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Plaintiffs Notch \$175M Win in Philadelphia's First Roundup Trial

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Philadelphia's first Roundup trial ended in a \$175 million verdict against Monsanto Friday.

And the verdict consisted of \$25 million in compensatory damages and \$150 million in punitive damages, in the case before Judge James C. Crumlish III of the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas.

Thomas Kline, a partner at Kline & Specter, and Jason Itkin, a partner at Arnold & Itkin, who represented the plaintiff Ernest Caranci, said they were pleased that their client "got justice today."

"We believe that the jury's finding that Monsanto's conduct was outrageous is a harbinger of things to come in the Roundup litigation nationally," the litigators said in a joint statement.

Meanwhile, a spokesperson for Bayer, Monsanto's parent company, has not yet returned a request for comment.

Caranci claimed his regular, unprotected use of Roundup over the course of about 20 years caused him to develop non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

The case, captioned Caranci v. Monsanto, was the first in Philadelphia's Roundup mass tort program to go to trial, with the next scheduled to begin Nov. 6.

Caranci was one of three Roundup cases to go to trial in October in which plaintiffs advanced a new claim about the weedkiller's contents. And it is the second plaintiff win in a row.

Until last week, Monsanto had been riding a string of Roundup trial victories. Their streak was derailed Oct. 20 by a \$1.25 million verdict in St. Louis, Missouri, though that award is small compared to the jury verdicts returned against Monsanto from before the COVID-19 pandemic that ranged from \$80 million to \$2 billion.

The St. Louis jury found that Monsanto failed to warn about the risks that Roundup and its active ingredient, glyphosate, could cause non-Hodgkin lymphoma, but it rejected claims that Monsanto was negligent in designing a defective product and declined to award punitive damages.

And another verdict is on the horizon in a third trial, where, as of Friday afternoon, the San Diego jury was still deliberating.

In addition to alleging that Roundup's active ingredient, glyphosate, is carcinogenic, plaintiffs in the three recent trials claimed other contents play a role in increasing users' risk of developing non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

Still, Monsanto continued to argue that studies have repeatedly found there to be no link between Roundup and non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

Manuel Cachán, a Los Angeles-based partner at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, argued during the Caranci trial that the majority of non-Hodgkin lymphoma cases are caused by random copying errors in reproducing cells, and not by environmental factors.