

From: Melissa Mandel <melissa18mandel@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2009 8:00 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comments

I am writing because I am concerned about the lack of competition in agricultural markets.

I have been horrified by the stories of farmers being prevented from saving their seed for next year's crops. The practice of seed-saving is age-old and sacred in my opinion. No good can come of giving control of seed to anyone besides the farmers themselves. Certainly not to a corporate giant with no moral standards whatsoever, like Monsanto.

I resent the ability of corporations to patent life forms. That is just wrong. Life belongs to everyone, all of us. I support the rescinding of all such patents.

The agribusinesses have been growing what they call food which is developed for its size, color and durability, rather than for its nutritional value. That is one of the major reasons people in the US have declining health levels. I support transitioning farm subsidies and other government aid to small farmers who grow on small farms and organically as much as possible. We can increase the number of farmers. In fact, we can also increase the amount of food grown in our suburbs by supporting community gardens and urban farms.

We still will need large amounts of crops like wheat but they can be grown for food value rather than simple quantity and then less will be needed. In order to do this crops must be grown in concert with nature and especially in support of growing the soil.

I could say much more, but will just end with, thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Melissa Mandel

, 94702