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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:

I understand the Department of Justice is holding workshops on the topic "Agriculture and Antitrust Enforcement Issues in Our 21st Century Economy." Please consider my comments in that regard.

As an organic consumer, I am concerned about the dubious practices of the Monsanto corporation -- especially its monopolistic 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 anti-competitive behavior skews markets -- not just in the U.S., but worldwide -- and subjects farmers and consumers to the unchecked power of a company that can raise prices at will.

My main concern, however, is that while Monsanto has acquired a diverse store of seed genetics, the company is making available only a few seeds that have been genetically modified to be dependent on chemicals that Monsanto itself produces.

The human population has gradually adapted to a vast diversity of food crops that farmers have cultivated and improved over the past 10,000 years. A company like Monsanto, which is clearly bent on whittling down food varieties to a few pesticide-dependent genetically modified crops, should not be allowed to buy up and put out of commission this critical diversity.

Such a business model may be great for corporate profits, but is utterly antithetical to human welfare. Indeed, the most devious part of the model is that these 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 -- an outright death sentence for seeds maintained through conventional breeding.

We have laws and policies intended to protect wild plant and animal species from extinction at least partly because our own species may depend

on that diversity in ways we do not yet fully understand. Why would we not have even stronger reasons for protecting the diversity of plant species on which we explicitly depend for our food? Just as we protect wild species from extinction, we must protect the tens of thousands of food varieties from companies like Monsanto that are deliberately eliminating them!

I urge you to include in your investigation a consideration of the importance of ensuring that seeds, the foundation of human life, remain at least in the marketplace and preferably in the public domain where they truly belong.

Thank you for the opportunity to make my voice heard on this matter.

Sincerely,

James A. Brown
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