

Resource

Glyphosate

September 2026

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is glyphosate?

Glyphosate is a broad-spectrum herbicide active substance. In simple terms, glyphosate is a weedkiller used to eliminate unwanted invasive plants, also known as weeds.

Glyphosate products are registered and used in more than 100 countries, including Great Britain (GB).

Where is glyphosate used?

Glyphosate is used to control unwanted weeds that can interfere with agriculture, infrastructure and other managed areas. Farmers use glyphosate to control weeds that compete with crops and can reduce their growth and quality. It can also be used around roads and railways, where excessive plant growth could cause safety and maintenance problems.

Who regulates glyphosate in Great Britain?

Glyphosate is regulated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), through its Chemicals Regulation Division (CRD) for use in GB (England, Scotland, and Wales). Their assessment is science-based and follows strict legal and regulatory standards.

GB operates a separate plant protection product ('pesticide') regulatory system from the EU, while Northern Ireland continues to follow some EU rules.

Is glyphosate safe for humans?

Glyphosate is one of the world's most extensively studied herbicides. It has been used for more than 50 years, since its introduction in the 1970s.

Regulatory authorities in Europe, the United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and elsewhere have assessed glyphosate and continue to conclude that glyphosate can be used safely. For instance, the EU renewed the approval of glyphosate for 10 years in 2023 after a 32-month review, concluding that ‘glyphosate is considered not to pose any harmful effects on human health or unacceptable effects on the environment.’

Is glyphosate safe in our food?

Before any agricultural chemical or pesticide can be sold and used, it must undergo rigorous scientific assessment by regulators. In GB, the CRD of the HSE is responsible for assessing glyphosate. These bodies establish the maximum allowable amount of each pesticide by setting maximum residue levels (MRLs). MRLs set the amount of pesticide residue that is legally permitted to remain in or on food, helping to ensure food is safe for consumption. MRLs are trade standards, set to reflect the levels that would be expected following good agricultural practice, but are always well within safety limits.

Is glyphosate bad for the environment?

Like other crop protection and weed management products, glyphosate plays an essential role in environmental management. By controlling weeds without the need for extensive soil disturbance, glyphosate can support conservation tillage practices. These practices can help reduce soil erosion by up to 90%, improve water retention and maintain or increase carbon storage.

Does glyphosate cause cancer?

Glyphosate has undergone extensive scientific evaluation and is registered for use around the world. Based on assessments by regulatory authorities, glyphosate does not pose a cancer risk to humans.

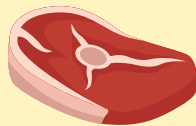
In 2015, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) added glyphosate to its list of ‘probably carcinogenic to humans.’ This was based on “limited” evidence of cancer in humans (from real-world exposures) and “sufficient” evidence of cancer in experimental animals (from studies of “pure” glyphosate).

It is important to understand that IARC is not a regulatory authority. Its classifications identify potential hazards but do not determine the level of risk associated with a particular exposure. IARC has also classified a range of other commonly encountered substances and exposures at the same hazard level, including red meat, high-temperature frying of foods, and night shift work. By the simplistic IARC measures

tobacco smoking, alcohol consumption and sawdust are more carcinogenic to humans than glyphosate.

IARC classified glyphosate...

as the same risk
as



red meat



high temperature
frying



night shift work

and less risk
than



tobacco



alcohol



sawdust

As of September 2026, the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) concluded that glyphosate does not meet the criteria to be classified as a carcinogenic under EU chemicals law. ECHA's Risk Assessment Committee (RAC) reviewed new evidence, including a study by the Ramazzini Institute, as well as feedback from a public consultation from 2026.

What if we didn't have glyphosate?

Without glyphosate, there would still be options for managing weeds, but farmers would likely face greater reliance on alternative herbicides and mechanical weed control. This could increase costs, fuel use and soil disturbance, potentially affecting crop productivity and, in turn, food security.

What is the Glyphosate Renewal Group GB?

The Glyphosate Renewal Group (GRG) in GB is a collection of companies seeking the renewal of glyphosate's approval for use in GB. The member companies offer resources and expertise to provide scientific studies and information on the safety of glyphosate.

A world with vs. without glyphosate



With glyphosate

- Reduce soil erosion by 90%
- Improve soil water retention, helping increase crop productivity
- Increase carbon storage and build healthier soils
- Reduce farmer accidents by minimising the need for heavy machinery operations



Without glyphosate

- Will significantly impact soil health, leading to soil degradation and increased erosion
- Release significant amount of CO₂ into the atmosphere through intensive farming practices
- Require more land to maintain yields, contributing to higher rates of deforestation

Further Reading

Health and Safety Executive

[Active substance renewal: glyphosate](#)

European Union

[Glyphosate](#)

International Agency for Research on Cancer, World Health Organisation

[IARC Monograph on Glyphosate](#)

European Chemicals Agency

[Glyphosate](#)

Agricultural Industries Confederation

[FAQS: Glyphosate](#)

Bayer

[Glyphosate FAQs](#)

CropLife Australia

[Glyphosate - The Facts](#)

Glyphosate Renewal Group (GB)

[What is the Glyphosate Renewal Group \(GB\)?](#)

For any questions, please contact [CropLife UK](#)