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To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comment on Monsanto

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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.

You see, I just had a hysterectomy in July because I have endometriosis. After years of personal study on the possible causes of Endometriosis, I believe that companies such as Monsanto have recklessly developed products from genetically modified organisms to pharmaceuticals that have adverse effects on our health. My health was destroyed before I was even born. My mother was prescribed a drug made by subsidiaries of Monsanto, to prevent miscarriages. The FDA later removed this medicine due to birth defects. Later on while living on a dair farm, my father used pesticides made by another subsidiary of Monsanto to prevent infestation of pests. I remember as a child putting my hands in this treated corn, not knowing the dangers of these chemicals because Monsanto never felt it necessary to warn the general public of these chemicals. I fished in a lake that was downstream from a papermill which polluted the waters with the dioxin by products from bleaching the paper products. The list can go on and on. This is not an unusual circumstance. The majority of our American population has had their health unknowingly tainted by Monsanto's reckless monopoly.

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.

Sincerely,

Sandy Pethan