

From: mistyhollow_sally@mac.com
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To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Fear of Monsanto

Sally Hammerman, RN, MSN
1020 East Street Road
West Chester, PA 19382-8504

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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, and thus over food which is a primary necessity of LIFE.

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. Further, those of us who know about the birds and the bees know that plants are naturally pollinated by their travels, and by weather.

YET Monsanto has the un-agricultural nerve to sue a small farmer who's crops are close to Monsanto's fields on the basis that some of his crops had some of their crops' genetic make-up. Seems neither Monsanto nor the judge who ruled on this case have been given the birds & bees lecture?

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. AND they are making seeds that re "terminators" - they don't reproduce. All of which, of course, means more control over our existence (food) for Monsanto.

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 hoping to keep on growing,

Sally Hammerman, RN, farmer
610-455-0981