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Sent: Friday, December 18, 2009 4:13 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comment

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December 18, 2009

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 consumer, I am profoundly concerned about Monsanto's 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 monopolistic behavior skews markets and subjects farmers and consumers to the unchecked power of a company that can raise prices at will.

I am further alarmed that, while Monsanto has acquired a diverse store of seed genetics, they are making available only 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 must 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 with even "Terminator" or "Traitor" technology that renders seeds sterile, a literal death sentence for seeds maintained through conventional breeding.

As we protect animal species from extinction, we must protect plant species, too,--especially the tens of thousands of food varieties--from companies like Monsanto that are intentionally 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.

Sincerely,

Mabel McElhaney