



Australian Government  
Australian Pesticides and  
Veterinary Medicines Authority

# Glyphosate

## Safety and use



The simple rule for safe use of agricultural and veterinary chemicals is to read the label and follow the safety and use instructions.

### WHAT IS GLYPHOSATE?

Glyphosate is a weed killer which works on a wide variety of leafy weeds. It doesn't distinguish one from another, and it works best after the seed has sprouted.

### ARE GLYPHOSATE PRODUCTS SAFE TO USE?

Yes, glyphosate products which are registered with the APVMA are safe to use, provided they are used as per the label instructions. Registered products have an APVMA or NRA approval number on the label.

Glyphosate is registered for use throughout the world and current regulatory assessment is that it does not pose a risk to humans when used according to the label instructions.

### WHAT ARE 'LABEL INSTRUCTIONS'?

All chemical products have instructions for safety and use on the label. The labels on glyphosate products are there for your safety and provide practical information on how to use each product. Always read the label instructions and use only as directed.

By following the directions you maximize the product's effectiveness and minimise your risk of exposure to the chemical.

### ARE AREAS WHICH HAVE BEEN TREATED WITH GLYPHOSATE SAFE FOR CHILDREN AND ANIMALS?

Always check the label for specific instructions about how to use any chemical products near people, including children, and animals—and follow the instructions.

Products containing glyphosate are safe to use in areas which will be later used by people and animals provided the label instructions are followed. The label instructions will tell you how long people or animals should avoid an area that has been treated—follow these instructions. In most cases, once the product is dry, it is safe to re-enter, but always check the label.

### CAN PRODUCTS CONTAINING GLYPHOSATE STILL BE SOLD IN AUSTRALIA?

Yes, products containing glyphosate are legal to sell in Australia provided they are registered with the APVMA.

### CAN LOCAL COUNCILS AND CONTRACTORS STILL USE GLYPHOSATE PRODUCTS?

Yes, provided they are registered with the APVMA and used according to the label instructions.

## INTERNATIONAL REPORT ABOUT GLYPHOSATE

Last year a report was released by the World Health Organisation's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) which classified glyphosate as 'probably carcinogenic to humans'.

The role of IARC is to identify things that have the ability to cause cancer—they look at both substances and lifestyles. IARC also classify indoor emissions from burning wood and high temperature frying, some shift work, and consumption of red meat in the same category as glyphosate.

When making an assessment of the risk of these substances or lifestyles they do not consider how this risk is managed in actual situations. They did not assess the risk of glyphosate causing cancer when used according to the label instructions in a registered chemical product.

Following this initial assessment, the World Health Organisation's pesticide specialists are doing a comprehensive risk reassessment of glyphosate and their findings will determine whether regulators, such as the APVMA, decide to take any further action in relation to glyphosate.

This group of experts will look at scientific studies and data from all sources including unpublished scientific data, which will then be independently peer-reviewed during the assessment process. The APVMA is a member of this expert scientific group and results are expected to be published in mid 2016.

## THE ROLE OF THE AUSTRALIAN PESTICIDES AND VETERINARY MEDICINES AUTHORITY

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) is the Australian Government agency responsible for agricultural and veterinary chemical product registration.

Before a chemical product can be sold or manufactured in Australia, it must first go through scientific assessment by the APVMA to check its safety and whether it works as expected and claimed by the manufacturer. These checks are designed to protect

## WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS FOR THE APVMA?

The current scientific assessment by expert scientists at the APVMA has concluded that glyphosate products are safe to use, provided they are used in accordance with the label instructions. Therefore no action to change the use or availability of products containing glyphosate is required at this stage.

The APVMA assessment is based on scientific evidence from a broader range of studies than was used by the IARC in their assessment. It is also consistent with what regulators in other countries, such as Germany and Canada, have done. Both have concluded that current labels for glyphosate products contain appropriate instructions for use to keep those regularly handling glyphosate safe.

However, all findings by international agencies are taken very seriously and, as a member of the World Health Organisation expert group on this matter, the APVMA will be directly involved in assessing consideration of all studies and data.

The current status of regulatory action taken, or proposed, by other regulators around the world will be looked at, as well as any relevant residue studies and any proposed changes to maximum residue limits by other countries.

Following this comprehensive scientific analysis and assessment of risk, the APVMA will decide on whether regulatory action is required for glyphosate products registered for use in Australia. Based on current evidence, no significant changes are expected.

the health and safety of people, animals, plants and the environment. If a product meets very strict requirements it is registered for use in Australia.

The APVMA does not monitor or enforce the correct use of agricultural and veterinary chemicals once they are registered.

The correct use of agricultural and veterinary chemicals is first-and-foremost the user's responsibility. The approved directions for use are on the label of every registered product in Australia and must be followed. Incorrect use of these chemicals in Australia is monitored and enforced collaboratively by Safe Work Australia, and state and territory government authorities.

### MORE INFORMATION



+61 2 6210 4701



[WWW.APVMA.GOV.AU](http://WWW.APVMA.GOV.AU)



[ENQUIRIES@APVMA.GOV.AU](mailto:ENQUIRIES@APVMA.GOV.AU)

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