



## agriculture, forestry & fisheries

Department:  
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### **Media release**

**22 May 2015**

### **The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries' response on glyphosate carcinogen classification**

In its recent evaluation in March 2015, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), as the specialised cancer agency of the World Health Organization (WHO), came to the conclusion that there is limited evidence of possible carcinogenicity associated with glyphosate, which could result in non-Hodgkin lymphoma in humans. The IARC concluded that glyphosate should now be classified as a carcinogenic substance in Group 2A which means that it is probably carcinogenic to humans. This is based on evidence from animal-based experimentation. Following the publication of the report in the Lancet Journal on 20 March 2015 by the IARC, there have been public concerns raised about human exposure to glyphosate as “probably carcinogenic to humans.”

Glyphosate is a broad-spectrum herbicide, and works by inhibiting an enzyme found in plants. There are about 100 products containing glyphosate currently registered for use in South Africa. Glyphosate has been registered for use in South Africa and all over the world for over 40 years.

All glyphosate-based products that are registered for use in South Africa have been through a robust chemical risk assessment process. Based on current risk assessments, glyphosate poses a minimal risk to users and the general public, provided it is used according to label instructions and safety statements. This is in agreement with other risk assessments conducted by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA), Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA), and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

## **Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) Action**

The DAFF, however, takes the IARC's findings very seriously and will examine the data and assessment done for the IARC classification and determine whether any regulatory action is necessary.

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