

Roundup Lawsuit Results in a \$2 Billion Loss for Bayer

The hits keep coming for pharmaceutical giant Bayer and their popular herbicide Roundup as a California jury awards two plaintiffs \$2.055 billion dollars in damages. The verdict came in the case of Alva and Alberta Pilliod of Livermore, Calif., who say that three decades of exposure to Roundup and its active ingredient, glyphosate, are the cause of their non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Each plaintiff received \$1 billion in punitive damages and an additional 55 million in collective compensatory damages. Bayer refuted the jury's findings in a statement released on Monday,

Bayer is disappointed with the jury's decision and will appeal the verdict in this case, which conflicts directly with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's interim registration review decision released just last month, the consensus among leading health regulators worldwide that glyphosate-based products can be used safely and that glyphosate is not carcinogenic, and the 40 years of extensive scientific research on which their favorable conclusions are based."

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Not the Only One

This is not the first successful verdict against Roundup within the last year, all of them occurring in California. The first judgment was reported in August of 2018, where judges awarded \$289 million in damages (later reduced to \$78 million). The second happened in March of this year, where a San Francisco jury found in favor of plaintiff Edwin Hardeman to the tune of \$80 million in damages.

California Dreaming

In every statement following the verdicts against them, Bayer has cited the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) classification of glyphosate as non-carcinogenic. Until recently, that was powerful evidence for the pharmaceutical corporation. In 2015, the World Health Organization's (WHO) International Agency for Research on Cancer listed glyphosate as cancer-causing. There were strenuous objections from then Monsanto and the EPA, but emails released in an early 2017 lawsuit suggested that prominent employees at the government agency had suppressed research unfavorable to glyphosate. The State of California recognized glyphosate as carcinogenic in July 2017. Since then, lawsuits against the herbicide have gained increasingly more traction.

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Money on the Mind

Three juries have found in favor of plaintiffs vs. Bayer, and there are anywhere from 4,000 to 11,000 lawsuits pending. It remains to be seen if spending large quantities of money on court cases will be enough for Bayer to pivot to a different product or begin to take responsibility for their product. Monsanto made \$1.9 billion in gross revenue from herbicide products in 2015. The current bill for Roundup cases is \$2.213 billion dollars. Is it enough?

Sources:

- *California Jury Awards \$2 Billion To Couple In Roundup Weed Killer Cancer Trial* – NPR
- *Jury returns \$2 billion verdict against Monsanto for couple with cancer – the biggest so far* – CNN
- *Bayer statement on jury's decision in California State Glyphosate Trial* – Bayer
- *EPA Says Roundup Is Safe While Bayer Is Losing Millions*

In Lawsuits – Organic Lifestyle Magazine