



WHO CORE ASSESSMENT GROUP ON PESTICIDES

EXPERT TASKFORCE ON CARCINOGENICITY OF DIAZINON, GLYPHOSATE AND MALATHION

Background

In March, 2015, 17 experts from 11 countries met at the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC; Lyon, France) to assess the carcinogenicity of the organophosphate pesticides. Glyphosate, malathion and diazinon were classified as “probably carcinogenic to humans” (Group 2A). These assessments will be published as volume 112 of the IARC Monographs.

The Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues is in charge of assessing the risk of pesticide residues in food. This risk assessment is performed in the context of the establishment of Maximum Residue Limits by the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the WHO Core Group on Pesticides is in charge of analysing all relevant information including those studies performed by the manufacturer. The JMPR last evaluated glyphosate, diazinon and malathion respectively in 2011, 2006 and 2003. These evaluations concluded that based on the weight of evidence the compounds were not genotoxic and any carcinogenicity was not considered to be the most critical endpoint at the level of exposure resulting of the proposed MRLs.

It is well understood that the respective roles of the IARC Monograph and WHO core group on pesticides are different, IARC dealing with hazard identification and WHO Core Group performing risk assessment for regulatory purpose. However, noting that new data could have been generated since the last evaluations by JMPR it is important to review the information available to IARC to determine whether there is a need to update the JMPR assessments.

It was then decided to create an *ad hoc* expert taskforce of the JMPR involving experts belonging to the WHO roster of experts as well as one of the key experts involved in IARC Monograph 112.

Terms of Reference

- The Taskforce should work only electronically and in English.
- The Taskforce should compare the publications considered by IARC (2015) and those considered by the JMPR (2003, 2006, 2011) for each of the 3 pesticides, and identify those that have not been considered by either IARC or JMPR.
- The Taskforce should consider whether newly available genotoxicity studies provide evidence that any of the compounds could be genotoxic.
- The Taskforce should identify the critical studies used by IARC to support the classification of these three compounds as “probably carcinogenic to humans” and assess their relevance for the remit of JMPR.
- The Taskforce should report back to JMPR in September 2015 for further discussion and action.