

FAQs: Glyphosate

Find the answers to frequently asked questions on glyphosate, one of the most widely used and extensively studied herbicides in modern agriculture.

The renewal process for glyphosate in Great Britain (GB) is currently underway, with the Health and Safety Executive carrying out a full scientific assessment and a public consultation on its draft conclusion expected during summer 2026. Glyphosate remains approved for use in GB while this process is completed.

Glyphosate plays an important role in supporting productive and sustainable farming by enabling effective weed control, reducing soil disturbance, lowering fuel use and helping to protect soil health. Residue monitoring and regulatory oversight continue to demonstrate compliance with food safety standards.

The Agricultural Industries Confederation (AIC) - the UK trade association for agricultural supply businesses including crop protection distributors, agronomists, feed manufacturers and commodity traders – has compiled the following frequently asked questions and answers to provide clear, evidence-based information on glyphosate, its regulatory status, and its role in modern farming.

This resource is intended to support Members and other industry stakeholders in discussions with customers, policymakers, media and the wider public by summarising the latest regulatory position and the scientific evidence underpinning glyphosate's continued use.

This resource will be updated as further information becomes available through the GB renewal process.

Does glyphosate pose risks to human health?

Glyphosate is one of the most widely used active ingredients in herbicides designed to control unwanted weed growth in cultivated crops. Leading health authorities in Europe, the United States, Australia, South Korea, Canada, New Zealand, Japan and elsewhere around the world continue to conclude that glyphosate-based products are safe when used in accordance with label instructions.

Is glyphosate carcinogenic to humans?

Authorities around the world have consistently concluded that glyphosate-based products can be used safely when applied according to label instructions, and that glyphosate is not carcinogenic to humans.

Among agencies of the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) is the only body to have classified glyphosate as "probably carcinogenic to humans" in 2015, placing it in the same category as everyday exposures such as red meat and hot beverages. However, the WHO's International Programme on Chemical Safety and the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR) concluded that glyphosate is not carcinogenic. The WHO's Guidelines for Drinking-water Quality also found that, when used properly, glyphosate does not present a hazard to human health.

In 2023, the EU's Assessment Group on Glyphosate (AGG) likewise concluded that a carcinogenic classification for glyphosate is not justified. Today, leading regulators around the world continue to support the safe use of glyphosate-based herbicides when used as directed.

What was the outcome of the EU glyphosate renewal?

The EU officially renewed the approval of glyphosate for a further 10 years, extending its authorisation until 15 December 2033. The renewal was granted subject to several specific conditions and restrictions, including a prohibition on its use as a pre-harvest desiccant. This restriction was introduced despite the assessment identifying no critical areas of concern regarding glyphosate's impact on human health and without specifically identifying any risk associated with its use as a pre-harvest desiccant. However, the pre-harvest use of glyphosate for weed control remains permitted.

Who evaluates the safety of glyphosate in Great Britain?

In Great Britain (GB), the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), through its Chemicals Regulation Division (CRD), is responsible for assessing glyphosate. The CRD conducts independent, science-based evaluations in line

with strict legal and regulatory standards that were assimilated into GB law following the UK's exit from the EU.

Why was glyphosate approval extended in Great Britain?

The approval of glyphosate was due to expire on 15 December 2025. In March 2025, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) extended the current approval by one year, until 15 December 2026. This extension allows time for a robust and comprehensive renewal assessment to be conducted.

Following its evaluation of the renewal application, the Chemicals Regulation Division (CRD) will publish a [Draft Renewal Report](#), with a 60-day public consultation expected during **summer 2026**.

Once the consultation is launched, AIC, together with other stakeholders, will continue to emphasise the importance of maintaining access to glyphosate for growers across Great Britain.

Why is there a need for glyphosate?

By using glyphosate for weed control, farmers have been able to forgo or significantly reduce ploughing and other forms of soil disturbance. Conventional plough-based tillage is an energy-intensive process that releases carbon dioxide from the soil into the atmosphere, while also generating greenhouse gas emissions from diesel use. If farmers are forced to revert to these weed control methods, carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions [fossil fuel consumption in Great Britain are predicted to grow substantially, while soil erosion could also increase](#).

Reduced tillage helps protect fertile topsoil from water and wind erosion, while also lowering labour, fuel and machinery costs. Some studies suggest that traditional plough-based weed management can be around twice as costly and time-consuming as chemical weed control methods.

What are the benefits to farmers of glyphosate herbicide use?

Glyphosate-based herbicides provide farmers with a flexible and cost-effective means of weed control. Unlike some other herbicides that target specific types of weeds, glyphosate provides broad-spectrum weed control. Depending on weed pressure and growing conditions, applying glyphosate before planting can increase yields in major crops by an estimated 30–60%.

In northern parts of the UK, glyphosate plays a particularly important role in pre-harvest management. The UK's maritime climate creates short and unpredictable harvest windows, making consistent crop ripening difficult to achieve. According to a recent [United Oilseeds survey](#), 97% of respondents in northern regions reported using glyphosate on at least one crop. Many farmers stated that there is currently no reliable alternative for managing uneven or late-ripening crops. Around 66% anticipated increased crop losses without glyphosate, while 72% believed that some crops would become difficult, or even impossible, to grow commercially.

Farmers have also warned that removing glyphosate would have direct consequences for consumers, potentially increasing food prices and driving greater reliance on imports. Many noted that imported products would continue to come from crops treated with glyphosate before harvest, placing UK farmers at a competitive disadvantage and further distorting an already uneven playing field.

Are there ecological benefits to using glyphosate?

By controlling a broad spectrum of weeds and their entire root systems, glyphosate has allowed farmers to undertake reduced tillage practices to plant crop seeds directly into stubble fields. Minimal soil disturbance practices also assist in the establishment cover or companion crops that deliver better soil health.

What about glyphosate residues and maximum residue limits MRLs?

The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) analysed harvested and stored cereal samples collected between 2016 and 2023 and detected glyphosate residues in 41% of the 1,075 samples tested. In all cases, residue levels were below the maximum residue limit (MRL), the legal trading standard, which is set well below levels considered to pose a risk to consumer health.

What are the potential impacts of the UK-EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement for glyphosate use in Great Britain?

Negotiations on the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement remain ongoing, and it is currently unclear whether growers in Great Britain (GB) will be required to comply with the EU or GB glyphosate renewal decision in the future. The UK Government continues to work towards implementing new arrangements by mid-2027. AIC is calling for a science-based evaluation of glyphosate's renewal in GB that reflects the UK's agricultural conditions and regulatory framework.



For more information, please contact

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