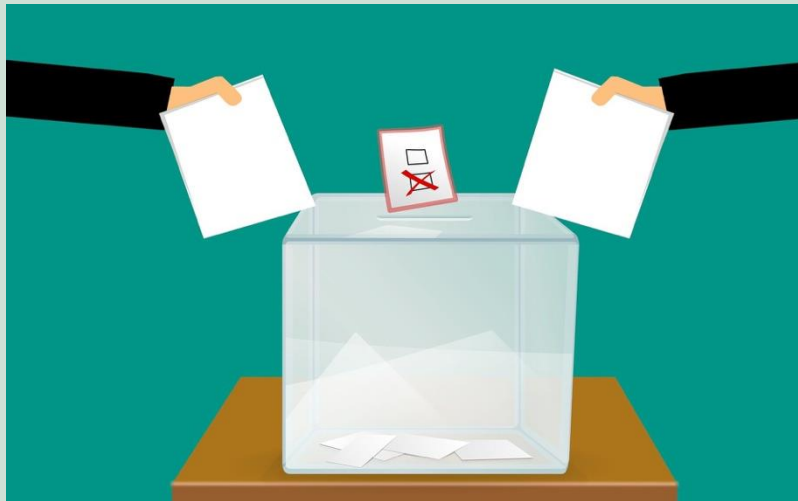




Pesticide newsletter

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Regulatory news



Canada: Government U-turn on glyphosate in food or just a post-election delay?

On May 6, 2021, the Canadian government launched a [public consultation](#) on a proposal to increase the admissible levels of residue of glyphosate, the ingredient declared as active by the manufacturers of glyphosate-based herbicides (GBH), in a number of foodstuffs (lentils, beans, peas, etc).

This proposal to increase the legal levels of glyphosate in food is intended to facilitate the marketing of certain products that exceed the current limits, but is in direct contradiction with consumer demands for products that are less contaminated by pesticides and the efforts needed to reduce their use. On the contrary, it may encourage the practice of spraying cereals and pulses just before harvest to dry the field and facilitate the work of harvesters, at the risk of increasing crop contamination, a method widely used in Saskatchewan, whose farmers have [welcomed](#) the government's proposal. Glyphosate, which is used in herbicides marketed under the Roundup brand by Bayer/Monsanto, was classified in 2015 as a probable carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), an agency of the World Health Organization. It is

the subject of [thousands of lawsuits](#) in U.S. courts by Roundup users with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. With its proposal, Canada seemed ready to be even [less demanding](#) than the United States or China.

However, the government has not been very transparent about the origin of this highly questionable proposal. It was a simple [request](#) from the agrochemical multinational Bayer that led the Canadian government to propose raising the permissible level of glyphosate in food and therefore to set up a consultation. The Canadian government's subservience to the multinational has led to a growing scandal. While Bayer claims that the proposed changes do not pose a health risk, its strategies of pseudo-scientific discourse and manipulation of information continue to be [exposed](#). The National Farmers Union, many NGOs, doctors and researchers have [opposed](#) the government's proposed increase in glyphosate residues in food. Organic farmers are also concerned, as they are already suffering from contamination from pesticides on neighboring fields.

The consultation was initially extended until September 3, but in response to the public outcry over the proposal, the government decided on August 4 to [suspend](#) its decision pending the availability of independent, recognized scientific research on the subject. The government also announced a serious review of the Pest Control Products Act (PCPA), which has not been substantially amended since its enactment nearly 20 years ago.

Friends of the Earth welcomed the government's announcement. "We are pleased to see that this announcement addresses many of the issues identified by Friends of the Earth. We hope this announcement signals the Liberal government's intention to proceed with pesticide regulation that is independent of corporate influence and in the best interests of human health and the environment," said Beatrice Olivastri, Director of Friends of the Earth Canada. She believes this announcement could be the beginning of a process by which the government regains public confidence in pesticides. But much depends on using the work of independent scientists in decision-making.

This encouraging Canadian news may be a sign that regulators are beginning to wake up to the risks of ever-increasing levels of pesticides.

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