

CALIFORNIA CLEARS HURDLE FOR CANCER LABEL ON ROUNDUP

FRESNO: California can require Monsanto to label its popular weed-killer Roundup as a possible cancer threat despite an insistence from the chemical giant that it poses no risk to people, a judge tentatively ruled Friday. California would be the first state to order such labeling if it carries out the proposal. Monsanto had sued the nation's leading agricultural state, saying California officials illegally based their decision for carrying the warnings on an international health organization based in France.

Monsanto attorney Trenton Norris argued in court Friday that the labels would have immediate financial consequences for the company. He said many consumers would see the labels and stop buying Roundup. "It will absolutely be used in ways that will harm Monsanto," he said. After the hearing, the firm said in a statement that it will challenge the tentative ruling.

Critics take issue with Roundup's main ingredient, glyphosate, which 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 in California use it on 250 types of crops. The chemical is not restricted by the US Environmental Protection Agency, which says it has "low toxicity" and recommends people avoid entering a field for 12 hours after it has been applied. But the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a Lyon, France-based branch of the UN World Health Organization, classified the chemical as a "probable human carcinogen."

Unselected foreign body

Shortly afterward, the most populated US state took its first step in 2015 to require

the warning labels. St. Louis-based Monsanto contends that California is delegating its authority to an unelected foreign body with no accountability to US or state officials in violation of the California Constitution. Attorneys for California consider the International Agency for Research on Cancer the "gold standard" for identifying carcinogens, and they rely on its findings along with several states, the federal government and other countries, court papers say.

Fresno County Superior Court Judge Kristi Kapetan still must issue a formal decision, which she said would come soon. California regulators are waiting for the formal ruling before moving forward with the warnings, said Sam Delson, a spokesman for the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. Once a chemical is added to a list of probable carcinogens, the manufacturer has a year before it must attach the label, he said.

Teri McCall believes a warning would have saved her husband, Jack, who toted a backpack of Roundup for more than 30 years to spray weeds on their 20-acre avocado and apple farm. He died of cancer in late 2015. "I just don't think my husband would have taken that risk if he had known," said Teri McCall, one of dozens nationwide who are suing Monsanto, claiming the chemical gave them or a loved one cancer. But farmer Paul Betancourt, who has been using Roundup for more than three decades on his almond and cotton crops, says he does not know anyone who has gotten sick from it. "You've got to treat it with a level of respect, like anything else," he said. "Gasoline will cause cancer if you bathe in the stuff." — AP



TITUSVILLE: This Tuesday, Jan 24, 2017 photo provided by NASA shows part of the Apollo 1 exhibit at the Kennedy Space Center. — AP photos



CAPE KENNEDY: In this undated photo made available by NASA, from left, veteran astronaut Virgil Grissom, first American spacewalker Ed White and rookie Roger Chaffee, stand for a photograph.

NASA OPENS EXHIBIT ON 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF APOLLO 1 FIRE

'GOT THE SPACE PROGRAM TO WHERE IT IS TODAY'

CAPE CANAVERAL: NASA opened an exhibit Friday honoring the astronauts in the Apollo 1 fire - 50 years to the day they died. The hatch from the burned spacecraft is the main draw. It had been concealed, along with the capsule, for a half-century. On Friday's anniversary, the hatch that trapped Gus Grissom, Ed White and Roger Chaffee inside their capsule at the launch pad finally went on display.

The exhibit at the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex also includes the redesigned hatch used on the spacecraft that carried men to the moon. Twenty-four Americans flew to the moon during the late 1960s and early 1970s, and 12 walked its surface. "It is really fitting for those three wonderful individuals: Roger, Ed and Gus. I knew them well," said Apollo 10's Tom Stafford.

Apollo 1 was America's first space tragedy. It was overshadowed in the decades ahead by two more disasters: the 1986 Challenger and 2003

Columbia shuttle accidents. NASA officials acknowledged at the ceremony it was about time Apollo 1 got properly recognized with its own exhibit. Families of the Apollo 1 crew were at Friday's opening; they got a private tour Wednesday. They had one last event: an early evening ceremony at the abandoned pad where the flash fire occurred at 6:31 p.m. on Jan. 27, 1967.

'You can feel the spirits here'

The relatives filled four long rows of black-draped chairs in front of the exhibit, along with Stafford and Apollo 16 moonwalker Charlie Duke, and NASA dignitaries. Astronauts from the space shuttle and station era stood on the sidelines, along with space center workers, past and present. Four tourists from Wisconsin who got on the wrong tour bus ended up at the ceremony.

"You almost can feel their spirits are here," Patty Most said as she gazed up at the large

glass painting of the Apollo 1 men in their white spacesuits, their orange launch tower in the background.

