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To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comment: Agriculture and Antitrust Enforcement

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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."

I am particularly concerned about Monsanto's control over the seed supply.

Monsanto has gained control over as much as 90 percent of seed genetics by purchasing seed companies and aggressively patenting life. They buy the rights to seeds and then limit access to them, forcing farmers to purchase GMO alternatives at higher prices. 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. These are brute tactics that negatively impact the world's food supply.

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 GMO seeds can cross-pollinate with organic and traditional varieties, destroying their unique characteristics. This cross-pollination can infect other seeds with genetically engineered chemical dependence or even "Terminator" or "Traitor" technology that renders seeds sterile, which would cause those varieties to become extinct.

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.

The power that Monsanto and other giant agribusiness companies have is currently unchecked by the U.S. government. I urge you to not only investigate Monsanto's methods of controlling with seed varieties, but

also its tactics for dealing with farmers.

Sincerely,

Rhodes Yepsen