

CCNB statement in response to report released by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health on glyphosate

July 29, 2016

FREDERICTON — Tracy Glynn, the forest program director of the Conservation Council of New Brunswick, issued the following statement about the report released today by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (OCMOH) on glyphosate.

The [report](#) confirms what we have long feared — that the forest industry uses more glyphosate in NB operations than any other province in Canada.

The report found that 40% of the forest land cut in NB in 2014 was sprayed with glyphosate compared to 28% in Ontario, 21% in Alberta, 18% in Manitoba and only 11% in Nova Scotia.

While 205,859 hectares were cut in Québec in the same year, no forest lands there were sprayed with glyphosate.

The analysis puts the key public policy question squarely back into the government's hands. Namely, why, of all places in Canada, is NB spending so much taxpayer money on our companies' spray programs when other jurisdictions, like Vermont and Québec, get on fine without it.

The report did discuss the human health risk associated with glyphosate. While it recognizes that there are many outstanding questions that need to be examined by Health Canada and its Pesticide Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) in its long overdue re-evaluation of the chemical, the report says human health risks can be reduced if its label restrictions are properly followed.

The OCMOH points out that public health agencies in Canada and elsewhere have adopted a "wait and see" approach. The PMRA is currently reassessing glyphosate. The review of glyphosate, not expected until 2017, was delayed due to what the OCMOH called "rapidly-evolving new information."

Beyond the scope of the OCMOH's report are other concerns related to glyphosate use in forestry that weigh heavily on the minds of New Brunswickers. These concerns need to be addressed by our provincial government and include the environmental impacts of the use of glyphosate on deer, moose and aquatic species, and on water quality.

The report points out the uncertainty surrounding glyphosate use world-wide. Some European countries, like France, Sweden, Italy and the Netherlands, are arguing for a complete ban of its use in both agriculture and forestry. We believe that this supports our recommendation that a prudent action would be to stop using it in forestry operations, especially since more responsible alternatives are available and their use, in fact, would create more jobs.

Additional Information

- NB farmers use less glyphosate than those in other provinces, primarily due to the fact that NB grows fewer bushels of genetically modified corn and soybeans.
- Québec banned herbicide use in its forests in 2001 due to public concern over human health impacts of spraying. Vermont, which has a similar forest type to New Brunswick, also stopped using herbicides in their forests, almost two decades ago, in 1997.
- NB's Auditor General recommended in her [2015 report](#) that public forests should be managed for economic, environmental and social values, and highlighted that the province has lost money from the management of public forests for at least the last five years.
- To see where NB forest will be sprayed this summer, click [here](#).