From: drfran@airmail.net
Sent: Friday, December 18, 2009 12:03 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comment

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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, 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 Frankenseeds 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.

The same way we protect animal species from extinction, we should protect plant species, especially the tens of thousands of food varieties, from companies like Monsanto that are consciously eliminating them.

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.

In addition to the destruction of traditional and organic farming industries and the expense of genetically modified seeds and the tons of chemicals they require, the process has introduced genetically modified foods into our food supply whether we want them or not.

I happen to have a sensitive immune system and react easily to chemicals including chemicals and pesticides in foods. I attempt to eat as cleanly as possible including organic but I am finding that even natural and organic foods such as salad dressings have soy and corn ingredients that are most likely genetically modified because they are traditionally grown along with the genetically modified crops.

Our food supply is being irrevocably tainted by the cross pollination of seeds.

We are working diligently on Health Care Reform. One of the first ingredients of health is clean, nutritious food. If we don't have that, we can never hope to improve and maintain our health. Please ensure that the purity, safety and variety of our food supply is preserved.

Sincerely,

Fran Assaf