

Legault feels heat on pesticides but rejects ban for now

Pascal Rossignol / REUTERS



Parkinson Quebec has made public an examination of several epidemiological studies that found exposure to pesticides was strongly linked to the development of Parkinson's disease.

Premier François Legault says the findings of [a study linking pesticide use to Parkinson's disease](#) are "serious" — but feels the issue must be examined in depth before taking any action.

However, Legault did not close the door on eventually banning certain pesticides.

This week, Parkinson Quebec made public an examination of several epidemiological studies that found exposure to pesticides was strongly linked to the development of Parkinson's disease.

The results of that examination were contained in a document to be presented this month to the provincial government.

Parkinson Quebec says there is a “causal link” between exposure and the development of the disease, which attacks the nervous system.

“I have concerns, as well,” Legault told reporters in Quebec City. “It’s worrisome and it’s serious.”

Legault was reacting not only to the Parkinson Quebec report but also [a decision by the City of Montreal to ban glyphosate](#) — a herbicide — from its territory before the end of the year.

The premier said he wanted first to consult with farmers about the issue and let a legislative committee on pesticides conclude its work.

While a ban is possible, it won’t happen now, Legault said.

“We’re not there yet, but we’re not excluding it.”

Legault said he was concerned about the effect of a glyphosate ban on Quebec farmers who compete with producers elsewhere who have access to the herbicide.

The opposition Liberals, meanwhile, called for a study on the health impacts of pesticides.

Liberal agriculture critic Marie Montpetit wrote in a communiqué the government should examine the presence of pesticides from the fields where produce is grown to the dinner table where they are consumed.

Parti Québécois environment and health critic Sylvain Gaudreault said the government should act decisively, noting studies have linked pesticides to autism and the death of bees.

Gaudreault, citing provincial legislation that allows the banning of some products as a precaution and without absolute scientific proof, said the government should ban certain pesticides.

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