



# Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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## Press Statement

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### **CAP: Immediate ban on the sale of glyphosate-based herbicides**

The Consumers Association of Penang reiterate its calls to the authorities to impose an immediate ban on the sale of glyphosate-based herbicides as it is found to be hazardous to humans, wildlife and the environment.

Recently a man from Brooklyn USA is seeking \$5 million claims in a class action law suit against Pepsico the company that produces Quaker Oats. According to the lawsuit the famous breakfast food claims that it is 100% Natural as false, deceptive and misleading because the company uses glyphosate in processing its oats.

The substance is used both as a weed killer and it is sprayed on the oats as a drying agent shortly before harvest claim the man from Brooklyn in his federal court lawsuit.

However our Director General of Health had issued a statement that Quaker Oats in Malaysia does not contain glyphosate. According to our Food Regulation the presence of glyphosate is allowed up to a level of 30 parts per million. Glyphosate is being sprayed on oats, wheat, barley and other crops as a dessicant.

Glyphosate is the chief ingredient in **Roundup** weed killer, from Monsanto. In Malaysia there are about 172 herbicide products which contain glyphosate.

Presently Sri Lanka and El Salvador have banned glyphosate after a recent study linked the herbicide to a Fatal Chronic Kidney Disease (CKDu) . It was reported that CKDu is the second leading cause of death among males in poor regions of Sri Lanka, and El Salvador.

According to a new study published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, glyphosate becomes highly toxic when mixed with 'hard' water or heavy metals like arsenic or cadmium that naturally exists within the soil or added as fertilizer.

In Malaysia some 2.5 million have some form of kidney disease, at present, there are about 30,000 people on dialysis and the number is increasing by about 5,000 to 6,000 each year. Every year, about 10% of dialysis patients die due to lack of organ donors.

Last year CAP brought up this issue to the Ministry Agriculture, however in spite of the hazards associated with glyphosate they informed us that it will not be banned.

In a letter to the Ministry of Agriculture,(which was forwarded to CAP). The Pesticide Board gave the following reasons for allowing glyphosate to be used:

- It has been used in Malaysia for more than 40 years.
- It is widely used by the plantation sector and small scale farmers
- Low toxicity compared to other herbicides.
- It is only a probable cancer causing agent

Glyphosate is increasingly associated with health problems such as infertility, birth defects, damage to the nervous system, Parkinson's disease and several forms of cancer. In addition to health risks for humans, the usage of glyphosate can also lead to loss of biodiversity and difficulties with purifying drinking water.

Glyphosate is a broad spectrum non-selective systemic herbicide. It is used to eliminate essentially all annual and perennial plants including grasses, sedges, broad-leaved weeds and woody plants. It can be used for a variety of crops, and in horticulture and landscaping. It has been used in our oil palm plantations.

Glyphosate is one of the most widely used herbicide because it is the weed-killer that genetically modified corn and soybeans are engineered to "tolerate". Due to this glyphosate is being sprayed over vast tracts of farmland as farmers are confident that their crops will not be harmed by the herbicide.

As of December 2015 glyphosate has been banned or restricted in several countries in Europe, North America, Latin America and Asia.

The majority of the glyphosate-containing herbicides are supplied with various surfactants, to make them water soluble. That allows the herbicide to spread over the plant leaves.

In some reports, the toxicity arising from glyphosate products is said to be enhanced by the surfactant incorporated into the formulation.

Glyphosate residues are neither removed by washing nor broken down by cooking. The herbicide residue remains on food for more than a year, even if processed, dried, or frozen.

Glyphosate not only causes cancer. It is also associated with increased spontaneous abortions, birth defects, skin diseases, and respiratory and neurological disease.

As the serious harm to health, wildlife and the environment caused by the use of glyphosate herbicides is clear, there is a compelling case for banning or phasing out glyphosate-based herbicides worldwide and Malaysia should follow this trend.

In view of its toxicity CAP calls on the Ministry of Agriculture to ban glyphosate-based herbicide. Meanwhile agribusiness to focus on the application should move away from the use of toxic chemicals and to move towards the use of safer organic production method.

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