

Monsanto Under Fire: Maker of Cancer-Causing Herbicide Sued by US Workers

Two separate lawsuits allege agrochemical giant deliberately misled public and regulators over dangers of product exposure

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Two U.S. workers are [suing](#) Monsanto over charges that the company's Roundup herbicide caused their cancers while accusing the agrochemical giant of deliberately misleading the public and regulators about the dangers of being exposed to its product.

The suits, both filed separately last week, come six months after the World Health Organization [declared](#) glyphosate, the key weed-killing ingredient in the herbicide, a "probable carcinogen." Earlier this month the California Environmental Protection Agency also [announced](#) it would begin labeling the chemical with the same designation.

One suit, filed Sept. 22 in a New York federal court, claims that plaintiff Judi Fitzgerald's exposure to Roundup while working at a horticultural products company in the 1990s was a contributing cause of her 2012 leukemia diagnosis.

Filed on the same day in a Los Angeles District Court, the second [suit](#) (pdf) charges that former farm worker Enrique Rubio's weekly exposure to Roundup products—which he sprayed on fruit and vegetable fields in Oregon and California— was "a substantial and contributing facto[r] in causing [his] grave injuries," referring to his 1995 bone cancer diagnosis.

"For nearly 40 years, farms across the world have used Roundup without knowing of the dangers its use poses," Rubio's suit states. "That is because when Monsanto first introduced Roundup, it touted glyphosate as a technological breakthrough: it could kill almost every weed without causing harm either to people or to the environment."

"Of course, history has shown that not to be truth," the statement continues, citing the WHO's recent designation.

"Those most at risk are farm workers and other individuals with workplace exposure to Roundup, such as workers in garden centers, nurseries, and landscapers. Agricultural workers are, once again, victims of corporate greed," the suit states. "Monsanto assured the public that Roundup was harmless," the suit continues, adding that the company "championed falsified data and attacked legitimate studies that revealed its dangers."

"Monsanto led a prolonged campaign of misinformation to convince government agencies, farmers and the general population that roundup was safe," it adds.

The lawsuits further claim that the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) changed an initial classification for glyphosate from “possibly carcinogenic to humans” to “evidence of non-carcinogenicity in humans” after pressure from Monsanto.

In a related development, the EPA [announced](#) Monday a series of landmark rules to protect agricultural workers from hazardous chemical exposure.

One of Rubio’s attorneys, Robin Greenwald, said she anticipates more suits targeting Monsanto and other biotech companies to follow, as awareness over glyphosate’s cancer-causing properties become more widely known. “I believe there will be hundreds of lawsuits brought over time,” Greenwald said.

The U.S. lawsuits follows a French court [ruling](#) earlier this month that found Monsanto “responsible” for the health problems suffered by a local farmer, who argued that the company’s Lasso herbicide did not have proper warning labels. That decision upheld a lower court conviction.

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