Jury: \$181M To 3 Hurt In III. Grain Elevator Blast

EAST ST. LOUIS, III. (AP) — A federal jury has sided against ConAgra Foods Inc. and a contractor in awarding \$180.8 million in damages to three men injured in a 2010 grain elevator explosion in southern Illinois.

Jurors in East St. Louis deliberated about 10 hours after a month-long trial before returning a verdict Friday favoring Minnesotans John Jentz and Robert Schmidt. The third plaintiff was John Becker, whose hometown wasn't immediately available.

The lawsuit alleged the men were removing equipment from a grain bin in April 2010 at the ConAgra-owned site in Chester when it exploded into flames. Jentz sustained burns over roughly three-quarters of his body.

Officials with Nebraska-based ConAgra say the accident was tragic but the company doesn't agree with the verdict or damages. ConAgra plans to appeal.

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