

From: Briana Robertori <BRobertori@berkeley.edu>
Sent: Friday, December 18, 2009 1:21 AM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comments

I am writing because I am concerned about the lack of competition in agricultural markets and Monsanto and other international monopolistic corporations' role in the reshaping and often destruction of farming livelihoods. It is of utmost importance that small farmers from all around the world can maintain their livelihoods and their sustainable farming practices. Small farms make up a large part of the global food trade and also provide one of the main sources of work for people in the global South. When a single company has control over the majority of seeds and is able to influence small farmers to buy its seeds and herbicides, this erodes sustainable agricultural systems that have been in place for centuries, and often displaces irreplaceable knowledge about cultivation and the land. Often, the push toward 'modernizing' agriculture puts farmers on a track toward debt, which is a trend that drives thousands of peasants into urban slums and job insecurity, not to mention a much lower quality of life.

The problems with a transition to corporate-led agriculture do not just extend to farmers in the global south, it also applies to farmers in the US and other developed countries. When Monsanto controls the majority of US seeds, this threatens the farmers who don't subscribe to buying corporate-owned seeds. Also, it further institutionalizes what I see as an unjust lack of transparency concerning what is actually in our food. If many countries in the European Union choose not to import GMOs for health and environmental reasons, I believe it should be a right that consumers have access to proper labelling of GMO products.

There are hundreds of other reasons - environmental, social, or economic, but I will not list them here because it would be too time consuming to develop the evidence. However, please take this email as a token of my distress at the state of our current food systems. It is in my interest and the interest of millions around the world that the United States acts before these unsustainable industrial agricultural practices, led by enormous profit-making industries rather than farmers, irrevocably overtakes agricultural systems around the world.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Briana Robertori

, 94709