



Pesticide newsletter

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Jurisdictional news



US: Massive lawsuits against Syngenta and Chevron over Paraquat

Syngenta and Chevron are facing [a growing number of lawsuits](#) over the production and marketing of Paraquat, an old herbicide linked to Parkinson's disease. It is contained in the product marketed under the name Gramoxone.

Very popular with American farmers, Gramoxone is however banned in more than thirty countries because of its high toxicity. Syngenta itself acknowledges the risk of accidental poisoning, and its products state "safe use" precautions on their labels, yet it denies the validity of scientific research linking it to Parkinson's disease. Gramoxone is also manufactured and marketed in the United States by Chevron.

To date, at least twenty lawsuits are pending, in six U.S. federal courts, and various state courts. The plaintiffs, all of whom have Parkinson's disease, believe that their exposure to Paraquat is responsible for their illness.

The plaintiffs' claims are bolstered by the April 12th, 2021 decision of U.S. District Judge John Ross of the Eastern District of Missouri to deny a [motion](#) by Syngenta and Chevron to dismiss the lawsuit in the Holyfield-Syngenta [case](#). In their motion, Syngenta and Chevron rely on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) regulation of Paraquat, which considers it safe for use as long as

all of its precautionary recommendations are met. Judge Ross found that this argument was flawed and that the EPA's issuance of the registration was not an absolute defense to claims that a product was "misabeled."

As a farm worker, Henry Holyfield was extensively exposed to Paraquat and developed incurable and disabling disorders of his nervous system. The Holyfields claim that Paraquat was distributed without adequate instructions for safe use and without warning that Paraquat was hazardous to health.

The plaintiffs' attorneys in pending lawsuits are [asking](#) a U.S. judicial panel to consolidate similar lawsuits into "multidistrict litigation" under the supervision of a federal judge in California. The reason is that they claim lawsuits are likely to multiply in light of the evidence linking Paraquat exposure and Parkinson's disease.

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