

From: adembska@gmail.com
Sent: Friday, December 18, 2009 11:53 AM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comment

Anna Dembska
PO Box 203
Hancock, ME 04640-0203

December 18, 2009

US Department of Justice

Dear US Department of Justice:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments in advance of the Department of Justice's workshops on "Agriculture and Antitrust Enforcement Issues in Our 21st Century Economy."

As an organic consumer and gardener, I am particularly concerned about Monsanto's control over the seed supply.

By buying seed companies and aggressively patenting life, Monsanto has gained control over as much as 90 percent of seed genetics. This is anti-competitive behavior that skews markets and subjects farmers and consumers to the unchecked power of a company that can raise prices at will.

But, my main concern is that, while Monsanto has acquired a diverse store of seed genetics, they are only making available a few seeds that are genetically modified to be dependent on their chemicals.

The vast bounty of food crops that farmers have cultivated and improved upon over the last 10,000 or so years should not be allowed to be bought up and put out of commission by a company bent on whittling down food varieties to a few pesticide-dependent genetically modified crops.

The most devious part of Monsanto's business model is that their seeds can cross-pollinate with organic and traditional varieties, destroying their unique characteristics and infecting them with genetically engineered chemical dependence or even "Terminator" or "Traitor" technology that renders seeds sterile, a literal death sentence for seeds maintained through conventional breeding.

It's extremely important to protect plant species and make sure diversity is maintained and available to the farming and gardening communities. Monsanto's conscious elimination of tens of thousands of food varieties threatens American and worldwide food security. As you may be aware, many Americans with financial troubles, or who want to take some responsibility for their own food security, are planting food gardens in their yards. The consolidation of seed stock by a few huge corporations threatens the thousands-year-old right of people to save seed and develop new varieties

that grow well in specific environments. This is particularly important as climates change and farmers and gardeners need to adapt to new and varying conditions.

I urge you to please include in your investigation a consideration of the importance keeping seeds, the foundation of human life, at least in the marketplace, if not in the public domain where they truly belong.

Sincerely,

Anna Dembska