approached, at which the cubic foot would resemble that on some distant sterile planet."

⁴⁵ <http://www.npr.org/sections/krulwich/2012/11/29/166156242/cornstalks-everywhere-but-nothing-else-not-even-a-bee>

⁴⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2012/nov/11/world-in-cubic-foot-david-liittschwager>

This is a question your children and grandchildren might ask

If ECHA endorses the European Commission's verdict of safety of glyphosate to satisfy farmers and protect the profits of Agrochemical Corporations, their children and grandchildren might well ask this question:

"Where have all the moths, bush-crickets, butterflies, bumblebees, dragonflies, damsel flies, grass-hoppers, beetles, ladybirds, bats, hover flies and solitary bees gone? Why are our vegetables not being pollinated? Were you responsible? Did you kill them?" To which they will have to answer: "Yes, we killed them."

The Monsanto Tribunal judges have just been appointed for October 2016⁴⁷

Monsanto will be put on trial at the International Criminal Court for crimes against nature and humanity, and ecocide.

The Monsanto Tribunal is an international civil society initiative to hold Monsanto accountable for human rights violations, for crimes against humanity, and for ecocide. Eminent judges will hear testimonies from victims, and deliver an advisory opinion following procedures of the International Court of Justice. A parallel People's Assembly provides the opportunity for social movements to rally and plan for the future we want. The Tribunal and People's Assembly will take place between 14 and 16 October 2016 in The Hague, Netherlands.

Prof Gilles-Eric Séralini sent me a paper about his 30 years of studying glyphosate⁴⁸

This is a description of Séralini's achievements that won him the 2015 Whistle-blower of the Year award from German scientists.

[This is what the industry-funded UK Science Media Centre prevented the British public from seeing.](#)

Rosemary Mason 09/08/2016

⁴⁷ <http://www.monsanto-tribunal.org/>

⁴⁴ http://www.gmoseralini.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Seralini-career-JBPC_2015.pdf