

## Argentinian tobacco farmers sue tobacco companies

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**In Misiones district, north-east-Argentina, tobacco companies asked farmers to use new seeds which require much more pesticides. But nobody explained them the risks. That's why 120 families sue not only tobacco companies, but also the ones which produce the herbicides and pesticides they used.**

The plants look dry and brown without Roundup Power Max, but deeply green when treated with the herbicide. In such a colourful way, the effect of the weed control product is shown in its advertising brochure. Its main active component is Glyphosat, a phosphonate.

Nevertheless, argentinian tobacco farmers claim that the use of these chemicals has caused devastating birth defects in their children. The defects, described in the 55-page complaint, include epilepsy, congenital heart defects, blindness and metabolic disorders.

For that reason, 120 families from the Misiones district in north eastern Argentina sued Roundup-producer Monsanto as well as Tobacco-giant Philip Morris, some of its affiliates and various tobacco brokerage companies in New Castle County Court in the US-state Delaware. The farmers are represented by the US-attorney office Bifferato. The complaint was filed on 6th April 2012.

### Genetically modified crops instead of native seeds

The farmers claim that they unknowingly damaged their children's health, due to the companies' negligence. The Argentinian brokerage company Tabacos Norte had recommended them to buy genetically modified crops which are resistant to glyphosat, but need much more herbicides and pesticides. Following these recommendations, they had used the products in large amounts and without adequate protection.

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According to the complaint, Tabacos Norte, based in Misiones, was created by Carolina Leaf and Philip Morris' Argentine subsidiary in 1984 and is controlled by these two companies. Misiones is the most important growing region for Burley tobacco in Argentina and is one of the poorest regions in the country. The crop is mainly grown on small, family-owned farms.

#### Reading recommendations:

The complaint: <http://www.courthousenews.com/2012/04/10/Argentina.pdf>  
(<http://www.courthousenews.com/2012/04/10/Argentina.pdf>)

Study on genetically modified tobacco crops:

[http://openwetware.org/wiki/840.119:Developing\\_Glyphosate\\_Resistance\\_in\\_Toba](http://openwetware.org/wiki/840.119:Developing_Glyphosate_Resistance_in_Toba)  
([http://openwetware.org/wiki/840.119:Developing\\_Glyphosate\\_Resistance\\_in\\_Toba](http://openwetware.org/wiki/840.119:Developing_Glyphosate_Resistance_in_Toba))

#### Blue 21 e.V.

Gneisenaustr. 2a  
10961 Berlin  
Telefon: 030 – 694 61 01  
Fax: 030 – 692 65 90  
Mail: [info@unfairtobacco.org](mailto:info@unfairtobacco.org)  
(<mailto:info@unfairtobacco.org>)

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