

[Why 1 or 2 milliGauss ? \(click\)](#)



For the first time the courts have established that there is a link between the effects of electromagnetic radiation from a very high voltage power line and the onset of disease among animals.



14 Nov 2008

An RTE power line of very high voltage is declared to be the cause of disease in a herd of cattle.

TULLE (Agence France Presse) – In ordering the management of the French company RTE (responsible for the distribution of electricity) to pay almost 400,000 euros to cattle farmers, the courts have established for the first time that there is a link between the effects of electromagnetic radiation from a very high voltage power line and symptoms of disease among animals.

On 28 October a judge from the Civil Court at Tulle sentenced the national electricity distribution network (RTE) to pay 390,648 euros for the "direct, material and certain" prejudice suffered by a dairy farm at Latronche (Corrèze) established on land crossed by a power line of very high voltage.

"The courts have established a direct link between this power line and the diseases among the animals" belonging to a farming family, reported their lawyer with satisfaction.

Maître Philippe Caetano has been involved since 2003 in a case that was at first an administrative matter then a civil one. RTE has announced that it will appeal against this sentence.

"It's the first time that a judge has brought a judgement against RTE but all the cases brought before administrative tribunals have always been rejected," we were told by Olivier Jallet, head of the department for Communication and Legal Matters at RTE Southwest. "The numerous independent scientific studies carried out in the past 30 years have not revealed the existence of a health risk from exposure to electromagnetic fields," he added.

In 20 years it's the fifth case involving animals brought against RTE over a power line. The high-voltage line at Latronche was upgraded in 1990 to a line of very high voltage (carrying 400,000 or more volts).

The Marcouyoux family, who ran the farm specializing in raising cows and pigs, soon noticed that their animals were showing symptoms of disease - breathing problems, weakened immune systems - but it was only in 1998 that a technician concluded that the animals were over-exposed to electromagnetic radiation. "The local farming authority and the county veterinary services got involved, and eliminated any source of infection as the cause of death of the cows," Maître Caetano recalled.

The sentence, of which AFP have obtained a copy, reports that "raising new litters of pigs was stopped because of an abnormally low birth rate and a high rate of infant mortality", that "the barn contains undersize heifers, some of them afflicted with hemorrhages or inexplicable abortions" and that "10% of the milk is lost" because of the digestive or genital diseases that the cows suffer from.

Michel Marcouyoux, who started the farm with his wife in 1974 on 30 hectares running the length of the power line, recounts that "over the last 15 years or so" they have been visited by a procession of veterinary officials trying to identify a possible illness in their herd.

"We were faced with the choice of giving up everything or putting up a new building a kilometre further away, and that's what we decided to do, but we had to give up on the pigs because for the new work we had to pay every penny from our own pockets," this 60-year-old farmer told us when we talked to him.

"My wife is deaf and so am I, and our son of 35 has breathing problems", declared M. Marcouyoux, who is now a member of an association based in Brittany called "Animals under tension".

"At night, if you hold a neon tube close to a very high tension line, it lights up all by itself," he adds with concern.



A cow close to a very high tension line
(photo added by Next-up organization)