

Monsanto Ordered to Pay \$80 Million in Roundup Cancer Case

By [Julia Jacobs](#) March 27, 2019



Edwin Hardeman leaving a federal courthouse with his wife in San Francisco last month. A jury ordered that Monsanto be held liable for the role its weedkiller played in Mr. Hardeman's cancer. Jeff Chiu/Associated Press

A federal jury on Wednesday ordered Monsanto to pay more than \$80 million in damages to a California man whose cancer it determined was partly caused by his use of the popular weedkiller Roundup.

The six-member jury found that Monsanto should be held liable for the man's illness because it failed to include a label on its product warning of the

weedkiller's risk of causing cancer.

The verdict, delivered in United States District Court in San Francisco, is a milestone in the continuing public debate over the health effects of Roundup and its active ingredient, glyphosate, the world's most widely used weedkiller. Monsanto is currently defending itself against thousands of similar claims.

The plaintiff, Edwin Hardeman, 70, used Roundup to control weeds and poison oak on his property for 26 years. In 2015, he learned that he had non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. The next year, after the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer declared glyphosate a probable carcinogen, Mr. Hardeman sued Monsanto.

Wednesday's verdict ended the second of two phases in the trial. Last week, [the jury issued an initial verdict saying](#) that the weedkiller was a "substantial factor" in causing Mr. Hardeman's cancer. The jury then started deliberating on Tuesday afternoon about whether Monsanto demonstrated negligence and should be held liable.

In determining that Monsanto was responsible, the jury awarded Mr. Hardeman \$75 million in punitive damages, Jennifer Moore, one of his lawyers, said in a phone interview. About \$5 million was also awarded for Mr. Hardeman's past and future suffering, as well as more than \$200,000 for medical bills, Ms. Moore said.

Ms. Moore said that Monsanto had continually ignored scientific studies showing the harmful health effects of Roundup.

"The evidence is overwhelming that Roundup can cause non-Hodgkin's lymphoma," she said. "And despite that, Monsanto continues to deny that." She said that Mr. Hardeman's cancer was in remission.

A statement from Bayer, which acquired Monsanto last year, said that the company would appeal the jury's verdict.

"We are disappointed with the jury's decision, but this verdict does not change the weight of over four decades of extensive science and the conclusions of regulators worldwide that support the safety of our glyphosate-based herbicides and that they are not carcinogenic," the statement said.

In December 2017, the Environmental Protection Agency issued a draft human health risk assessment that said glyphosate was most likely not carcinogenic to humans.

During the court proceedings, Mr. Hardeman's legal team presented expert testimony and research that Roundup causes mutations in human cells and that human populations that are exposed to Roundup are more likely to develop non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Bayer's statement said that it believed the jury was most likely divided over the scientific evidence presented in the case, which it said was indicated by the fact that the jurors took more than four days to decide last week's verdict.

In a similar case decided last year, a California jury found that Monsanto had failed to warn a school groundskeeper of the cancer risks posed by Roundup. The jury ordered Monsanto to pay \$289 million in damages, but a judge later reduced that payment to about \$80 million. Monsanto is also appealing that verdict.

"Now two different juries have held that Roundup causes an individual's non-Hodgkin's lymphoma," Ms. Moore said, "and that Monsanto should be punished for its conduct."