

16 November 2017

Olivia Brown

Via: fyi-request-6657-e17e117b@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mrs Brown

Official Information Act Request

I refer to your request for information clarified on 18 October 2017 regarding correspondence the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has had in relation to the assessment of the environmental effects of glyphosate.

Our response below provides information on the history of glyphosate and the approval process for products containing glyphosate, as the EPA does not hold correspondence regarding the assessment of the environmental effects of glyphosate as a substance by itself. We hope you find this useful in understanding how the environmental effects of glyphosate and products containing glyphosate have been assessed.

History of glyphosate

Glyphosate is an active ingredient in a variety of different herbicides, and was first approved in New Zealand in 1976. This was prior to the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (HSNO) coming into force, and the formation of the Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA), the EPA's predecessor, in 1996. The first assessment of the environmental effects of glyphosate was undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (now the Ministry for Primary Industries), therefore the EPA does not hold correspondence about the assessment of the environmental effects of glyphosate dating back to 1976.

The approvals for the import or manufacture of herbicides containing glyphosate that occurred prior to the HSNO Act coming into force were transferred into the HSNO regime in 2004 via a legislative instrument called a transfer notice. At this time, ERMA carried out an assessment of the ecotoxicological hazards of glyphosate, primarily sourcing data from publicly available databases.

EPA approval process

There are approximately 60 approvals for products containing glyphosate as the active ingredient. The EPA continues to receive and process applications for products containing glyphosate under the HSNO Act. When a person wishes to import or manufacture a product which contains differing levels of glyphosate to those which are already approved, a new approval is required. When deciding whether to grant an approval, EPA staff and decision makers take into account a range of factors, including requirements of the HSNO Act and the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (Methodology) Order 1998.

One of these requirements is the assessment of the environmental effects of the product. There are a range of environmental effects that the EPA takes into account, and we undertake a variety of assessments and modelling. This will determine appropriate controls to be placed on a substance to minimise and/or mitigate the environmental effects of the substance. EPA scientists may correspond with the applicant about the product. This correspondence would be in regard to specific products containing glyphosate, not the assessment of glyphosate as a substance by itself.

Environmental effects

The approvals for products containing glyphosate are informed by robust and up-to-date scientific analysis. The decision documents for the approvals each contain an analysis of various environmental effects. These decision documents can be found on the EPA website. A link to an example of a decision document is provided below, as well as a link to the HSNO Application Register on the EPA website, where further decision documents can be found.

Example decision document:

http://www.epa.govt.nz/search-databases/HSNO%20Application%20Register%20Documents/APP203340_APP203340_Final_decision_Document_Signed.pdf

HSNO Application Register:

<http://www.epa.govt.nz/search-databases/Pages/applications-search.aspx>

The controls placed on approved products containing glyphosate can be found on the EPA website using the link below.

<http://www.epa.govt.nz/search-databases/Pages/controls-search.aspx>

We hope that the above information addresses your request sufficiently. If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact Frances Charlett-Green on frances.charlett-green@epa.govt.nz or 04 474 5533.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fiona Thomson-Carter". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Dr Fiona Thomson-Carter
General Manager
Hazardous Substances and New Organisms
Environmental Protection Authority