

# California to require Roundup labeled a carcinogen

Ingredient in popular weed killer going on list as cancerous

By SCOTT SMITH  
Associated Press

FRESNO, Calif. (AP) — Regulators in California took a pivotal step on Monday toward becoming the first state to require the popular

weed killer Roundup to come with a label warning that it's known to cause cancer.

Officials announced that starting July 7 the weed killer's main ingredient, glyphosate, will appear on a list California keeps of potentially cancerous chemicals. A year later, the listing could come with warning labels on the product, officials said.

However, it's not certain whether Roundup will ulti-

mately get a warning label.

Monsanto, the chemical's maker, has filed an appeal after losing in court to block the labeling, arguing that Roundup doesn't cause cancer and that the labels will harm the company's business.

State health regulators must also decide if there's a high enough amount of the chemical in Roundup to pose a risk to human health. State officials received more than

1,300 public comments.

"We can't say for sure," said Sam Delson, a spokesman for California's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. "We're reviewing those comments."

Glyphosate has no color or smell. Monsanto introduced it in 1974 as an effective way of killing weeds while leaving crops and plants intact.

It's sold in more than 160 countries, and farmers use it

on 250 types of crops in California, the nation's leading farming state.

Attorney Michael Baum, who represents more than 300 people who claim a loved one became sick or died from exposure to Roundup, says the fight to protect Californians is not over.

He said that the state's failure to set the proper risk level would undermine protections California put

in place by listing harmful chemicals.

Scott Partridge, Monsanto's vice president of global strategy, said in a statement that glyphosate does not cause cancer and there's no need to list it as harmful in California.

"This is not the final step in the process," Partridge said. "We will continue to aggressively challenge this improper decision."

## Rural Oregon landowners accuse marijuana-growing neighbors of racketeering

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Press

A couple of rural Oregon landowners are accusing their neighbors of operating marijuana-growing operations in violation of federal anti-racketeering laws.

The lawsuit filed by Rachel and Erin McCart of Beaver Creek, Ore., accuses 43 defendants — including neighboring property owners as well as affiliated marijuana growers and retailers — of violating the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act.

Because it remains illegal under federal law, Oregon's "regulatory scheme" for marijuana does not protect the defendants from RICO charges for conspiring to grow, process and sell the controlled substance, according to the plaintiffs.

"Given the strict federal prohibitions against each of those purposes, defendants knew these purposes could only be accomplished via a pattern of racketeering," the complaint said. "In furtherance of that goal, defendants pooled their resources and achieved enterprise efficiency that no one defendant could have achieved individually."

Beginning in late 2014, the defendants began installing equipment to produce marijuana on two properties neighboring the McCarts, who own nearly 11 acres of fenced pastures and forestland, the complaint said.

While the neighborhood was once quite and safe, the marijuana operations have drawn unwanted visitors who litter nearby properties, play loud music, ride loud all-terrain vehicles and harass landowners, the plaintiffs claim.

The McCarts allege that a narrow, one-lane easement running across their property is now a busy commercial roadway traveled "seven days a week, at all hours of the day and night" by the marijuana



Pamplin Media Group File

A Beaver Creek, Ore., couple has filed suit against their neighbors and dozens of other related people and businesses alleging they broke federal racketeering laws by operating a marijuana farm. The plant is legal under state law but illegal under federal law.

growers as well as their customers, employees and building contractors.

"While passing plaintiffs' property, these easement users stared menacingly at plaintiffs, directed obscene gestures at them, peered into plaintiffs' kitchen window (which looks out onto the easement), openly used marijuana, rolled their windows down and blasted loud music and dramatically accelerated or decelerated when they observed plaintiffs outdoors on their property," the complaint said.

These problems, as well as the "unmistakable, skunk-like stench of marijuana" and the incessant barking of guard dogs, have reduced the McCarts' property value and would make it tough to sell at any price, the lawsuit alleges.

"No one's idea of a dream home includes noxious odors, invasive and persistent racket, heavy commercial traffic, a location next door to two illegal drug manufacturing sites, or aggressively obnoxious neighbors," according to the plaintiffs.

The McCarts seek compensation for three times the amount of damages caused to their property in an amount that's not specified in the lawsuit, which has been assigned to U.S. Magistrate Judge John Acosta in Portland.

zations, academia, conservation districts, and government agencies. Ecology has hired a consultant, Ross Strategic, to guide the meetings. "We wanted to have a third-party seen as a neutral actor in the process," Rau said.

While the guidance won't be mandatory, it will help Ecology identify how to best spend federal money the state receives for water-protection projects, he said.

The Washington Farm Bureau is concerned the guidance will favor projects that call for large buffers between fields and waterways. "It takes way too much land out of production," said Evan Sheffels, the organization's associate director of government relations.

Despite Ecology's assurances that the guidance will be voluntary, the Farm Bureau is skeptical of the undertaking, Sheffels said. "We'd rather not go there, but Ecology has decided they're going to do it, whether we want them to or not."

Ecology says it wants people with on-the-ground experience and with scientific and technical expertise.

Candidates should submit letters of interest by July 18 to Rau at ben.rau@ecy.wa.gov. Ecology says it plans to pick the panel by early August.

# Tobacco virus found in Washington wine grapes

By DAN WHEAT  
Capital Press

WAPATO, Wash. — A virus discovered in Virginia tobacco 90 years ago has been found in Washington, in a vineyard near Wapato.

