

USDA quietly ushers in new pesticide-resistant crop

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Last week, the USDA quietly announced its decision to deregulate (approve) Bayer CropScience's newest genetically engineered soybean, designed to be resistant to the herbicide, isoxaflutole. EPA has designated isoxaflutole a "probable human carcinogen." It is also a PAN [Bad Actor pesticide](#), reflecting the herbicide's placement in PAN's list of "most toxic" pesticides.

PAN's Senior Scientist, Marcia Ishii-Eiteman, PhD, released this statement:

"USDA's decision to allow Bayer's isoxaflutole-resistant soybean on the market is unconscionable. This seed has been designed to be used with an herbicide we know poses serious threats to health. Over a decade ago, EPA designated isoxaflutole as a probable human carcinogen and determined that it causes liver and thyroid tumors in addition to developmental delays. With a casual stroke of the pen, USDA is putting the health of millions of farmers and their families at risk.

Like Dow and Monsanto's new GE seeds designed to be used with 2,4-D and dicamba, respectively, the most remarkable feature of Bayer's isoxaflutole-resistant soy is its ability to drive a surge in pesticide use and sales for years to come. This is the Big 6 pesticide corporations' marketing strategy and response to the disaster of Roundup-resistant "superweeds" now infesting over 60 million acres of farmland in the U.S.: engineer new seeds to be used with more (often older and more toxic) herbicides, wait for the inevitable rise of weeds resistant to these chemicals, and do it all over again. It's a win-win for the pesticide companies, but at what cost?

Simply put, these new herbicide-resistant seeds will drive a massive increase in pesticide use that can harm vulnerable crops, while placing the burden of both increased costs and health risks on farmers and rural communities. Adding insult to injury, they keep us further from the [ecological solutions that can really help America's farmers move towards sustainable farming](#).

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