

From: jlipka@mail.une.edu
Sent: Friday, December 18, 2009 5:03 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comment from a Future Physician re: Monsanto

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December 18, 2009

US Department of Justice

Dear US Department of Justice:

As a third year medical school student at the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine and future family practice physician, I first 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 future family practice physician, current medical student, and current organic consumer, I am particularly 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.

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.

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.

Whether you believe human beings are 6000 years old or 50,000 years old,

we are slow to adapt as biological creatures, and I believe a number of developments in post-WWII agri-business is responsible for a number of current health problems--obesity, Type II diabetes, ADHD, and depression. I firmly believe, from a health standpoint, that agri-business is making us sick. And I do believe that Monsanto genetically engineering crops and altering our food source that we have used for thousands of years has a negative effect on our health. These are issues that a number of medical students and physicians do discuss, as we are concerned about the health of the population and our own health.

I know that Monsanto claims that it has the best of intentions and is about feeding the world. However, I oppose the means by which they are doing this; and I oppose one corporation having the power, via monopoly, to feed the world.

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,

Jennifer Lipka
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