When Andrew Schultz became general manager of the vineyard five years ago, the owner asked him to figure out what was wrong with his Grenache wine grape vines.

Shoots were short and stunted. Some collapsed. Others grew poor fruit that dropped. Some vines had great canopies and no grapes. Others had small grapes and little canopy. The xylem, tissue in stems conveying water and nutrients, was discolored.

Schultz had never seen anything like it, began mapping problem areas within the 3-acre block and called in his former professor, Naidu Rayapati, Washington State University virologist and grapevine disease expert.

"It was quite surprising to realize that we had this virus here in Washington state in wine grapes," Rayapati said. "It took us three to four months to figure it out, using a variety of diagnostic techniques."

He used three different methods to verify and is "100 percent sure" it is Tobacco Ringspot Virus (TRSV), first identified in Virginia tobacco fields in 1927. TRSV is transmitted by nematodes, varroa mites and honeybees and also can be by sap inoculation and seeds. It has a wide host range of crops, ornamentals and weeds. Its most common symptom is chlorotic ring-spots on leaves.

TRSV has been reported in Florida, Mississippi, Alabama, Oklahoma and Michigan but never in the Pacific Northwest, Rayapati said.

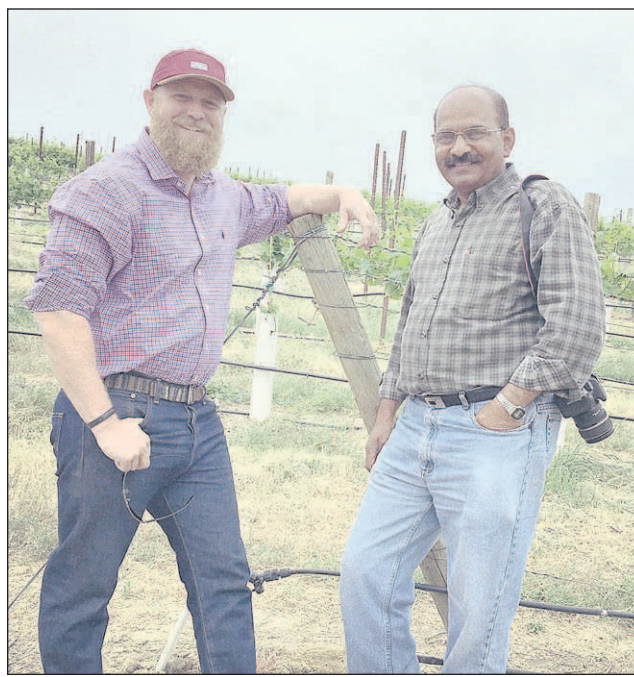
"There is a knowledge gap in the distribution of this virus and its economic impact on different crops," he said. "No one is doing active research."

At the request of the owner, Rayapati and Schultz are not revealing the identity of the vineyard. But Schultz said it had been a pear orchard



Courtesy of WSU

Grapes from healthy Grenache vines dwarf grapes from vines damaged by Tobacco Ringspot Virus.



Courtesy of WSU

Vineyard Manager Andrew Schultz and WSU virologist Naidu Rayapati in May 2016.

with no fallow time between tree removal and vine planting in 2006. The virus is in nematodes and they think it likely was present in the pear orchard and may be undetected in other places in the lower Yakima Valley.

TRSV is spotty, not pervasive, in the 3-acre block but has spread some into two adjoining 3-acre blocks over

12 years, Schultz said. Other things, like leafroll virus, spread a lot faster, he said.

TRSV can cause plants to become totally unproductive and can render ground useless for growing, Rayapati said. But he believes the vineyard can be salvaged.

Chemicals kill nematodes but not completely. They bounce back.

Rayapati and Schultz are working on other means to combat and contain it, including testing different rootstocks and grafts and predatory nematodes to eat the ones spreading the virus.

Schultz said Syrah and other varieties may be less susceptible than Grenache.

However even with the infestation, the block has produced some great wine, he said.

The discovery is a reminder to the industry to be vigilant to test soil when switching crops and to use certified virus-free plants, Rayapati said.

WSU's Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center, near Prosser, is home to the Clean Plant Center Northwest which helps growers plant virus-free trees and grape and hop vines.

Wine is a \$4.8 billion industry in Washington with 60,000 acres of wine grapes and more planted each year.

"It's important to nip this problem in the bud," Rayapati said. "Tobacco Ringspot isn't something that will wipe out the industry, but we need to make sure growers plant virus-free materials and there are no risks in the soil itself."

## Washington Ecology seeks advisers on farm practices

Letters of interest are due on July 18

By DON JENKINS  
Capital Press

The Washington Department of Ecology will appoint an advisory group to evaluate ways farmers and ranchers can prevent water pollution, an exercise viewed warily by the state Farm Bureau.

Ecology is seeking experts for the group, which is expected over the next year to help the department develop a set of best management practices. Ecology says the measures will be voluntary and won't become new regulations.

"I think it will be useful guidance for people," said Ben Rau, Ecology's manager of the effort.

The initiative stems from criticism the Environmental Protection Agency made in 2015 about Ecology's plan to control pollution from urban and rural runoff. The EPA said Ecology's plan to prevent pollution from agricultural lands needed "greater specificity."

Ecology has approached the subject carefully. It plans to put together an advisory group of 10 to 14 members drawn from farm groups, tribes, environmental organi-



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