



Dow AgroSciences' 'Forefront' Causes Chaos in Highland Gardens

GENITICALLY MODIFIED?.....NO

MODIFIED GENITICALLY....YES!

Amateur gardeners throughout the UK tend to prefer growing vegetables, fruit and flowers, organically whenever possible.

Now most of us believe that good old fashioned cow sh-t is one of the best, if not the very best, organic fertilisers available.

Alas, for at least twelve local growers in the Highlands of Scotland this has proved to be not so. They all have suffered a severe shock this season by seeing their precious produce growing in a grotesque manner.

At Seacrest the first signs of such contortions were seen in five separate rose bushes, two of which were established for over twenty years, an Iceberg and a Pink Peace. The other three bushes were relatively young being in their third year and doing nicely.

For internet viewers the digital images displayed on my sites www.independent-highlander.co.uk and www.dilettantegardener.co.uk clearly illustrate the extent that plants have suffered after being treated with cow dung produced from cows grazing pasture after being treated with the Dow AgroSciences herbicide, trade name *Forefront*.

Apart from some relatively minor trials by farmers in the UK, growing Genetically Modified crops have been prohibited by the Government of the day.

However all that is about to change, as our European Masters have now agreed to allow Genetically Modified crops to be grown on some parts of the EU's agricultural land.

As we all are well aware of the *Human Rights Act* so it will only be a matter of time before some farm conglomerate in the UK claim that its H.Rs. are being denied and so raise a civil action for permission to grow such crops.

Law Court judges have to follow the letter of the law and could only find in favour of the pursuant.

As I understand it in my limited and some what humble way, Genetically Modified plants may be reproduced in their modified status 'year on year' without change.

Again in my own way I am convinced that Dow AgroSciences' **aminopyralid** fortified herbicide, trade name *Forefront* causes modification of plant genes in their growing stages. Whether these changes could be reproduced the following year from seed or cuttings, (grown in sterile conditions) remains to be seen, for after all apparently *Forefront* has been on sale for just two years so its real impact has yet to be experienced, at our (the gardeners) cost.

There again nobody seems to be able to say (or will say) for certain that that herbicide will not induce Genetically Modified forms in animal or human foetuses, should pregnant animals or humans come in contact in one way or another with, Dow AgroSciences' aminopyralid reinforced herbicide.

Despite a petition containing several hundred signatures delivered to Parliament, against the continued use of the herbicide, sales still flourish.

Admittedly the Dow AgroSciences' **aminopyralid** was withdrawn from sale for a short period but was then reinstated. (See details on following page).

The Independent Highlander (with thanks) freely admits to using extracts from numerous Web publications, in its exposure of Dow AgroSciences harmful herbicide marketed under the trade name of *Forefront*.

Aminopyralid is a dangerous chemical which has caused serious damage and both the Soil Association and Organic Growers Association want it banned from sale. It has been discovered that it can remain active, damage subsequent crops, **and can pose a human health threat**, even after the crop to which it has been applied has been eaten by a horse or cow, passed through the animal, been stored as farm yard manure, and eventually applied to another crop.

After government lobbying by the Soil Association, OGA, Garden Organic, and others, and following many cases of damage to crops in 2008, the product was withdrawn from sale by the manufacturers Dow AgroScience Ltd. It was then re-instated in September 2009 by the Chemicals Regulations Directorate (CRD), with supposed 'enhanced stewardship requirements' which are in fact un-enforced, and despite a petition on the last Prime Minister's website which raised over 1500 objections and a submission from concerned allotment holders.

Aminopyralid is the active ingredient in a broadleaf herbicide used to control weeds on non-organic grasslands. It is marketed under the brand names Forefront and Mileway by Dow AgroSciences.

"The problem has not gone away and there may still be manure around that contains herbicide from 2008. It may also be that the 'stewardship' proposals, which aim to prevent manure leaving farms where **aminopyralid** has been used, are not working. We urge growers to be careful about where they are sourcing their manure from. This product should never have been re-licensed - manure contaminated with this herbicide is no longer a valuable resource for gardeners but a toxic waste product. The fact that this hormone weed killer is still causing significant problems for growers despite this industry attempts to prevent damage means that it should be immediately banned by the government"

The chemicals of greatest concern are picloram, clopyralid, and aminopyralid because they can remain active in hay, grass clippings, piles of manure, and compost for an unusually long time.

