

Monsanto's lingering shadow: Bayer grapples with growing Roundup legal costs

Three years after Bayer agreed to pay \$10 billion to settle claims that its weedkiller, Roundup, caused cancer, juries continue to award plaintiffs in additional cases billions of dollars in damages, even as the German drug and chemicals giant insists it will continue its fight in court.

In the past two months, in four separate cases, juries have awarded more than \$2 billion in damages to a handful of roughly 50,000 claims that weren't covered by the 2020 settlement. The \$10 billion agreement is one of the largest in history.

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Bayer has said Roundup does not cause cancer. Company executives told The New York Times they will continue litigating cases, and fight to overturn the four recent verdicts or reduce the jury amounts, noting that final awards in previous cases were significantly smaller.

"The company will not incentivize the plaintiff law firm business model through mass settlements of 1-800-file-a-claim cases that have no merit," Nicole Hayes, a Bayer spokeswoman, said in a statement. "Instead, we will continue to try cases because decades of science and worldwide regulatory assessments continue to support Roundup's safety and non-carcinogenicity."

Bayer's woes stem from its 2018 purchase of Monsanto, the maker of Roundup, for \$63 billion in cash. Since the deal was announced in 2016, Bayer's shares have plunged more than 60 percent. It is widely considered one of the worst mergers in history.

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