

World Health Day Theme: Food Safety – Farm to Table | THE JET

Food safety is each ones responsibility, including that of our farmers as we mark the World Health Day today and it is important that farmers and consumers are aware of the inputs in our food chain.

We request the Ministry of Agriculture to ban the pesticide 'Round Up' widely used by farmers in Fiji to control weeds in their farms. Glyphosate, the chief ingredient in Roundup weed killer, which is sprayed over acres of crops, has been found in food and has been linked to a range of health problems and diseases, including Parkinson's, infertility and cancers. Over the years a lot of controversy has surrounded the weed killer and various studies have been released. (See links below)

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/weed-whacking-herbicide-p/>

<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2013/06/09/monsanto-roundup-herbicide.aspx>

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/04/25/roundup-health-study-idUSL2N0DC22F20130425>

"Farmers in Fiji are not aware of the negative effects of this chemical and are often seen spraying without the use of protective gear. Families are exposed to the chemical as a norm; children walking from school pass by acres of sprayed fields inhaling the compound. Due to ignorance and poor handling, these chemicals pose great danger to health," says Sashi Kiran, Director of FRIEND.

We request the Ministry to create awareness on side effects of all pesticides introduced in the market so farmers are aware what they are applying in the food chain affecting thousands of consumers. This World Health Day theme is very apt – Food Safety – Farm to Table and is an opportunity to create awareness on the health of our soils and good practices in farming to ensure consumers eat healthy and not high levels of chemical residues causing them ill health.

FRIEND has been actively encouraging organic farming with now 50 registered farmers who practice the method using local manures and herbal pesticides with great results.

PRESS RELEASE