

Glyphosate and Pesticides: Et Tu, Live Science?



By Alex Berezow — July 3, 2018



Credit: Storyblocks [1]

Two weeks ago, we reported on a bizarre decision by the online news arm of the journal *Science*: The outlet had [reprinted an article](#) [2] from a politically slanted environmentalist website that hyped concern over a particular chemical. The article fell quite short of the high standards we associate with the journal.

Now, Live Science has done something similar, but it's far worse. Normally a reliable source of information (and an outlet with which ACSH has a reprinting agreement), Live Science published an article that is a dream for anti-pesticide and anti-chemical fearmongers.

The [article](#) [3], written by Christopher Pala, begins with an ominous warning that is far more suitable for the pages of an H.P. Lovecraft story than a science article:

On a former sugar plantation on the dry southeast coast of Kauai, Hawaii, far from the tourist beaches, agrochemical companies are testing a secret cocktail of toxic pesticides on genetically modified corn.

Good grief. Was the "secret cocktail" being sprayed from black helicopters? And why, exactly, is it a problem for chemical companies to conduct field trials with their products? Isn't that what we want them to do before they sell them on the market?

The article goes on to say:

The most common unrestricted pesticide, glyphosate — sold as the herbicide Roundup — is "probably carcinogenic in humans," the World Health Organization determined in 2015.

No, it didn't. The World Health Organization says that [glyphosate is unlikely to cause cancer](#) [4], the exact opposite of what was written. Instead, the author cited IARC, a rogue outfit inside the WHO that is under fire for what appears to be [scientific fraud](#) [5]. IARC is the only agency that declares glyphosate to be a carcinogen; the U.S. EPA and the European Food Safety Authority, in addition to the WHO, reject IARC's conclusions.

Toward the end of the article, the author states:

There is some uncertainty as to why the companies don't want to disclose which pesticides they use.

No, there isn't. Companies don't want to disclose information because they know journalists and activists will use it against them. And if they don't disclose the chemicals, they'll be attacked anyway. So, there's no benefit from transparency when a company is damned if it does and damned if it doesn't.

Like the news arm of the journal *Science*, Live Science needs to be careful, or its good reputation will be harmed. The funny thing about reputations is that it takes years to build them but mere moments to destroy them.

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Source URL: <https://www.acsh.org/news/2018/07/03/glyphosate-and-pesticides-et-tu-live-science-13148>

Links

[1] <https://www.storyblocks.com/stock-image/grilled-young-corn-bq5xbrcd7ubj6gtmxkt>

[2] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2018/06/21/science-publishes-environmentalist-scaremongering-13108>

[3] <https://www.livescience.com/62831-hawaii-bans-secret-spray-sites.html>

[4] <https://www.chemistryworld.com/news/who-clarifies-glyphosate-risks/1010208.article>

[5] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/10/24/glyphosate-gate-iarcs-scientific-fraud-12014>