

## Bayer to Waste \$5.6 Billion Trying to Appease Anti-Pesticide Activists

*Ronald Bailey*

Trial lawyers have managed to bamboozle three American juries so far into [showering billions of dollars](#) onto their suffering clients based on the scientifically bogus claim that exposure to Bayer's glyphosate (sold as Roundup here) weedkiller gave them cancer.

These jury awards are made despite the fact that the vast majority of the scientific literature and most of the world's regulatory agencies find that glyphosate is safe to use. That includes the [National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](#) and the [Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues \(JMPR\)](#). And also the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#) and other regulatory agencies in [Europe](#), [Canada](#), [Japan](#), [Australia](#), and [Korea](#) have consistently reaffirmed that glyphosate does not cause cancer.

Plaintiffs' lawyers make their case in part by citing a [highly politicized](#) International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) monograph and a [badly flawed meta-analysis](#) that purportedly found that exposure to glyphosate increased the risk of non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL) in humans by 41 percent. Interestingly, it was later revealed that [one of the consultants](#) on the IARC monograph was a paid by the Environmental Defense Fund and is now an expert witness for trial lawyers. No conflict of interest there!

The trial lawyers are the willing (and highly compensated) instruments of the longstanding activist campaign against modern biotech crops spearheaded by groups such as [Environmental Defense Fund](#), [Greenpeace](#), and [Union of Concerned Scientists](#).

Battered by the bad publicity stemming from the ridiculous jury awards Bayer is now pledging to [invest \\$5.6 billion in additional methods to combat weeds](#) over the next decade. The company says that this R&D investment will aim at better understanding of how pesticide resistance develops, discovering new pesticides, and devising more precise application methods. Doubtless some considerable proportion of the pharmaceutical and crop science company's annual R&D [spending of \\$5.8 billion](#) is already devoted to achieving those goals.

Since the activists basically [oppose modern agriculture](#), Bayer's pledge of additional R&D funding to find new ways to kill weeds will do nothing to mollify them. To meet its commitment, Bayer is presumably diverting funds from solving other pressing problems, such as, finding new ways to [control disease carrying vermin](#) in the tropics or developing [new cancer cures](#). The price of this attempt at appeasement is likely more suffering in the world than there would otherwise have been.