

# Syngenta MDL Judge Tears Up Lawyers' Contingency Contracts in \$500 Million Fee Ruling

Reuters **reports** that U.S. District Judge John Lungstrum of Kansas City has set aside individual contingency fee contracts that some plaintiffs' lawyers had in place for clients in a multidistrict litigation.

The ruling rejected the claims of Watts Guerra, a Texas firm that had signed up tens of thousands of farmers to bring individual cases in state court, accusing the agricultural giant Syngenta of peddling genetically modified seeds that produced corn China refused to import. The case led to a \$1.5 billion global settlement for the U.S. farmers, according to Reuters' **Alison Frankel**.

"This court has the authority and duty to determine the amount of reasonable fees paid to attorneys from the settlement fund, and because any further contingent fee payments would necessarily come from proceeds from the settlement fund, the court can and does prohibit any such additional payments," Lungstrum wrote in the opinion.

**Read the Reuters article.**