

### Leading expert of EFSA – sponsored by Monsanto?

Confidential emails reveal how Monsanto secretly influences European scientists

**18 August 2017/ A number of emails published by US consumer attorneys show how Monsanto is secretly influencing European scientists behind the scenes in order to have their herbicide glyphosate declared as being non-carcinogenic. It seems that payments by Monsanto can be traced to a leading expert at the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA): It is likely that Jose Tarazona, head of the Pesticide Unit at EFSA, was funded by Monsanto for his participation at a conference in the US in 2017. According to available information, it can be assumed that the funding was channelled via a British toxicologist. At the conference Tarazona stated that glyphosate should not be considered to be carcinogenic.**

According to the emails, in March 2016, Monsanto approached a leading British toxicologist, Allister Vale. In essence, he was asked to publicly defend the authorisation of glyphosate as a herbicide. Allister Vale agreed in principle to cooperate, but did not want to receive funding from Monsanto directly. He, therefore, proposed routing the money via Society of Toxicology (SOT) conferences. This proposal was welcomed by Monsanto.

Indeed, in 2017, Allister Vale, organised an expert discussion on glyphosate at the annual conference of the SOT in the US. The event was chaired by Mr Vale and included Jose Tarazona in his official role as the head of the Pesticide Unit at EFSA. Mr Tarazona took up a strong position on glyphosate stating it is not carcinogenic. Monsanto was not named as a source of funding for the conference. However, after taking a closer look at the published program of the event, it is clear that Jose Tarazona's participation was sponsored by Allister Vale. In the program, the presentation of Mr Tarazona is announced as follows: *"Is Glyphosate Probable Human Carcinogen? No!. J. Tarazona. European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Pesticides Unit, Parma, Italy. Sponsor: A. Vale"*.

This unusual circumstance, the private sponsoring of a leading EFSA expert, gives validity to the assumption that Monsanto was behind the hidden funding that not only went to Allister Vale, but also to the leading expert at EFSA.

"Hidden funding in science seems to be one of Monsanto's most reliable ways of influencing decisions on their products," says Christoph Then for Testbiotech. "As yet, we are not seeing enough willingness on the part of authorities and politicians to take action. We now want to know from EFSA exactly how and why Jose Tarazona's presentation was funded."

The emails show that Monsanto quickly reached an agreement with Vale, but he was eager for the flow of money to be well hidden. Consequently, he proposed that Monsanto and / or its cooperating institutions should fund SOT conferences in 2017. In response, Daniel Goldstein, a leading expert at Monsanto wrote: *„At this point, I certainly understand the need for Monsanto (and the other manufacturers) to stand back from proceedings and to participate as observers at most (if at all). Funding can perhaps come from the Glyphosate Consortium which is conducting the EU re-registration or via ECETOX or CEFIC, for example, and be routed via SOT or one or more academic institutions. At that point, we can be "hands off" altogether.“*

Testbiotech has now sent a letter to the EFSA demanding detailed information. It is not entirely clear whether Mr Tarazona was aware of the original source of the funding. However, private sponsoring of a leading EFSA expert should always raise immediate concerns.

In the communications between Monsanto and Mr Vale, another British expert, Colin Berry, played a prominent role. He is said to have already benefited from Monsanto payments in previous years, whereby the payments appear to have been routed via his university. It seems that Monsanto wanted to resume activities with Berry and a group of toxicologists that he headed, and also asked Allister Vale to be part of these activities.

Monsanto activities were successful in regard to Colin Berry and the scientists with whom he cooperates: In May 2016, Berry and other like-minded scientists met with EU Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis. The EU Commissioner was happy to be photographed with the experts. Their topic of discussion at the time was the safety of chemicals. Meanwhile, Mr Andriukaitis has taken the position of prolonging the authorisation of glyphosate for another ten years.

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**Further information:**

The confidential emails from Monsanto: <http://baumhedlundlaw.com/pdf/monsanto-documents/70-Email-Details-Monsantos-Financial-Support-of-Glyphosate-Research-Without-Disclosing-Companys-Interest.pdf>

The program of the annual meeting of the Society of Toxicology in 2017 (page 141):  
[www.toxicology.org/pubs/docs/Prog/2017Program.pdf](http://www.toxicology.org/pubs/docs/Prog/2017Program.pdf)

Report mentioning Colin Berry's visit in Brussels:  
<https://corporateeurope.org/food-and-agriculture/2016/05/busy-may-professor-boobis>