

Why Are Public Officials Protecting GMO and the Pesticides Industry? Digging Down into the Cesspool of Corruption

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It is based on a cesspool of corruption that is most probably responsible for more death and disease than the combined efforts of the tobacco companies ever were. It is sheer criminality that hides behind corporate [public relations](#), [media misrepresentations](#) and the [subversion](#) of respectable-sounding agencies which masquerade as public institutions.

The 'agrochemicals-agritech industry' should not be regarded as some kind of faceless concept because that lets individuals off the hook. It is run by identifiable individuals who sell [health-and environment-damaging](#) products, [co-opt scientists](#), [control public institutions](#) and ensure farmers are kept on a [chemical treadmill](#). From CEOs and scientists to public officials and media/PR spin doctors, specific individuals can be identified and at some stage should be hauled into court for what amounts to 'crimes against humanity'.

In her [numerous documents](#), Dr Rosemary Mason has described the devastating effects of agrochemicals and has singled out certain individuals who, in a different world, would probably be standing in the dock to answer for their roles they have played in poisoning the environment and damaging public health. Mason has supplied ample, strong evidence to highlight how agrochemicals are killing us and how public institutions and governments collude with the industry to frame legislation and policies to ensure it's 'business as usual'.

However, individuals act within circumstances not of their choosing; capitalism corrupts and it is not the concern of the managers of private corporations to look after the interests of the public at large. A CEO's obligation is to maximise profit, capture markets and defeat the competition. The naive hope by many is that 'corporate social responsibility' and consumers' perception of a company will oblige corporations to act in a manner that in some way serves the wider public interest. The other hope is that public officials and institutions will safeguard this interest by holding private interests to account.

But in the cold, cynical world of 'free' market capitalism, an [interlocking directorate](#) of state-corporate interests have for a long time ensured that state institutions in 'liberal democracies' are shaped and manipulated to facilitate the interests of private capital. The 'free' market only exists in the warped delusions of those who churn out clichés about its sanctity. We need look no further than the [billions of taxpayer dollars](#) that prop up US agriculture and agribusiness profits, for example, or, more generally, how the state facilitates taxpayer-funded [corporate welfare](#) across the board.

The bottom line is to maximise profit for private corporations – and, in Monsanto’s case, by all means possible, including the unflinching defence of the health- and environment-damaging (but [massively profitable](#)) product glyphosate. Through [political influence and co-option](#), policies are put in place on Monsanto’s behalf, and the public is expected to sit back and take the poison. It’s for their own good! And the relentless message is that there is no alternative, when, in reality, there are [genuine alternatives](#) to a pesticide-drenched food and agriculture that is both [commercially and politically](#) motivated.

Within the cesspool created, corporations bank on their political influence, media hacks, bogus science, lobbyists and public relations departments and firms to churn out the message that they are serving the public interest, while clearly acting against it.

And this leads us back to Dr Rosemary Mason and her new open letter to the European Chemicals Agency. As with her many other open letters to officialdom, Mason takes us on a journey by naming names and shedding light on how corporate power works to encourage scientific fraud and subvert public watchdogs and policy-making institutions with the aim of getting toxic agrochemicals, especially glyphosate, onto the market and ensuring they remain there.

She addresses the letter directly to European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) Executive Director Geert Dancet.

Key points from Mason’s open letter

Readers are urged to consult Mason’s 5,000-word open letter ([open-letter-to-the-european-chemical-agency-about-scientific-fraud-and-ecocide](#)), where they can find all the relevant links, charts and references to support the points below.

1) *Scientific fraud and glyphosate.* The German government has accused the German Rapporteur Member State Federal Institute of Risk Assessment (BfR) and the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA) of scientific fraud for using Glyphosate Task Force (GTF) statistics that for some considerable time claimed them to be BfR’s own work.

Mason demands that the ECHA must act to ban glyphosate immediately and asserts that human health and the environment are being totally destroyed by it as well as the hundreds of other chemicals that have been registered illegally.

Mason writes:

“The current EU legislation was originally set up to protect the pesticides industry. Monsanto and other agrochemical corporations helped the EU to design the regulatory systems for their own products and chose which country should be appointed as Rapporteur Member State. Regulation 1107/2009, Article 63 specified that: “All confidential data ...shall be deleted or redacted.” Much of the industry data submitted to the German RMS was redacted.”

2) *Glyphosate, conflicts of interest and PR masquerading as science.* By naming names (Alan Boobis, Angelo Moretti, Chris Wolf, Michael Pragnell and others), Mason notes how key positions are held by individuals with proven links to the agrochemicals industry. As a result, crucial decisions and documents are slanted accordingly.

Mason mentions Critical Reviews in Toxicology and how, in 2016 Volume 46, Monsanto commissioned five reviews published in a supplement to Critical Reviews in Toxicology. Monsanto also funded them. The whole point was to raise serious doubts about the adverse effects of glyphosate by using junk science and to confuse the whole issue. Mason says that this is what Monsanto paid the scientists for.

3) *The ECHA might be preparing itself to support EFSA, the European Commissioners and the Glyphosate Task Force (GTF) to re-license glyphosate in 2017.* This is despite the fact that, of the 293 responses to ECHA's consultation, an overwhelming majority supported the International Agency for Research into Cancer (IARC) position that glyphosate is probably carcinogenic for humans.

