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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 an 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. My cousin recently lost his farm, and I'm saddened each year to see fewer farmers at my local farmer's market!

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. We need variety in our diets! My daughter & I are both allergic to wheat & dairy, and my sister is allergic to corn by-products! Science suggests that over-exposure to some substances may trigger or worsen allergies, and Monsanto is contributing to this by actively reducing the variety and nutritional quality of plants in our diet.

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,

Lorena Knoch