

Lawsuit charges weigh on Bayer profits again

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(AP)—Charges for lawsuits over its birth control pills weighed on Bayer AG's earnings once again during the fourth quarter of 2012.

The German company said Thursday it made a [net profit](#) of €374 million (\$490 million) during the period, compared with €397 million the previous year.

The company booked €455 million in charges during the quarter due to current or anticipated lawsuits in the United States over claims of injuries from blood clots associated with its [oral contraceptives](#).

The profit fall masked a 7.3 percent rise in sales to €9.86 billion.

For the full year, net income declined 1 percent to €2.45 billion while sales rose 8.8 percent to €39.8 billion.

Aside from the problems with the contraceptives, the company said its business was doing well, with sales rising across the three basic divisions: prescription and over-the-counter drugs, farm chemicals and seeds, and [synthetic materials](#) such as polyurethanes, adhesives and coatings.

Excluding the lawsuit expenses, earnings before interest, taxes and other financial factors rose 9 percent to €8.24 billion.

Bayer has said it will raise its dividend for 2012 to €1.90 per share from €1.65 amid optimism over the coming year. It forecast a percentage increase in operating earnings in the mid-single digit range.

Bayer shares rose 2.6 percent to €75.71 in morning trading in Europe.

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