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From: Keri Dane [mailto:kdane@dataacc.net]

Sent: Tuesday, December 15, 2009 10:37 PM

To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops

Subject: Dane, Chad 12.15.09

December 15, 2009

Legal Policy Section
Antitrust Division
U.S. Department of Justice
450 5th Street, NW. Suite 11700
Washington, DC 20001

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Chad Dane and I farm nearly 3200 acres of irrigated corn, as well as soybeans and popcorn in Nebraska. My family has been farming since 1887. I am also a seed corn dealer in the area.

While we are a more traditional farm, I absolutely believe the pace of seed innovation has increased in recent years, and although some prices are a little out of hand, farmers are definitely seeing huge benefits and significant advantages in crop production. The biotech seeds make things easier in the farming community. They save in application time and improve the environment by keeping actual pesticides out of the soil and water.

Farmers, like anybody else, have different personalities and therefore make their farming and seed decisions based on those differences. Some choose their seeds based on price, while others make their decisions on yield. Farmers tend to stay with one seed company with most of their business so they can get a big volume discount. As long as my company stays yield competitive my customers will stay with me. As a farmer, I don't think there is enough competition out there. Farmers only have 3-4 major companies to choose from. Companies must meet behind closed doors and find an applicable price. This runs the little seed company out of business. It also makes it harder for dealers to find new clients. I think the biggest struggle comes from local co-ops who sell multiple brands of seed and can offer special incentives to buy seed there. This is where the farmer dealer really struggles.

Some farmers change seed companies to find a better price, but as long as their yield is prevalent, most will stay loyal to the dealer or company they trust. Price is important to some, but farmers are smart business people, so their decisions are based mostly on previous experience and crop productivity. Some farmers are afraid of change, so they stay loyal to a company, but it tends to stay pretty balanced over-all because the top four companies produce similar yields in the end.

The newest seed innovations and biotech traits offer convenience, timeliness and a decrease in fuel and labor costs over the years. As long as private research continues to increase, farming will have more conveniences and the technologies will be greater, however margins do continue to get tighter and the possibility of over-producing is always around the corner. Farmers have always found a way to over produce and drive prices below production costs. The double edge sword with biotech is that it pushes production faster than we can sometimes use the commodity up.

Thank you for allowing me to voice my opinion in the public forum.

Sincerely,

Chad Dane
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