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Despite Public Outcry, EPA Registers Enlist Duo

(October 15, 2014 – Washington, D.C.) Despite a massive outpouring of public opposition, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced today that it has registered Enlist-Duo,[®] an herbicide that incorporates a mix of glyphosate and a new formulation of 2,4-D, intended for use on genetically engineered (GE) Enlist-Duo[®]-tolerant corn and soybean crops, officially ushering in the new wave of GE 2,4-D tolerant crops.

“EPA approval of this herbicide sets a dangerous precedent,” says Jay Feldman, executive director of Beyond Pesticides. “Instead of looking to alternatives, regulators are signaling that the answer to widespread weed resistance is more toxic products that endanger farmworkers and farming communities.”

As Beyond Pesticides noted in its comments submitted to EPA in June of this year, approval of this product demonstrates that the U.S. pesticide and agricultural regulatory system puts people and the environment before industry bottom lines.

Adverse effects of 2,4-D, a chlorophenoxy herbicide, are plentiful and include human health risks of soft tissue sarcoma, non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, neurotoxicity, kidney/liver damage, and harm to the reproductive system. Research also points to an increased risk of birth defects and EPA-acknowledged risks of increased-weed resistance.

There are concerning safety gaps in the human health risk assessment that Dow Agrosiences provided to EPA for Enlist-Duo[®]’s registration. These issues are compounded by EPA’s decision to waive the tenfold safety standards under the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA), a fact questioned by U.S. Representative Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) in a letter to EPA sent at the end of August.

Public opposition to both the clearance of Enlist-Duo[®]-tolerant seeds and registration of Enlist Duo[®] has been clear. Over the 60-day public comment period, which ended back in March, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) received over 10,000 comments on its draft environmental impact statement and plant pest risk assessments. Of these comments, over 88%, including Beyond Pesticides, were opposed to the non-regulated status of the Enlist varieties. During a recent 30-day “review period” in August for the final environmental impact statement, the agency received 969 submissions. Again the majority did not support deregulation. Additionally the agency received over 240,000 signatures from three non-government organizations opposing the deregulation of the Enlist crops. Beyond Pesticides joins the chorus of citizens, environmental and consumer groups opposed to the increased use of this product in communities throughout the U.S.

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