

Message

From: MILLER, SARA E [Redacted]
Sent: 6/18/2017 11:56:04 PM
To: PARTRIDGE, SCOTT S [Redacted]
CC: RANDS, TODD [Redacted]; MURPHEY, SAMUEL
[Redacted]
Subject: Re: Gilliams response

Flagged for Christi already to make sure Bloomberg is featured in clips tomorrow.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 18, 2017, at 5:43 PM, PARTRIDGE, SCOTT S [Redacted] wrote:

I trust this garbage will not be featured in our Clips. The Bloomberg piece should be included.

Scott Partridge

C: [Redacted]

On Jun 17, 2017, at 8:15 AM, RANDS, TODD [Redacted] wrote:

[Carey Gillam, Contributor](#) I am a veteran journalist and research director for U.S. Right to Know, a non-profit consumer education group.

Monsanto Spin Doctors Target Cancer Scientist in Flawed Reuters Story

06/16/2017 06:09 pm ET | Updated 11 hours ago



In a well-orchestrated and highly coordinated media coup, Monsanto Co. and friends this week dropped a bombshell on opponents who are seeking to prove that the company's beloved Roundup herbicide causes cancer.

A widely circulated story published June 14 in the global news outlet Reuters (for which I formerly worked) laid out what appeared to be a scandalous story of hidden information and a secretive scientist, "exclusive" revelations that the story said could have altered a critical 2015 classification that associated Monsanto's Roundup to cancer and triggered waves of lawsuits against Monsanto.

It was a blockbuster of a story, and was repeated by news organizations around the globe, pushed by press releases from Monsanto-backed organizations and trumpeted by industry allies like the American Chemistry Council.

It was also flawed and misleading in a number of critical respects.

Authored by Reuters' reporter Kate Kelland, who has a history of cozy relations with a group partly funded by agricultural company interests, the piece accused a top epidemiologist from the U.S. National Cancer Institute of failing to share "important" scientific data with other scientists as they all worked together assessing the herbicide glyphosate for the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). That group reviewed a wide body of research on glyphosate and determined in March of 2015 that the pesticide should be classified as a probable human carcinogen. Had the group known of this missing data, its conclusion could have been different, according to Reuters.

The story was particularly timely given glyphosate and Roundup are at the center of mass litigation in the United States and under scrutiny by U.S. and European regulators. After the IARC classification, Monsanto was sued by more than 1,000 people in the United States who claim they or their loved ones got non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL) from exposure to Monsanto's glyphosate-based Roundup and the company and the cases could start going to trial next year. Roundup is the most widely used herbicide in the world and brings in billions of dollars a year for Monsanto. The company insists the IARC classification is meritless and the chemical is proven safe by decades of research.

So yes, it was a big story that scored big points for Monsanto in the debate over glyphosate safety. But, drilling deeply into the sourcing and selective nature of the Reuters piece makes it clear the story is not only seriously flawed, but that it is part of an ongoing and carefully crafted effort by Monsanto and the pesticide industry to discredit IARC's work.

The story contains at least two apparent factual errors that go to the credibility of its theme. First the story cites "court documents" as primary sources when in fact the documents referred to have not been filed in court and thus are not publicly available for reporters or members of the public to access. Kelland does not share links to the documents she references but makes it clear her information is largely based on a deposition from Aaron Blair, the National Cancer Institute epidemiologist who chaired the IARC working group on glyphosate, as well as related emails and other records. All were obtained by Monsanto as part of the discovery process for the Roundup litigation that is pending in federal court in San Francisco. By citing court documents, Kelland avoided addressing whether or not Monsanto or its allies spoon-fed the records to her. And because the article did not provide a link to the Blair deposition, readers are unable to see the full discussion of the unpublished study or the multiple comments by Blair of many other studies that do show evidence of links between glyphosate and cancer. I'm providing the deposition here, and disclosing that I requested and obtained it from attorneys involved in the Roundup litigation after Kelland's story was published.

Second, the story relies in part on an anti-IARC view of a scientist named Bob Tarone and refers to him as an "independent" expert, someone "independent of Monsanto." Kelland quotes Tarone as saying that IARC's evaluation of glyphosate is "flawed and incomplete." Except, according to information provided by IARC, Tarone is far from independent of Monsanto; Tarone in fact has acknowledged that he is a paid consultant to Monsanto, and a piece cited by Reuters and authored by Tarone last year in a European scientific journal is being recorrected to reflect Tarone's conflict of interest, according to IARC, which said it has been in communication with that journal.

