



Five million Brazilian farmers are locked in a lawsuit with US-based biotech giant Monsanto, suing for as much as 6.2 billion euros. They say that the genetic-engineering company has been collecting royalties on crops it unfairly claims as its own.

The farmers claim that Monsanto unfairly collects exorbitant profits every year worldwide on royalties from “renewal” seed harvests. “Renewal” crops are those that have been planted using seed from the previous year’s harvest. While the practice of renewal farming is an ancient one, Monsanto disagrees, demanding royalties from any crop generation produced from its genetically-engineered seed. Because the engineered seed is patented, Monsanto not only charges an initial royalty on the sale of the crop produced, but a continuing 2 per cent royalty on every subsequent crop, even if the farmer is using a later generation of seed.

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