

Nation of Change

French Court Finds Monsanto Guilty of Chemical Poisoning



It seems Monsanto has taken a few well-deserved hits this week with their RoundUp being labeled as hazardous and France finding them guilty of chemical poisoning. Let's hope this fight against Monsanto continues.

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An appeals court in Lyon, France has [upheld a 2012 ruling](#) against Monsanto, in which the agribusiness giant was found guilty of the chemical poisoning a farmer named Paul François. (See FRANCE-24 report [here](#).)

The grain grower said that in 2004 he became ill due to [Monsanto's](#) weedkiller, Lasso. François claimed he suffered from neurological problems, memory loss, headaches and stammering after inadvertently inhaling the herbicide.

In François' case, doctors determined the cause of his ill health was monochlorobenzene, a highly toxic substance that made up 50 percent of Monsanto's herbicide, according to [teleSUR](#). The substance sent François to the hospital, where he entered in a coma. Subsequent tests showed that the farmer suffered permanent brain disease, [teleSUR](#) reported.

In 2012, he filed suit against Monsanto for not providing a warning on the product label and won. Monsanto appealed the decision shortly after.

Yesterday's ruling, however, stamps another victory for the farmer. The appeals court said Monsanto was "responsible" for the intoxication and ordered the company to "fully compensate" François, [Reuters](#) reported.

"It is a historic decision in so far as it is the first time that a (pesticide) maker is found guilty of such a poisoning," François Lafforgue, François' lawyer, told the news agency.

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[RT](#) reported that the farmer (pictured above in 2011) was happy with the outcome, adding: “David can win against Goliath. ... And a giant like Monsanto is not above the law.”

Monsanto’s lawyer Jean-Daniel Bretzner said the company plans to take the case to France’s highest appeal court.

“The decision is very surprising given the inaccuracies and errors that dot Paul François’ evidence,” Bretzner said. “But this is just another step and the discussion is going to go on and the fight will go on.”

According to *Reuters*, Bretzner also said that the potential compensation for the farmer would be decided after the highest court makes a decision. Nonetheless, he said, the award amount would be very low.

“We are speaking about modest sums of money or even nonexistent. He already received indemnities (by insurers) and there is a fundamental rule that says that one does not compensate twice for a loss, if any,” Bretzner said.

Lasso, the herbicide in question, was banned in France as well as in all other European Union member countries in 2007. The product has been phased out in the U.S.



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However, another active ingredient in Lasso, alachlor, is still the second most widely used herbicide in the country, according the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). [It so happens](#) that the odorless, white chemical is heavily used on corn and soybeans in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio and Wisconsin.

Its rampant use is confounding, as even the EPA [says](#) alachlor “has the potential to cause damage to the liver, kidney, spleen, nasal mucosa and eye from long-term exposure.” The agency also considers it an endocrine disruptor and a carcinogen.

Lasso is not the only Monsanto product considered harmful. In March, the World Health Organization’s cancer arm—the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)—listed glyphosate, the key ingredient in Monsanto’s wildly popular weedkiller Roundup, as “[probably carcinogenic to humans](#).”

Monsanto maintains the safety of their products and has also demanded a retraction from the IARC.

In related news, just this week, California’s Environmental Protection Agency issued plans to label glyphosate as known to cause cancer, [the first state in the country to do so](#).

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California EPA to Label Monsanto's Roundup as a Cancer Causing Chemical



California's EPA has decided to label Monsanto's RoundUp herbicide as a cancer-causing chemical dangerous to humans, animals, and the environment. For years, government environmental agencies have denied these chemicals were hazardous, but it looks like activists have helped sparked change.

Published: September 12, 2015 | Authors: [John Vibes](#) | [True Activist](#) | News Report (See television report [here](#).)

It was announced this week that the California Environmental Protection Agency is planning to label Monsanto's [RoundUp](#) herbicide as a cancer-causing chemical. This is just the most recent warning that has been leveled against the chemical by environmental and health groups around the world. In the past year, government agencies have finally caught up with activists who have been protesting against [Monsanto](#) and their dangerous products for years.

In a [statement](#) released earlier this year, the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) announced that glyphosate, the main ingredient in RoundUp, is "probably carcinogenic."

This week, the EPA's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment in California released a "notice

of intent" to label the product as a carcinogen. Meanwhile, the issue is up for discussion for California residents, who have until October 5th to speak their mind on the measure. Due to a law passed in the state in 1986 called Proposition 65, the state is required to publish a list of chemicals that are known to cause cancer birth defects or reproductive problems. Now that glyphosate is now on that list officially worldwide, the state is required to add it to the list.

Nathan Donley, staff scientist with the Center for Biological Diversity in San Francisco said that this is a major victory in the fight against [dangerous pesticides](#).

"California's taking an important step toward protecting people and wildlife from this toxic pesticide. It's nearly impossible for people to limit exposure to this toxin because it is just so widespread. That's why we need much tighter controls on its use," Donley said.

"More than 250 million pounds of glyphosate are used each year in the United States, and the science is clear that it's a threat to public health and countless wildlife species. It's long past time to start reining in the out-of-control use of glyphosate in the United States," he added.

For years, government environmental agencies have denied that these chemicals were dangerous, but now with official proof on record, activists are vindicated and are now able to point to scientific evidence to back up what they have been warning about all along.

John Vibes, author

Bio: John Vibes writes for True Activist and is an author, researcher and investigative journalist who takes a special interest in the counter culture and the drug war.

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