

GREENPEACE

Greenpeace publishes pesticides industry ranking

Bayer pesticides are most damaging for humans and the environment

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Brussels/Hamburg — Pesticides manufactured by German chemical multinational Bayer pose the biggest threat to human health and the environment, compared to other international producers, Greenpeace found in a report it published today. Syngenta (Switzerland), Monsanto (USA), BASF (Germany) and Dow Chemical (USA) are the next to follow on the company black list.

The Greenpeace report, "The Dirty Portfolios of the Pesticides Industry",⁽¹⁾ provides the first-ever ranking of the world's leading agrochemical companies based on the hazards and risks of their pesticides on human health and the environment. The multinationals together account for 75 percent of the world market, and 243 (or 46 percent) of the 512 pesticides they sell worldwide are particularly hazardous for humans and for nature. The European Union is currently negotiating new legislation for the authorisation of pesticides.

"Our ranking shows how toxic the business of the leading agrochemical companies still is," said Greenpeace chemicals expert Manfred Krautter. "Politicians must now tighten up EU pesticide laws to protect our health and to preserve biodiversity. Pesticides that can cause cancer, alter genes, and damage the reproductive, endocrine or nervous system must no longer be authorised. Pesticides that harm bees or life in aquatic environments must be banned from the market. The chemical industry is now using its significant lobbying power to try to secure authorisation even for toxins like these."

On average, 46 percent of the multinationals' pesticide portfolios are made up of particularly dangerous substances. In terms of environmental and health protection, another worrying aspect is that only inadequate information is available in public databases concerning the toxic effects of another 16 percent of the pesticide components. Even the best EU laboratories are unable to routinely detect the residues in food of 42 percent of pesticides on the market.

"Pesticides are in the environment, in the food we eat and in our bodies. They are like a time bomb, threatening our health and many endangered animal and plant species," Krautter said.

US company Monsanto has the portfolio with the highest proportion (60 percent) of pesticides that are particularly toxic to humans and the environment. However, Monsanto only ends up in the middle of the overall ranking due to its small share of the market. The overall ranking not only takes into account the hazardous properties of the various pesticides, but also the quantities that are sold worldwide.

Notes to Editor

(1) The report can be found at www.greenpeace.eu. The ranking draws on data from the Greenpeace studies "Black List of Pesticides" and "Limits of Pesticide Analysis" published in January and February 2008. All five companies declined to supply Greenpeace with information about the pesticidal substances that they sell.

(2) The European Commission put forward a proposal on new regulation for the authorisation of pesticides in 2007 and the European Parliament proposed a series of amendments to strengthen legislation in October 2007. EU agriculture ministers are due to meet on 23 June to attempt to reach a common position on the proposal.

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