These herbicides eventually break down through exposure to sunlight, soil microbes, heat, and moisture. Depending on the situation, the herbicides can be deactivated in as few as 30 days, but some field reports indicate that breakdown can take as long as three to four

years. Degradation is particularly slow in piles of manure and compost. When mulches, manures, or composts with herbicide activity are applied to fields or gardens to raise certain vegetables, flowers, or other broadleaf crops, potentially devastating damage can occur.

Crops known to be sensitive to picloram, clopyralid, or aminopyralid are: Beans; Carrots; Compositae family; Cotton; Dahlias; Eggplant; Flowers, in general; Grapes; Legumes; Lettuce; Marigolds; Mushrooms; Peas; Peppers; Potatoes; Roses, some types; Spinach; Sugar beets; Strawberries; Sunflowers; Tobacco; Tomatoes; Umbelliferae family; Vegetables, in general.

Source: Soil Association

"We have an allotment in Cheltenham. Several are badly affected by cow manure from local organic farmer who buys in straw which he says must have been affected. Man from Dow came to look and advised aminopyralid is designed to break down in the soil but will take time. He suggested probably another year for compost already used, but 2 or 3 years for any still heaped. Also basically only way to find out is to try growing each year and seeing effect!!!!!! He also said he personally would not eat affected crops. Not very reassuring!!!! Tony."

There are dozens of e-mails like Tony's all complaining about the effect that Dow AgroSciences' herbicides have on their gardens.

One of Dow's recommendations is that dung from animals grazing treated pastures should not be permitted to leave the farm. Yet there are reports from all over the UK that that recommendation is being ignored either knowingly or otherwise.

Irresponsible farmers spreading this 'muck' about on a largely unknowing public should, be charged and fined heavily.

And Dow should be made to lodge a very large amount of dollars as a surety that their product will not have a harmful or lasting effect on the British public. Hit them where it hurts most. After all we amateur gardeners are being severely hurt as our hobby takes a knock, and perhaps years to recover.

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Gardeners have been warned not to eat home-grown vegetables contaminated by a powerful new herbicide that is destroying gardens and allotments across the UK. The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) has been inundated with calls from concerned gardeners who have seen potatoes, beans, peas, carrots and salad vegetables wither or become grossly deformed. The society admitted that it had no idea of the extent of the problem, but said it appeared 'significant'. The affected gardens and allotments have been contaminated by manure originating from farms where the hormone-based herbicide aminopyralid has been sprayed on fields.

Dow AgroSciences, which manufactures aminopyralid, has posted advice to allotment holders and gardeners on its website. Colin Bowers, Dow's UK grassland marketing manager, told The Observer that links to their products had been proved in some of the cases, but it was not clear whether aminopyralid was responsible for all of them and tests were continuing. 'It is undoubtedly a problem,' he said, 'and I have got full sympathy for everyone who is involved with this.'

He said the company was unable to advise gardeners that it was 'safe' to consume vegetables that had come into contact with the manure because of pesticide regulations. 'All we can say is that the trace levels of aminopyralid that are likely to be in these crops are of such low levels that they are unlikely to cause a problem to human health.' **The Dow website says: 'As a general rule, we suggest damaged produce (however this is caused) should not be consumed.'** Those who have already used contaminated manure are advised not to replant on the affected soil for at least a year.

Aminopyralid, which is found in several Dow products, the most popular being Forefront, a herbicide, is not licensed to be used on food crops and carries a label warning farmers using it not to sell manure that might contain residue to gardeners. The Pesticides Safety Directorate, which has issued a regulatory update on the weed killer, is taking samples from affected plants for testing. Problems with the herbicide emerged late last year, when commercial potato growers reported damaged crops. In response, Dow launched a campaign within the agriculture industry to ensure that farmers were aware of how the products should be used. Nevertheless, the herbicide has now entered the food chain. Those affected are demanding an investigation

Aminopyralid is popular with farmers, who spray it on grassland because it controls weeds such as docks, thistles and nettles without affecting the grass around them. It binds itself to the woody tissue in the grass and only breaks down when exposed to bacteria in the soil.

A retired management consultant with an allotment near Bushy Park in Hampton, South-West London, said several of her allotment neighbours had used the same manure bought from a stables and all were affected. 'I am absolutely incensed at what has happened and find it scandalous that a weed killer sprayed more than one year ago, that has passed through an animal's gut, was kicked around on a stable floor, stored in a muck heap in a field, then on an allotment site and was finally dug into or mulched on to beds last winter is still killing "sensitive" crops and will continue to do so for the next year,' she said.

