

STATES OF JERSEY



BANNING THE SALE, IMPORTATION AND USE OF PRODUCTS CONTAINING GLYPHOSATE: PETITION

Lodged au Greffe on 20th February 2018
by Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

to request the Minister for the Environment to take the steps necessary to ban the sale, importation and use of products containing glyphosate as an active ingredient or adjuvant.

DEPUTY K.C. LEWIS OF ST. SAVIOUR

REPORT

Glyphosate's toxicity is reckoned to be low, in the concentrations used by farmers, although the U.N. International Agency for Research on Cancer called it "probably carcinogenic".

The Soil Association says glyphosate traces are regularly found in bread.

According to the U.S. National Pesticide Information Centre, the chemical mostly passes through the body quickly in urine and faeces.

How does glyphosate work?

It is usually mixed with other chemicals that help it get into plants, where it blocks a key enzyme pathway. The disruption prevents plants from making certain proteins needed for their growth.

The 'shikimate pathway' involves 7 enzymes which enable the plant to form amino acids, the building blocks of proteins. The pathway is not found in animals.

Some crops, such as soybean, have been genetically modified to resist glyphosate.

Farmers spray it on fields before their crops emerge in spring, so the crops do not have to compete with weeds.

Some also use it as a pre-harvest treatment to dry out crops and make them easier to harvest. The U.K. Soil Association says such use is risky, as it can increase glyphosate residues in food.

France plans to ban the use of glyphosate within 3 years. In a tweet, French President Emmanuel Macron said he had ordered a ban on the use of glyphosate in France "as soon as alternatives are found, and within 3 years at the latest".

Financial and manpower implications

I have sought guidance from the Department of the Environment regarding the prospective financial and manpower implications for the States. It is difficult to quantify what those implications might be. However, the Department has advised me that there might be cost implications in respect of the following –

- Cost to departments of using an alternative to glyphosate (e.g. the Department of Infrastructure in managing weeds on roads), in terms of the product cost and any usage costs associated with its effectiveness (e.g. multiple application).
- Cost implications of responding to any impact that substitute/alternative products might have on Jersey's natural environment (e.g. impact on water sources).
- Possibility of a legal challenge against the States of Jersey by manufacturers of glyphosate products if glyphosate were banned in Jersey.
- Possible States of Jersey/Gov.uk operational costs associated with defending a decision by Jersey to ban glyphosate against the agreed UK Government position.

