



Agricultural retail group says IARC pesticide findings needlessly alarm public

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The Agricultural Retailers Association (ARA) said that the recent labeling of a popular herbicide as a possible carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) causes confusion and should not be the basis for banning useful crop-protection tools.

In its second report this year, the IARC labeled a safe and effective pesticide, dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D), as a "possible carcinogen," giving it the same designation it assigned to glyphosate in March.

ARA President and CEO Daren Coppock said farmers use these proven tools to protect crops from weeds.

"They have passed through intense regulatory analysis and have been in use, in the case of 2,4-D, for more than 70 years," Coppock said. "IARC analysis does not actually identify whether a compound is a carcinogen. It should not be the basis to ban useful crop-protection tools."

IARC, an agency within the U.N.'s World Health Organization, conducts initial reviews of compounds to help prioritize cancer analysis. The agency evaluates the potential for carcinogenic hazard of compounds -- not whether the compound is a carcinogen, but whether it has the potential to be -- and should be studied further.

Glyphosate, 2,4-D and other compounds under review by the IARC have been the subject of hundreds of scientific studies and regulatory reviews. Government regulatory agencies charged with protecting public health in more than 100 countries have evaluated the science and concluded that glyphosate and 2,4-D do not increase health risks when used as directed. In fact, no government in the world considers them carcinogens. That includes U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the European Food Safety Authority, Health Canada and the World Health Organization.