



## Agrochemicals And The Cesspool Of Corruption: Dr. Mason Writes To The US EPA

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*In her recent open letter to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), campaigner Dr Rosemary Mason documents what amounts to a cesspool of corruption surrounding sections of the agrochemicals industry and the regulation of glyphosate (as found in Monsanto's herbicide Roundup).*

As with all her previous 'open letters' to officials, Mason cites ample sources to support her arguments and claims, not least those about the health- and environment-damaging impacts of glyphosate, a highly [financially lucrative](#) product for Monsanto. Readers may access these sources by consulting her original 15-page letter to the EPA here: [open-letter-to-us-environmental-protection-agency-about-glyphosate-and-the-international-monsanto-tribuna](#)

Mason notes that CropLife America, the agribusiness lobby association, put pressure on the EPA to exclude individuals who had in the past expressed a negative opinion of glyphosate from sitting on the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP). EPA immediately bowed to that request and delayed the date of the SAP to find further figures approved by industry. She documents in some detail how CropLife America pressured the FIFRA SAP to rely on assessments of glyphosate tainted by conflicts of interest and wanted to have excluded specific scientists from the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) (whose negative evaluation of glyphosate had upset the industry) and the Consensus Statement on Glyphosate written by 16 scientists.

To keep the pressure on in support of glyphosate, Mason describes how Monsanto commissioned five reviews published in 'Critical Reviews in Toxicology' and also funded them. A stunt whereby science took a back seat to crass public relations.

PR masquerading as science published in questionable journals is part of the industry's aim to create doubt. And it's an endless activity. In the meantime, Mason argues that as powerful corporations attempt to muddy the waters, people die unnecessarily by being exposed to dangerous agrochemicals like glyphosate and the environment is degraded even further.

But for many, none of this comes as any surprise. Based on evidence given to the Monsanto Tribunal, Mason says the truth is there for the world to see: the US EPA, the European Food Safety Authority, the European Commission, the UK Chemicals Regulation Directorate and the Republic of Ireland have been conspiring with Monsanto against civil society to destroy the environment with chemicals and poison their food. More on the Monsanto Tribunal later.

Shifting her focus to Europe, Mason focuses on Professor Alan Boobis, Chairman of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN/World Health Organization/Joint Meeting on Pesticide Residues panel, who claimed he had no conflicts of interest. He is also vice-president of the International Life Science Institute (ILSI) Europe, an organisation that had received money from both Monsanto and CropLife International. Mason quotes The Guardian journalist Arthur Neslen from May 2016:

“A UN panel that on Tuesday ruled that glyphosate was [probably not carcinogenic to humans](#) has now become embroiled in a bitter row about potential conflicts of interests. It has emerged that an institute co-run by the chairman of the UN’s joint meeting on pesticide residues (JMPR) received a six-figure donation from Monsanto, which uses the substance as a core ingredient in its bestselling Roundup weed-killer. [Professor Alan Boobis](#), who chaired the UN’s [joint FAO/WHO meeting](#) on glyphosate, also works as the vice-president of the International Life Science Institute (ILSI) Europe. The co-chair of the sessions was Professor Angelo Moretto, [a board member](#) of ILSI’s Health and Environmental Services Institute, and of its [Risk21 steering group](#) too, which Boobis also co-chairs. In 2012, the ILSI group took a \$500,000 (£344,234) donation from Monsanto and a \$528,500 donation from the industry group CropLife International, which represents [Monsanto, Dow, Syngenta and others](#), according to [documents obtained by the US right to know campaign](#).”

Mason states that when glyphosate was reassessed in 2002, Alan Boobis was also Chairman of the UN’s JMPR meeting on pesticide residues. Prof Boobis is current Chairman of the UK Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT), which is alleged to be an independent scientific body.

As in her many previous letters to various institutions and officials, Mason provides much evidence to show how the concept of independent science is being made a mockery of by what to all intents and purposes is arguably corporate-sponsored corruption facilitated by prominent public agencies and officials. And once Mason peels away a very thin veneer – it is not a very subtle form at that.

Finally, Mason comes to the recent International Monsanto Tribunal in The Hague. A civil society initiative to hold Monsanto accountable for human rights violations, crimes against humanity and ecocide, eminent judges heard testimonies from victims and delivered an advisory opinion following procedures of the International Court of Justice.

Two of the tribunal judges wrote to Monsanto to invite them to participate in the tribunal. Monsanto decided not to appear for their defence. They issued a sanctimonious statement in five languages saying that the Tribunal was “pushing the wrong issues, since the real discussion is about feeding the world.”

Well the people there [would say that, wouldn’t they](#)? It seems the tendency to rely on public relations cliches runs deep.

Nnimmo Bassey at the opening said:

“Being an ambassador to this Tribunal is like being an ambassador to mother Earth. If mother Earth could speak, Monsanto ought to be in jail long before now. Food is a celebration, it is culture, it is life. This is a struggle not against one multinational corporation, it is a struggle for life, it is a struggle for liberty. A struggle to stop big companies from colonizing our food systems, colonizing our agriculture, holding mother Earth as a slave for their profits.”

Judge Tulkens said:

“We will try to deliver the legal opinion before December 10th, the International Day of Human Rights. It will be addressed to Monsanto and to the United Nations. From this legal opinion, other jurisdictions can be involved and more judges will step in. We, as the judges [at the Monsanto Tribunal] have seen, heard, noted and deliberated. Chances are that the international law will take into consideration new issues such as the ones related to ecocide. »

Mason goes on to discuss some of the witness testimonies, which again highlight the close ties between the agrochemicals cartel and government/regulatory agencies across the globe at national and international levels.

In finishing, she discusses the harmful impacts of glyphosate on human health and the environment and notes how a combination of bought-and-paid for science (and by implication scientists), conflicts of interest and compromised governments and agencies allow the agrochemicals sector to poison the planet with various toxins, in addition to glyphosate. The [media's role in this is complicit](#).

Mason also refers to the new book '[OurDaily Poison: From Pesticides to Packaging, How Chemicals Have Contaminated the Food Chain and Are Making Us Sick](#)' by Marie-Monique Robin to add to the [reams of evidence](#) she has provided over the years in her correspondence with senior officials: officials who, for the large part, appear to be unable or unwilling to address Mason's concerns, regardless of the amount of credible (peer-reviewed scientific) sources she uses to support her case.

Given the evidence presented by Mason, the Monsanto Tribunal and [many others](#), we appear to have public officials working on behalf of agrochemicals industry. Perhaps these figures should bear in mind what Mason concludes in her letter to the US EPA:

“It is outrageous that US EPA is bowing to pressure from a corrupt and criminal pesticides industry that pays lobbyists to assess their products... The US EPA, EFSA, the European Commission and the UK Chemicals Regulation Directorate should study carefully the evidence given to the Monsanto Tribunal from witnesses about Monsanto's violation of human rights. It is possible that they might end up being prosecuted in the International Criminal Court in The Hague for crimes against humanity and for assisting Monsanto in ecocide and genocide. In the International Criminal Court, ignorance is no defence against prosecution.”

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