The three astronauts "got the space program to where it is today," friend Ron Meyer noted. The exhibit also provides a look at the Apollo 1 astronauts, not just as pilots, but as husbands and fathers, too. It also remembers the launch pad workers who risked their own lives attempting to pry off the three-part hatch and save the crew.

As he joined others in walking through the exhibit, Kennedy's associate director Kelvin Manning said the message still rings true these many decades later, as NASA looks ahead to the commercial space effort and eventual journeys to Mars. "We want to honor the crew," he said. "We also want people to pause ... we want to understand the risks so we can ensure our astronauts' safety." — AP



LOS ANGELES: Containers of Roundup, left, a weed killer is seen on a shelf with other products for sale at a hardware store. — AP

RUSSIA CHECK SPACE FLIGHT ENGINES OVER FAULTY PARTS

MOSCOW: Russia yesterday said it had ordered a full check of engines used on its key Proton rocket after a cargo ship crashed last month due to engine disintegration and an inspection revealed factory violations. A plant making engines for both the Soyuz and Proton rockets had workers "switch technology and documentation," Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin said, vowing to punish those responsible.

Earlier reports said engine parts used on the second and third stages of the widely-used Proton rocket had been swapped for cheaper variants. "A neces-

sary check of engines with possible technical defects will be made," Roscosmos space agency said, adding that the launch schedule will be "coordinated" with the verifications.

Rogozin said launches using the Proton rocket would resume in three and a half months. He did not mention the Soyuz rockets, which are used for manned flights, particularly the next ISS mission set for late March. The Progress freighter crashed in Siberia after it failed to reach orbit in early December due to a malfunction during third-stage separation. — AFP

WASHINGTON: Can women be brilliant? Little girls are not so sure. A study published Thursday in the journal Science suggests that girls as young as 6 can be led to believe men are inherently smarter and more talented than women, making girls less motivated to pursue novel activities or ambitious careers. That such stereotypes exist is hardly a surprise, but the findings show these biases can affect children at a very young age.

"As a society, we associate a high level of intellectual ability with males more than females, and our research suggests that this association is picked up by children as young as 6 and 7," said Andrei Cimpian, associate professor in the psychology department at New York University. Cimpian coauthored the study, which looked at 400 children ages 5-7.

In the first part of the study, girls and boys were told a story about a person who is "really, really smart," a child's idea of brilliance, and then asked to identify that person among the photos of two women and two men. The people in the photos were dressed professionally, looked the same age and appeared equally happy. At 5, both boys and girls tended to associate brilliance with their own gender, meaning that most girls chose women and most boys chose men.

But as they became older and began attending school, children apparently began endorsing

gender stereotypes. At 6 and 7, girls were "significantly less likely" to pick women. The results were similar when the kids were shown photos of children. Interestingly, when asked to select children who look like they do well in school, as opposed to being smart, girls tended to pick girls, which means that their perceptions of brilliance are not based on academic performance. "These stereotypes float free of any objective markers of achievement and intelligence," Cimpian said.

In the second part of the study, children were introduced to two new board games, one described as an activity "for children who are really, really smart" and the other one "for children who try really, really hard." Five-year-old girls and boys were equally likely to want to play the game for smart kids, but at age 6 and 7, boys still wanted to play that game, while girls opted for the other activity. "There isn't anything about the game itself that becomes less interesting for girls, but rather it's the description of it as being for kids that are really, really smart."

Aspirations and career choices

As a result, believing that they are not as gifted as boys, girls tend to shy away from demanding majors and fields, leading to big differences in aspirations and career choices between men and women. "These stereotypes discourage women's

pursuit of many prestigious careers; that is, women are underrepresented in fields whose members cherish brilliance," the authors wrote.

It is still unclear where the stereotypes come from. Parents, teachers and peers and the media are the usual suspects, Cimpian said. But it is evident that action must be taken so that these biases don't curtail girls' professional aspirations. "Instill the idea that success in any line of work is not an innate ability, whatever it is, but rather putting your head down, being passionate about what you are doing," Cimpian said, adding that exposure to successful women who can serve as role models also helps.

Toy companies like Mattel, maker of the Barbie doll, have taken steps to try to reduce gender stereotypes. Mattel's "You can be anything" Barbie campaign tells girls that they can be paleontologists, veterinarians or professors, among other careers. The campaign also holds out the possibility that a girl can imagine herself to be a fairy princess. Rebecca S Bigler, professor of psychology at the University of Texas at Austin, described Cimpian's study "as exceptionally nice work." She suggested that the stereotypes develop in early elementary school when students are exposed to famous scientists, composers and writers, the "geniuses" of history, who are overwhelmingly men. — AP

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