

**From:** mark.balcom@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Friday, December 18, 2009 5:23 PM  
**To:** ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>  
**Subject:** Comment

---

Jan Balcom  
27266 Twin Ponds Rd.  
Clovis, CA 93619-9654

December 18, 2009

US Department of Justice

Dear US Department of Justice:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments for the Department of Justice's workshops on "Agriculture and Antitrust Enforcement Issues in Our 21st Century Economy." I am particularly concerned about Monsanto's control over the seed supply and the dangers that creates for all of us.

Monsanto has gained control over as much as 90 percent of seed genetics by buying seed companies and aggressively patenting their "products". This is anti-competitive and skews markets. It subjects both farmers and consumers like me to the unchecked power of a company that can raise prices at will, as well as control what kinds of foods and other ag products are available.

The most dangerous part is that although 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, actively and successfully diminishing crop diversity in a very dangerous way.

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 dangerous and partially hidden part of Monsanto's business model is that their modified seeds can and do cross-pollinate with organic and traditional varieties, 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 must protect plant species, ESPECIALLY THE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF FOOD VARIETIES. Failing to do so is a dangerous and horribly unwise course.

I urge you, please include in your investigation a consideration of the importance keeping seeds, the foundation of human life, from being held as the private property of a single or very few corporations. Without protecting and ensuring significant diversity, you put us all at needless

and unacceptable risk.

Sincerely,

Jan Balcom  
(559)298-7334