

## **'If you live in South Africa you should accept being poisoned' University of Cape Town**

A slightly edited version of this was published in the Mail & Guardian

Fiona Macleod's revealing article 'Evidence of Poison', March 9, and the website [www.tasmaniatimes.com](http://www.tasmaniatimes.com) quoted in Dr Alison Bleaney's letter March 16 refer. It appears that the denialist agrochemical industry front CropLife mentioned in Fiona's article are active all over the world creating smoke clouds over the dangers of aerial spraying. They represent the same group of companies who deny global warming. Dr Johan Minnaar produced evidence of serious illnesses and disorders among his patients in Groblerdal, where commercial farmers are spraying large amounts of agrochemicals on crops. Horrific cases include breasts on a five year old girl, teenage boys temporarily "growing breasts" during spraying seasons, miscarriages, partial facial paralysis, cancers and ear malfunctions. Milder poisoning symptoms, include asthma, sinusitis, headaches, dizziness and depression. Professor Leslie London of the University of Cape Town states " premature puberty and other hormonal abnormalities are symptoms of contamination by pesticides containing "endocrine disruptors". He went on to say, "I think there is a view that if you choose to live in the country, you should accept this as a way of life. "

Patricia Bailey MD reported similar symptoms in Hawaii, after the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) sprayed cannabis crops growing on the island. As a result of the numerous dead birds, patented glyphosate 'Roundup' was dubbed "Agent Green" because it kills everything it touches. At first, officials denied that glyphosate had killed the birds, claiming on Hawaiian television station KGMB and in the *Hawaii Tribune-Herald* that the noise of the low flying helicopters had caused the birds to die of heart attack! According to <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roundup> "The largest single user of Roundup reportedly is the U.S. Government, which sprays huge quantities of the herbicide over the northern countries of South America in an effort to discourage cultivation of the coca plant". Large areas of land and delicate ecosystems have been laid waste by aerial spraying. The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) prohibits all biological warfare, including attacks on crops.

The SAPS conducts similar clandestine glyphosate spraying operations on wild cannabis in South Africa. The spokesperson in charge of these operations confirmed that the Roundup pamphlet informed him "that Roundup is as safe as table salt".

"Aerial application has been shown in some studies to drift more than 2km, even in the absence of strong winds" said Prof London. Gusts of wind disperse the pesticide even further to outlying communities, where it collects in rainwater catchments. Rooftop catchments are a common source of residents' drinking water in rural areas. Ingestion of glyphosate as a result of this can result in sudden death. Studies done at the Department of Critical Care Medicine, Changhua Christian Hospital, Taiwan, Republic of China report that Between 1 January 1980, and 30 September 1989, 93 cases of exposure to herbicides containing glyphosphate and surfactant ('Roundup') were treated at Changhua Christian Hospital. There were seven deaths, all of which occurred within hours of ingestion.

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