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

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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 a local, organic consumer, I am particularly concerned about Monsanto's control over the seed supply. They are ruthlessly employing the most vicious tactics to advance their agenda for complete control over the world's food supply. Case-in-point is the Percy Schmeiser fiasco that practically impoverished him because of genetic drift from a neighboring GE canola farmer. It was more about eliminating the competition than to leverage legal proceedings over the "alleged" co-opting of patented GE seeds.

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 simply because they have levied the greatest market share to manipulate market price. End result, drive every farmer that does not comply with their agenda out of business for good.

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 various chemicals. This is most prevalent in the field cropping sectors of the Midwest where vast tracts of land are occupied by monocropping schemes (e.g. corn, soybeans and wheat) that place more emphasis on feeding livestock than on feeding humans and acting as stewards of the land.

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. Why would we allow this based on the principal of eliminating the diversity of our food production capacities or choices? Why should we allow those we do not trust to control the very thing which provides us with life? That would be a death wish!

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.

They have been deemed "Frankenseeds" for this reason. What happens under gene manipulation can only happen in a lab and cannot happen in our natural environment like traditional cross breeding methods can with plant species of the same genera. No where in nature do we see gene deletion or addition happen without human intervention to acquire an intended result. This is very problematic and little to no "independent" or "third party research" has been organized to establish a moratorium on GE seeds and animals to ensure their safety with respect to human health and the environment.

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 of keeping seeds, the foundation of human life, at least in the marketplace, if not in the public domain where they truly belong.

The future requires food security and diversity at the local level due to the dual threat of peak oil and climate change. So, we must allow a community-scale response to this problem and hand over seed preservation and conservation practices to individual communities and the public seed banks that are being re-established all across America today.

Sincerely,

Dex Conaway