

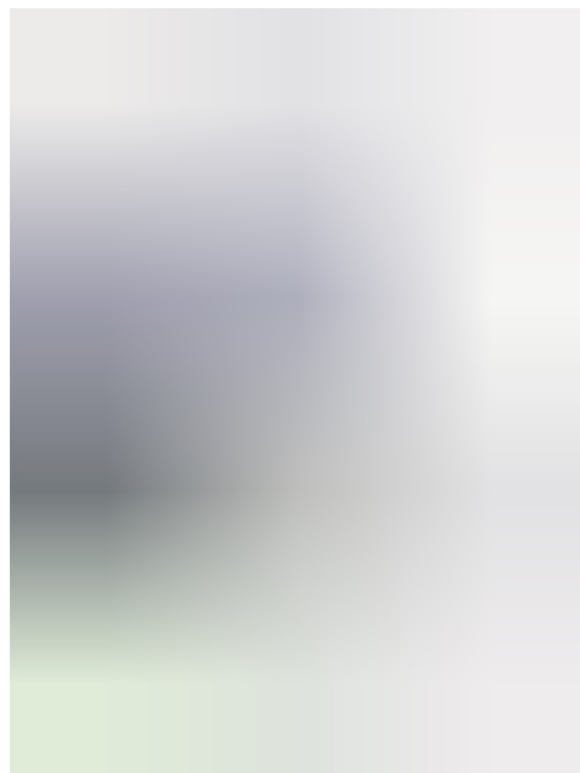
Pesticide giants make billions from bee-harming and carcinogenic chemicals

Lausanne, Zurich, 20 February 2020

Pesticides

Syngenta

A groundbreaking investigation by Public Eye and the investigative unit of Greenpeace UK, Uearthed, reveals that more than a third of the pesticide sales made by BASF, Bayer Crop Science, Corteva Agriscience, FMC and Syngenta contain chemicals that are highly toxic to health or the environment. The companies' principal markets? Developing and emerging countries, where regulations are weaker and risks higher.



©

Public Eye and Uearthed obtained data from the market analysis company Phillips McDougall, which detail : billion dollars of agricultural pesticide sales in 2018, or approximately 40% of the world market. We analysed the c using the list of highly hazardous pesticide established by the Pesticide Action Network (PAN). The results show th the German companies Bayer and BASF, the American Corteva and FMC and the Swiss Syngenta together made 35% their sales income from pesticides that pose the highest levels of risk to health or the environment. This represent billion dollars of the 13.4 billion in pesticide sales made by the five companies that are covered by the c

United in the powerful lobby group CropLife International these giants position themselves as a group of responsible companies, who «are innovating to replace highly hazardous pesticides with newer, less toxic products». Our rese

highlights a completely different reality

- In 2018, the five main members of CropLife made nearly a quarter of their sales income (22%) from pesticides associated with long-term health effects. At the top of the list: substances classified as “probable carcinogens” or that can affect the reproductive system or childhood development, such as chlorothalonil and chlorpyrifos, which have just been banned in Switzerland.
- The firms also generated 4% of their sales income with pesticides that highly acutely toxic. Such substances cause 25 million severe farmer poisonings every year, resulting in 220,000 deaths, mainly in developing countries. Syngenta is responsible for two-thirds of these sales.
- The companies made 10% of their sales income from pesticides that highly toxic to bees, such as the neonicotinoids, implicated in the massive disappearance of numerous pollinating insects worldwide.

Our analysis also shows that developing and emerging countries are the privileged playing fields of these multinationals who make nearly 60% of their sales of highly hazardous pesticides in such countries. The firms take advantage of the weakness of regulations in countries like Brazil and India to continue selling substances that are banned in the European Union and in Switzerland. Whereas such chemicals cannot be used safely, especially in such countries.

«This practice of the agrochemical giants is irresponsible and contradicts their public commitment to a more sustainable agricultural model», said Baskut Tuncak, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and toxics. «Whether they poison workers, extinguish biodiversity, persist in the environment, or accumulate in a mother's breast milk, highly hazardous pesticides are unsustainable. They should have been phased out long ago».

Given the refusal of the pesticide manufacturers to act voluntarily, Switzerland and the other countries that host these firms should enact strict measures to guarantee that the companies respect human rights and the environment in the countries where they operate.

More information [here](#) or by contacting:

Géraldine Viret, communication officer, +41 21 620 03 00 geraldine.viret@publiceye.ch

Laurent Gaberell, agriculture and biodiversity expert, +41 21 620 06 11 laurent.gaberell@publiceye.ch

Infographics

[CropLife's top selling hazardous pesticides](#)

[Each CropLife company's top-selling hazardous pesticide](#)

[CropLife's hazardous pesticide sales in high vs. low/middle-income countries](#)

[Crops that drive world trade in hazardous pesticides](#)

Public Eye
Dienerstrasse 12
P.O. box
8021 Zurich
T +41 44 2 777 999
kontakt@publiceye.ch



© 2020 Public Eye