

Ohio farmers criticize Trump administration report questioning pesticide safety

By Anna Staver
Cleveland.com

COLUMBUS, Ohio -- Ohio farmers are pushing back after a federal report questioned the safety of glyphosate and other pesticides.

The [report](#) was released as part of the Trump administration's Make America Healthy Again initiative. While it stops short of recommending restrictions, U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert Kennedy Jr. questioned long-term pesticide exposure--especially in children.

One section cited research on glyphosate [linking the pesticide](#) to "a range of possible health effects, ranging from reproductive and developmental disorders to cancers, liver inflammation and metabolic disturbances," the report stated."

That's stirred frustration in Ohio farm country, where growers say the report fuels unnecessary fear.

"We are deeply disappointed that the Make America Healthy Again Commission would release a report that raises questions that have already been answered about the safe use of pesticides," Ohio Corn & Wheat Growers Association Director Tadd Nicholson said in a statement.

Ohio growers, he said, use glyphosate and other pesticides responsibly, relying on them to protect crop yields and manage weeds in a state where corn, soybeans and wheat are major exports.

Nicholson emphasized that these chemicals have undergone decades of study by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

"Ohio farmers live and work on the same land where they raise their families," he said. "They prioritize safety for their crops, communities, and children."

Health advocates, however, have debated the pesticide's safety for years.

In 2015, the World Health Organization's cancer research agency classified glyphosate -- the active ingredient in Roundup -- as "probably carcinogenic."

But a 2022 European Chemicals Agency report concluded that glyphosate can cause serious eye damage and is toxic to aquatic life--but stopped short of classifying it as a cancer risk.

Monsanto, and later its parent company Bayer, has been [sued by American farmers](#) over claims the herbicide causes cancer. The company, which manufactures Roundup, denies those allegations but has paid billions to settle legal disputes.

Globally, [several countries](#) have taken action. France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany have all restricted use of glyphosate in recent year.

"Some people who drink water containing glyphosate well in excess of the maximum contaminant level (MCL) for many years could experience problems with their kidneys or reproductive difficulties," according to [Ohio State University Extension's](#) Ohio Watershed Network.

Glyphosate remains largely unrestricted in America, where regulatory agencies say it's safe when used as directed.

That's the position Ohio growers say they trust -- and the one they want policymakers to defend.

"What Ohio farmers need is support, not suspicion," Nicholson said. "This report only adds to the confusion in a conversation that should be rooted in facts."