

Bolsonaro-legalized toxic pesticides endanger people worldwide



Brasilia, August 1 (RHC)-- Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's environmental deregulation and new free trade deals would see the world consuming toxic pesticides that are banned in most countries, Oliver Tickell of the Green Economic Institute warned Tuesday in an interview with RT.

"This is not just a problem for Brazil and Brazilian people and people exposed in the countryside to these pesticides and consumers and farmers. It is actually affecting people all over the world through Brazil's agricultural exports."

Since coming to power, Bolsonaro's right-wing government has legalized hundreds of formerly banned pesticides, as part of his promise to do away with environmental protections. The move represents a continuation of the neoliberal Michel Temer presidency, which has seen Brazil approve over 1,000 formerly banned pesticides since 2016.

Some of those chemicals include glyphosate and atrazine, which EU farmers have banned from using since 2003.

Another, acephate, was recently banned in China for its toxic qualities. Nevertheless, European customers are likely to begin consuming the pesticides that their own governments consider too dangerous, thanks to the new EU-Mercosur trade deal that will see Brazilian agricultural exports enter the European market.

Of the 262 pesticides newly approved by Bolsonaro, 82 are considered "extremely toxic". His Agriculture Minister Tereza Cristina Dias has said only an "ideological process", during the Workers Party administrations, had stopped agri-business from using the toxic chemicals, adding that critics of the chemicals are responsible for "data manipulation" and even "terrorism."

Environmental deregulation has led to an increase in damaging forms of farming such as cattle rearing, that leads to widespread deforestation. Recent data shows a 68 percent increase in deforestation in the past month alone, and that 1,000 sq km of the Amazon rainforest had been destroyed in the first 15 days of July. Bolsonaro claimed these figures are "lies" despite coming from his own administration's government agencies.

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