

Under fire over Monsanto's glyphosate, Bayer vows 'transparency'

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Having a successor to the controversial herbicide glyphosate would help Bayer eventually move on from its costly buyout of Monsanto

Pharmaceutical giant Bayer announced Friday plans to invest five billion euros (\$5.6 billion) over the next decade in a new generation of herbicides and promised more transparency after the Monsanto "watch

list" scandal.

Since it acquired Monsanto for \$63 billion in 2018—one of the largest deals in German corporate history—Bayer has been lumbered with a massive burden of health-related lawsuits because of Round Up, the American company's glyphosate herbicide.

Monsanto has also come under fire after it was revealed that it kept lists of key pro- or anti-pesticides figures in at least seven EU countries.

Amid the spiralling row over glyphosate, Leverkusen-based Bayer said it would offer more "transparency" during the process of renewing the licence of glyphosate in the European Union.

The German company insisted however that glyphosate "will continue to play an important role in agriculture and in Bayer's portfolio".

At the same time, Bayer said it is "committed to offering more choices for growers and will invest approximately five billion euros in additional methods to combat weeds" in the next decade.

It also aims to "reduce the environmental impact by 30 percent by 2030" of its agricultural products, it said.

These measures, Bayer said, "address questions and concerns" it has heard "following its acquisition of Monsanto."

Round-Up has been the subject of three costly judgements in California in recent months and is now the subject of more than 13,000 claims in the United States.

In the last year, Bayer has seen around 40 percent wiped off its share price.

Glyphosate is classified as a "probably carcinogenic" by the World Health Organisation (WHO), but the EU in December 2017 renewed the licence of the weedkiller across Europe for five years.

The licence runs until December 15, 2022 and any request for renewal must be submitted by the end of the year.

In France, Bayer is under investigation for allegedly keeping lists of key pro- and anti-pesticides figures drawn up by a PR agency on behalf of Monsanto.

Last month, Bayer admitted that Monsanto kept similar lists in at least seven EU countries.

AFP has filed a complaint with a French data protection regulatory body because some of its journalists were on the list.

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