

## Deception through Fraudulent Science and Public Relations Campaign

It is one thing to ignore science. It is quite another to deceive with science. The latter is exactly what investigative journalist Carey Gillam concludes in her talk in April to Beyond Pesticides' 36<sup>th</sup> National Pesticide Forum, *Organic Neighborhoods: For healthy children, families, and ecology*. Ms. Gillam's talk, in this issue of *Pesticides and You*, is a synopsis of her longer book, *Whitewash: The Story of a Weed Killer, Cancer, and the Corruption of Science*. In our cover piece, *Pesticide Use Harming Key Species Ripples through the Ecosystem*, we point out that the pesticide regulatory system does not assess the real effects of pesticides on the ecosystem, resulting in a cascade of impacts. Both these pieces support the need for and inform local action to restrict pesticides.

### A Shift in Tone, Not Rollbacks, at EPA

Ms. Gillam's findings, based on internal Monsanto documents, emerge during a turbulent period at EPA, with the literal dismantling or disabling of environmental and public health programs and the resignation of EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, caught up in ethics violations. His replacement, interim administrator Andrew Wheeler told the *Washington Post*, "[I] would say that the agenda for the agency was set out by President Trump. And Administrator Pruitt has been working to implement that. I will try to work to implement the president's agenda as well."

According to *The New York Times*, "Mr. Wheeler's actions signal a strategic shift at the EPA, an agency at the heart of President Trump's push to strip away regulations on industry. Under Mr. Pruitt, . . . the agency pushed for ambitious but fast-paced rollbacks of environmental rules. Mr. Wheeler, a former coal lobbyist who served as Mr. Pruitt's deputy, has brought a more disciplined approach to dismantling environmental rules."

### Scientific Deception

Ms. Gilliam points out that, "Glyphosate is the poster child for the bigger pesticide problem." She continues, "If it goes away tomorrow, we are not okay." Because of this, Beyond Pesticides has strategically sought to transform our country's approach to pest management, both agricultural and residential/structural, by eliminating a reliance on pesticides and advancing organic management practices that do not rely on toxic inputs. In this context, pesticides like glyphosate, become an example of chemical industry influence resulting in inadequate underlying law and regulations. As environmental and public health groups engage in a whack-a-mole effort to remove specific pesticides, we must teach that these chemicals are not only dangerous to environmental health, but are unnecessary to prevent pests and achieve pest management goals.

Ms. Gillam provides succinct evidence of the pesticide industry's deception and attempts to besmirch legitimate scientists and science. As she explains, despite claiming to be shocked about the cancer finding for glyphosate by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) of the World Health Organization, an internal Monsanto document, *Preparedness and Engagement Plan for IARC Carcinogen Rating of Glyphosate*, was written before IARC even met. As Ms. Gillam says: "They knew it was going to come. They knew the science was there. They knew they were vulnerable. So they started laying out the plan of how to discredit IARC. It illustrates a long-term pattern. This didn't just begin with the IARC classification. If you go back through EPA archives, you can see that from the very beginning, wherever there was a sign of concern or harm associated with this pesticide, Monsanto figures out a way to make it go away, to tamp it down, to silence the person who's raising the alarm bells." Now, after trying to block the Agency for Toxic Substances Disease Registry review of glyphosate cancer data, Monsanto has its fingerprints on legislative report language on an appropriations bill in Congress that will prevent the agency from reviewing the data.

### French Beekeepers Take Action

Meanwhile, as we report in this issue, about 200 members of a French beekeeping cooperative sued Bayer—on the same day the giant chemical company's acquisition of Monsanto was finalized—after discovering that their honey was contaminated with glyphosate. At the same time, researchers have found adverse health effects at glyphosate levels below those regulators deem "safe" or acceptable. These results represent the first phase of the Global Glyphosate Study based at the Ramazzini Institute in Bologna, Italy.

### Continue to Press for Organic Integrity and Local Action

All this again affirms the need to have clarity on the alternatives to pesticides in clearly defined management systems that establishes allowed substances based on a rigorous cradle-to-grave health and environmental assessment, compatibility with nature and biodiversity, and essentiality, or necessity for the input. Beyond Pesticides continues to press for integrity and is fighting to uphold local authority to adopt more restrictive standards than state and federal law and ensuring that the integrity of organic law is maintained.

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