'It's very toxic, it shouldn't get into the food chain. You try to be as organic as you can and we have poisoned our food. I've been everywhere, emailed all the right people, but nobody will speak on the record to guarantee what is safe to eat. We all think it is a scandal. Not to mention what it has cost in time and money.'

The RHS head of horticultural advisory services said, 'Our advice is **not to eat the vegetables because no one seems to have any idea whether it is safe to eat them** and we can't give any assurances. 'It is happening all over the country'.

Dow is planning a major publicity campaign to reiterate warnings to farmers over usage, and to encourage allotment holders to check the provenance of manure that they put down in an effort to prevent the problem escalating. On compensation, it was less forthcoming. 'There is no easy answer to that,' said Bowers. 'The first port of call is always where the manure comes from. From that point on, I can't really comment.'

A legal consultant at the National Society of Allotments and Leisure Gardeners, is preparing claims for some members to seek financial compensation from the manure suppliers. But it was difficult to trace the exact origins of each contaminated batch. 'It seems to be everywhere. From what I know, it is endemic throughout England and Wales. We will be

The PAST!.....and.....the FUTURE?

THE TRAGEDY AT BHOPAL

In the early hours of Monday, Dec. 3, 1984, a toxic cloud of methyl isocyanate (MIC) gas enveloped the hundreds of shanties and huts surrounding a pesticide plant in Bhopal, India. Later, as the deadly cloud slowly drifted in the cool night air through streets in surrounding sections, sleeping residents awoke, coughing, choking, and rubbing painfully stinging eyes.

The gas cloud was composed mainly of materials denser than the surrounding air, stayed close to the ground and spread outwards through the surrounding community. The initial effects of exposure were coughing, vomiting, severe eye irritation and a feeling of suffocation. People awakened by these symptoms fled away from the plant. Those who ran inhaled more than those who had a vehicle to ride. Owing to their height, children and other people of shorter stature inhaled higher concentrations.

Thousands of people had succumbed by the morning hour. There were mass funerals and mass cremations as well as disposal of bodies in the Narmada river. 170,000 people were treated at hospitals and temporary dispensaries. 2,000 buffalo, goats, and other animals were collected and buried. Within a few days, leaves on trees yellowed and fell off. Supplies, including food, became scarce owing to suppliers' safety fears. Fishing was prohibited as well, which caused further supply shortages.

At that time the plant was operated by Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL) holding 49.1% with the Union Carbide Corporation (UCC) owning 50.9%.

In 1994, the Supreme Court of India allowed UCC to sell its 50.9 percent share. The Bhopal plant was sold to McLeod Russel (India) Ltd. UCC is now a subsidiary of Dow Chemical.

What, I hear you ask, has this got to do with Euilleam and Morag's vegetables being contaminated by Dow AgroSicences' herbicides? (Not forgetting the hundreds of amateur gardeners who have suffered the same fate with their cherished produce.)

DOW's HIGHLAND ACQUISITION

Last year Dow Chemical bought over 800 acres, or thereby, of land adjacent to KBR's largely idle oil rig building yard at Nigg Ferry by Tain.

Many local people wondered why they would do such a thing, believing that the company had some inside information into the re-commencement of fabrication and perhaps the land would be used as some sort of 'ransom strip'.

How very wrong people can be. Apparently Dow Chemical will be responsible for providing almost all of the Eastern Bloc countries with millions of tons of herbicides, pesticides and perhaps with 'othercides' that have yet to be developed and we know nothing about, worth billions of dollars.

Dow is also involved in the production and supply of genetically modified seeds in the States and as already disclosed the EU Government will allow crops to be grown from such seeds, shortly. (UK next?)

So, friends, neighbours and readers of the 'Highlander' we can assume that in the not too distant future a Planning Application may be lodged with Highland Council, for the development of the said 800 acres, or thereby, into a manufacture/storage complex for Dow to produce all things to do with 'cides'. In addition no doubt they will also apply for permission to build their own wharf from their sea base frontage out to the deep water channel. (A shortcut to Russia perhaps?)

Heaven forbid that when they are in production such an accident can happen similar to that that happen in Bhopal. Personally I have no faith in the Dow Chemical conglomerate and even less so now seeing the cavalier attitude they have adopted to the misuse of their lauded herbicide Aminopyralid (Forefront).

Petition your MSP, MP or MEP. This poisoning of our country MUST STOP. Ed.