

11.03.2019, David Cox

## The Roundup row: is the world's most popular weedkiller carcinogenic?

Producer Monsanto is facing thousands of lawsuits from customers who now have cancer. But not all experts are convinced of a link...

As a third-generation cotton farmer in Bakersfield, California, John Barton estimates that he sprayed thousands of gallons of the herbicide [Roundup](#) over the course of his 30-year working life.

“My family were farming 1,000 acres of cotton, so we’d be out in the fields spraying it, and we’d get our pants wet, our shoes wet, our socks wet, and if the wind changed it would blow in our face,” Barton tells me. “We did that spring, summer and fall for most of my life. There was really no regulation at the time that we were spraying Roundup; no one was offered any protection. But I didn’t think anything of it, as they kept telling us how safe it was.”

By ‘they’, Barton is referring to [Monsanto](#), the corporation that produces Roundup. Monsanto, which was acquired by the German pharmaceutical giant Bayer last year, is currently facing more than [9,000 lawsuits](#) across the US from plaintiffs, mostly former gardeners and agricultural workers who believe that Roundup exposure caused their cancer.

Last summer, former school groundskeeper Dewayne Johnson, who is terminally ill with [non-Hodgkin lymphoma](#), won a [landmark victory](#) against the company when jurors ruled that Monsanto had failed to warn him of the health risks posed by Roundup. In the latest trial, which [recently got under way](#) in San Francisco, Edwin Hardeman, who suffers from an aggressive form of non-Hodgkin lymphoma, is pursuing a similar verdict. Like Johnson and Hardeman, Barton has also developed non-Hodgkin lymphoma and is preparing to take legal action.