

From: donimae2001@yahoo.com
Sent: Friday, December 18, 2009 4:23 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comment

Doni Mae
po box 1002
Shingle Springs, CA 95682-1002

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."

Although I have nothing against recombinant DNA technologies, I am opposed to the use of "ownership" of modified genomes to control individual farmers and agricultural activities in general. Agricultural production has to deal with many factors which vary over space and time. It is not wise to interfere with individuals' use of their knowledge and local resources in raising food and in developing and saving seeds of strains that work for them and for their customers. I find Monsanto's behavior in these respects to be appalling.

I am 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 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.

I am also unhappy with the current use of terminator technology. It is only justified for plants that are harmful if their spread is not controlled, i.e. invasive species. At the very least, seeds and living plants that have been so modified should be labeled as such. Monsanto should be using this technology to prevent the spread of their genetically modified strains instead of charging people whose crops were contaminated by their pollen. Indeed, Monsanto is the one at fault and should be the entity that pays to remedy these situations.

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 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.

If we see fit to protect wild species from extinction, we should protect the tens of thousands of food varieties that have been developed and used by human societies from companies like Monsanto that are consciously eliminating them.

I urge you to please include in your investigation a consideration of the importance of diversity in resources and respect for rights and dignity of small (and even backyard) farmers. They need protection from companies such as Monsanto.

Sincerely,

Doni Mae