Drinking to your health? Weed killer lurks in many beers and wines

Having a beer or a glass of wine at happy hour or a backyard barbecue shouldn’t include gulping down a potentially hazardous pesticide.

But that’s likely the case, according to a new report by our research and policy partners at U.S. PIRG Education Fund, titled “Glyphosate pesticide in beer and wine.” The study tested 20 different beers, wines and a hard cider. Researchers found the chemical glyphosate, which is the active ingredient in the world’s most popular weed killer, Roundup, in all but one beverage.

Pesticide even found in organics

Roundup even invaded three of the four organic beers and wines tested—despite strict rules prohibiting makers of those products from using glyphosate-based herbicides in production.

The upshot is that, right now in America, even the best-intentioned brewers and vintners struggle to avoid Roundup leaching into their drinks.

How much glyphosate is too much?

This is troubling for numerous reasons. The primary one is that glyphosate poses a health risk. Last year, a California jury concluded that not only was Roundup a “substantial factor” in causing a plaintiff’s terminal cancer, but its producer, Monsanto, also didn’t warn the plaintiff about this risk. A federal jury reached the same conclusion in March, in the first case against Monsanto to be tried in federal court.

The Roundup report doesn’t suggest that the glyphosate that partygoers are drinking reaches established danger levels.
The largest amount of the herbicide discovered in one of the wines was 51.4 parts per billion (ppb) and the beer with the highest total of the pesticide totaled 49.7 ppb. Neither of those numbers meet the Environmental Protection Agency’s risk tolerances for beverages.

That said, at least one previous scientific study found that as little as one part per trillion of glyphosate can stimulate the growth of breast cancer cells and disrupt the endocrine system. What the report raises is that we are finding Roundup in unexpected places.

Glyphosate is showing up everywhere

Glyphosate has infiltrated nearly every type of food tested by the Food and Drug Administration. We know that researchers are finding glyphosate in honey, cereal, ice cream, rainwater and now beverages. What we don’t know is the cumulative effect of all this glyphosate on a person over a lifetime.

Still, even if downing a couple of glasses of Roundup-tainted wine or chomping down on a bowl of glyphosate-infused cereal isn’t definitively dangerous by itself, consumers deserve better transparency.

The public has a right to know what exists in everyday products. Without that knowledge, consumers are prevented from making informed decisions about what they want to eat and drink.

If we’re truly seeking to protect the well-being of people wanting a drink or two, more should be done. Sadly, the government isn’t even conducting basic testing.

It’s time to ban glyphosate

Two years ago, the U.S. Department of Agriculture dropped plans to examine glyphosate in food. That would have been a good first step, and it needs to be done. Unless research proves glyphosate’s safety, we need a more direct approach: The pesticide shouldn’t be used in the United States.

Until then, it will be hard to offer a full-throated “bottoms up” to your buddies, while you’re worrying about what’s actually at the bottom of the bottle.

By Kara Cook-Schultz, director
Campaign to Ban Roundup

Originally posted at https://medium.com/u-s-pirg

21ST CENTURY TRANSPORTATION

In unanimous vote, Colorado adopts new auto pollution standards

It’s unanimous: Colorado air regulators support a cleaner, healthier future.

On Nov. 16, Colorado’s Air Quality Control Commission (AQCC) voted to adopt the Low-Emission Vehicle Program (LEV) or “Clean Cars” standards for cars and trucks. Vehicle emissions are the primary contributor to Colorado’s air pollution.

“This is personal. I bike; I run; I love hiking,” said CoPIRG Foundation Director Danny Katz. “By adopting the advanced Clean Cars Standards, Colorado is taking a big step toward reducing smog and air toxins, cutting carbon pollution, and saving Coloradans money at the pump.”

Prior to the vote, CoPIRG Foundation and our network partners at Environment Colorado Research & Policy Center helped organize an event to announce that more than 7,600 Coloradans have called on the AQCC to adopt the standards.
Colorado is now one of 13 states to adopt the LEV standard. In 2012, the Obama administration instituted equally stringent federal emissions standards, but the current administration is working to roll them back.

21ST CENTURY TRANSPORTATION

Denver earns a ‘C’ on progress toward safer streets

In 2018, 59 people died on Denver’s streets. We can do better and the key is safer streets.

On Jan. 22, the Denver Streets Partnership, comprised of CoPIRG Foundation and other advocates for safer streets, released a report card detailing the city’s progress toward street safety goals. So far, Denver’s performance is decidedly mixed.

“Last year, Denver failed to meet its goals to improve sidewalks and street lighting, redesign streets for safe speeds, and focus safety improvements in the parts of the city that need it most,” said Danny Katz, director of CoPIRG Foundation. “We look forward to what the city will accomplish moving forward in 2019, especially since Denver has increased the number of people who are working to make our streets safe for everyone.”

In 2017, the city and county of Denver became a leader in the Vision Zero movement with Mayor Michael Hancock’s action plan that established the goal of eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries by the year 2030.

PIRG CONSUMER WATCHDOG

How safe is our food? Not safe enough, says PIRG Consumer Watchdog team, and it’s trending in the wrong direction

Unsafe food recalls in the U.S. are trending the wrong way. From 2013 to 2018, they rose 10 percent overall, and 83 percent for the most hazardous meat and poultry recalls.

These were the chief findings in “How Safe Is Our Food?”, a report released by our partners at U.S. PIRG Education Fund, the research and policy arm of our national network. The report reached millions of people through coverage on CBS This Morning, NBC News and USA Today.

“We need to be looking for farm-to-fork preventative solutions that are logical,” PIRG Consumer Watchdog Adam Garber told USA Today. “By doing that, we can protect people’s health.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 1 in 6 people in the U.S. contract foodborne illnesses each year. To stem the problem, our Consumer Watchdog team is calling for public health standards for contamination in agricultural water, a ban on salmonella in meat, and a better recall system to get dangerous food out of people’s homes.

Above: CoPIRG State Director Danny Katz appeared on Denver7 News to announce the release of the “How Safe is Our Food?” report.

BE AN ADVOCATE FOR COLORADO’S FUTURE

Support our work in the public interest by including a gift to CoPIRG or CoPIRG Foundation in your will, trust or retirement accounts.

For more information call 1-800-841-7299 or send an email to: PlannedGiving@copirg.org
TOP STORY: Drinking to your health? Weed killer Roundup lurks in many beers and wines

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THANKS TO YOU

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More than 20,000 Coloradans are ready to move beyond plastic

Plastic foam cups and single-use plastic bags are a common sight on the steps of the Colorado State Capitol, but not like this: On Feb. 28, the cups and bags, gathered by volunteers in cleanups, formed the number 22,898.

That’s the number of petition signatures gathered by CoPIRG, Environment Colorado and other groups, urging state legislators to take action on plastic pollution. Every day, Coloradans throw away 1 million polystyrene foam cups and one of the worst forms of plastic pollution: It never fully degrades, instead breaking into smaller pieces that often enter waterways and harm our environment and wildlife.

“Colorado contributes roughly 1 million foam cups, 3 million plastic straws, and 4.5 million plastic bags to our state’s waste stream every day,” said CoPIRG State Director Danny Katz. “These are items that are often used once and then discarded but will take centuries to decompose. Nothing we use for a few minutes in 2019 should continue to pollute our state past 2019.”

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Dear CoPIRG member,

We all want a healthier, safer and more secure future. In recent months, CoPIRG took steps to make that future a reality—and we couldn’t have done it without your support. I hope you enjoy reading more about the work you made possible.

Thank you,

Danny Katz, State Director
info@copirg.org

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