

French court upholds poisoning case against Monsanto

September 10 2015



French farmer Paul François gives a press conference, on September 10, 2015 in Paris, following the ruling of Lyon's appeal court regarding his trial against Monsanto company, which he accuses of poisoning him after the use in 2004 of a herbicide

A French court on Thursday upheld a ruling in which US biotech giant Monsanto was found guilty of poisoning a farmer who says he suffered neurological damage after inhaling a weedkiller made by the company.

The plaintiff, cereal farmer Paul Francois, said the decision proved that "David can win against Goliath... And a giant like Monsanto is not above the law."

The case, heard by an appeal [court](#) in the southeast city of Lyon, is the first of its kind in France.

The court confirmed a 2012 ruling that Monsanto was "responsible" for the intoxication by its Lasso weedkiller and ordered the US giant to fully compensate Francois.

The [farmer](#) said he suffered damage to his health in 2004 after inhaling fumes while he was using Lasso on his maize crop.

Monsanto, which has maintained throughout the process that the product was not dangerous, said it would appeal the decision.

"The [decision](#) is very surprising given the inaccuracies and errors that dot Paul Francois's evidence," said the company's lawyer Jean-Daniel Bretzner.

"But this is just another step and the discussion is going to go on and the fight will go on," he added.

Paul Francois argued that Monsanto was aware of the dangers of Lasso long before it was withdrawn from the French market in 2007.

Lasso, which contains high levels of highly toxic monochlorobenzene, was withdrawn from sale in Canada in 1985 and was banned in Belgium and Britain in 1992.

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Citation: French court upholds poisoning case against Monsanto (2015, September 10) retrieved 30 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-09-french-court-poisoning-case-monsanto.html>

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