4) *The German government summoned Prof Dr Andreas Hensel before the Committee on Agriculture and Food where he accused BfR of scientific fraud.* BfR stands accused of endangering the population and of intentional falsification of the content of scientific studies. In addition, Prof Dr Eberhard Greiser, a retired epidemiologist at the University of Bremen, says of BfR's actions, "I'd say this is an intentional falsification of the content of scientific studies."

5) *Evidence given to the International Monsanto Tribunal*

Toxicologist Dr Peter Clausing:

"Ample evidence has been provided above showing that European Authorities twisted or ignored scientific facts and distorted the truth to enable the conclusion that glyphosate is not to be considered a carcinogen, thereby accepting and reinforcing the false conclusion proposed by the Monsanto-led GTF. The German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) committed scientific fraud."

In his evidence to the tribunal, Clausing systematically demolished arguments that the EU authorities used to dismiss the significant findings of glyphosate-induced malignant lymphoma in mouse carcinogenicity studies.

Mason then goes on to discuss the wide-ranging evidence presented to the tribunal, including Lawyer Koffi Dogbevi's discussion of Monsanto and ecocide (destruction of the environment), which is a crime against humanity that is likely to be subject to prosecution in the International Criminal Court. She notes the vicious media campaign mounted against Professor Seralini and his team that was instigated by 'interested circles' from the chemical industry as well as the industry-financed British Science Media Centre.

6) *Industry pressure on the EPA.* The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), having concluded that glyphosate is not a carcinogen, invited public comments.

Public comments were invited on 16/09/2016 to the Scientific Advisory Panel of FIFRA (Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act) on US EPA Glyphosate Issue Paper: Evaluation of Carcinogenic Potential. However, only four days before the meeting it was suddenly delayed.

Why did US EPA delay the FIFRA SAP meeting at such short notice? Mason provides compelling evidence indicating the industry's hand in trying to remove certain scientists

from being included on the panel. The suggestion is that the EPA bowed to intense industry lobbying from CropLife America (a US trade association representing the major manufacturers, formulators and distributors of crop protection and pest control products).

7) *EPA collusion with Monsanto*. In 1991, an archival document showed that the US EPA Health Effects Division colluded with Monsanto: glyphosate was to be changed from a Group C carcinogen to Group E (evidence of non-carcinogenicity for humans).

Members of US EPA's Toxicology Branch of the Hazard Evaluation Division Committee, in a consensus review on March 4 1985, had classified glyphosate as a Group C carcinogen, based on the incidence in rats/mice of renal tumours, thyroid C-cell adenomas and carcinomas, pancreatic islet cell adenomas, hepatocellular adenomas and carcinomas in males, but on June 26 1991 the Health Effects Division Carcinogenicity Peer Review Committee met to discuss and evaluate the weight of evidence on glyphosate with particular emphasis on its carcinogenic potential. In a review of the data the committee concluded that glyphosate should be classified as Group E (evidence of non-carcinogenicity for humans). However, three of the Committee refused to sign and wrote: DO NOT CONCUR.

8) *Monsanto's sealed secret studies from the US EPA obtained under Freedom of Information*. US Scientist Anthony Samsel analysed Monsanto's sealed secret long-term studies (15,000-20,000 pages) from the US EPA (on mice, rats, rabbit and beagles) and showed that Monsanto knew that glyphosate was carcinogenic from the 1970s.

9) *Glyphosate causes cataracts and interstitial damage and a range of diseases*. Among Monsanto's long term studies, an unpublished study on albino rats in 1990 showed that glyphosate entered the eye and caused cataracts and tissue damage.

The rate of cataract surgery in England "increased very substantially" between 1989 and 2004 from 173 (1989) to 637 (2004) episodes per 100,000 population.

A 2016 study by the WHO also confirmed that the incidence of cataracts had greatly increased: 'A global assessment of the burden of disease from environmental risks.' says that cataracts are the leading cause of blindness worldwide. Globally, cataracts are responsible for 51% of blindness – an estimated 20 million individuals suffer from this degenerative eye disease. In the US, between 2000 and 2010 the number of cases of cataract rose by 20% from 20.5 million to 24.4 million. It is projected that by 2050, the number of people with cataracts will have doubled to 50 million.

Mason then goes on to describe in some detail how the municipality's spraying of glyphosate effectively destroyed her nature reserve near Swansea, Wales, and is "responsible for cancers, neurological diseases and cataracts, just as Monsanto found in long-term studies before it gained illegal registration with the US EPA."

10) *The UK State of Nature Report 2016*. One of the report's authors, Mark Eaton, says:

"The report includes a new "biodiversity intactness index", which analyses the loss of species over centuries. The UK has lost significantly more nature over the long term than the global average with the UK the 29th lowest out of 218 countries. It is quite shocking where we stand compared to the rest of the world, even compared to other western European countries: France and Germany are quite a way above us in the rankings. The index gives an idea of where we have got to over the centuries, and we are pretty knackered."

Mason provides a great deal of statistical evidence to highlight the massive increase (by crop type) in use of pesticides over the years, not least glyphosate.

And she also provides a great deal of shocking data that highlights the increase in major diseases and the loss of biodiversity, as set out in the State of Nature Report.

In finishing her open letter, Mason asks the various agencies responsible for protecting health and the environment:

“Why are you all protecting the pesticides industry?

Then she adds:

“Monsanto has been lying to you for the sake of money. They wanted to control the food... CEO Hugh Grant and the US EPA knew that glyphosate caused all of these problems. The corporation concealed the carcinogenic effects of PCBs on humans and animals for seven years. They have no plans to protect you and your families from the tsunami of sickness that is affecting us all in the UK and the US.”

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