But much more noteworthy than the errors is how selective the story is in pulling from the Blair deposition. The story ignored Blair's many affirmations of research showing glyphosate connections to cancer, and

focused instead on Blair's knowledge of one unpublished research study that was still in progress. The story hones in on speculation that the data perhaps could have been finished and published in time to be reviewed by IARC and further speculation by Blair, prodded by a Monsanto attorney, that had it been finished and had it been published it could have helped counter the other studies IARC viewed that showed positive cancer connections.

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That research, part of a massive ongoing project by U.S. government researchers called the Agricultural Health Study, includes hundreds of studies and years of data analyzing pesticide impacts on farmers. Blair, who retired from the National Cancer Institute in 2007, was not leading that research but was part of a team of scientists who in 2013 were analyzing data about pesticide use and the risk of non-Hodgkin lymphoma. The data specific to glyphosate did not show a connection to NHL but in working to publish a paper about all the data the group had gathered, they decided to narrow the focus to insecticides and in 2014 did publish a paper on that work. The data on glyphosate and NHL has yet to be published, and some scientists who are familiar with the work say it has not tracked people long enough yet to be definitive given NHL generally takes 20 or more years to develop. A prior compilation of data by AHS researchers that also showed no connection between glyphosate and NHL was published in 2005 and was considered by IARC. But because the newer data was not published it was not considered by IARC.

Blair said the decision to limit the published work to insecticides was to make the data more manageable and was made well before IARC announced it would be looking at glyphosate in 2015.

"The rule is you only look at things that are published," Blair told me this week after the Reuters story was published. "What would it be like if everyone on the working group whispered things they knew but weren't published and made decisions on that?" IARC confirmed it does not

consider unpublished research. In his deposition, Blair states that nothing has changed his opinion about glyphosate and NHL.

Epidemiologist and University of Toronto scientist John McLaughlin, who sat on the glyphosate working group for IARC with Blair, said to me in a note this week that the information about the unpublished work written about by Reuters did not alter his view of the validity of IARC conclusion on glyphosate either.

Also left out of the Reuters story - the deposition and a draft copy of the study in question shows that there were concerns about the AHS results due to "relatively small" subgroups of exposed cases. And notably, the Reuters report leaves out Blair's discussion of the North American Pooled Project, in which he participated, which also contains data related to glyphosate and NHL but is not favorable to Monsanto. A synopsis of that project presented to the International Society for Environmental Epidemiology in 2015 showed that people who used glyphosate for more than five years had significantly increased odds of having NHL, and the risk was also significantly higher for people who handled glyphosate for more than two days per year. That information, like the new AHS data, was not given to IARC because it wasn't yet published.

"When Dr. Blair's deposition transcript is read in total, it shows that nothing was wrongfully withheld from IARC," said Plaintiffs' attorney Aimee Wagstaff. She said Monsanto was using pieces of the deposition to "further its agenda in the media."

To epidemiologist Peter Infante, who spent more than 20 years leading a cancer identification unit at the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and analyzed a body of epidemiology research on glyphosate in testimony to an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Scientific Advisory Committee in December, the attention drawn to unpublished data that supports Monsanto's position is much ado about nothing.

"You still have other studies that show dose response," he told me. "This Agricultural Health Study is not the gold standard. For glyphosate and NHL they haven't been following people long enough. Even if the data had been published and had been considered by IARC it would be in the context of all the other study results."

And finally, in an odd exclusion, the story fails to disclose that Kelland herself has at least tangential ties to Monsanto and friends. Kelland has helped promote an organization called the Science Media Centre, a group whose aim is to connect certain scientists such as Tarone with journalists like Kelland, and which gets its largest block of funding from corporations that include the agrichemical industry. Current and past funders include Monsanto, Monsanto's proposed merger partner Bayer AG, DuPont and agrichemical industry lobbyist CropLife International. Kelland appears in a promotional video for SMC touting the group and authored an essay applauding the SMC that appeared in a SMC promotional report.

As a Reuters reporter for 17 years (1998-2015) I know the value of an "exclusive." The more such scoops a reporter garners, the more bonus points and high praise from editors. It's a system seen in many news agencies and it works great when it encourages dogged, investigative journalism. But powerful corporations like Monsanto also know how eager reporters are to land exclusives and know that handing favored journalists cherry-picked information with the promise of exclusivity can serve their public relations needs quite well. Follow up the hand-fed story with a press release from an industry-funded outlet and calls for an investigation from the industry group American Chemistry Council and you have propaganda gold.

What you don't have is the truth.

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