From: jimggers@yahoo.com
Sent: Friday, December 18, 2009 7:33 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 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.

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.

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.

Monsanto should pay damages to farmers whose crops they contaminate. I want organic food, not genetically engineered food. I know organic food is healthy. I don't want pesticide-contaminated food. Our healthcare system is so expensive that we cannot afford foods contaminated with pesticides, antibiotics and other non-natural substances to decrease the health of the nation. I want organic food, and I want to maintain the freedom to be able to choose organic food. It is vital to keep the small farmers in business, to keep them employed, and to maintain superior products since they have pride in and care about their produce. Seems like there is essentially a monopoly here, which should fall under the anti-trust laws of this country. I don't want one or two big corporations, or even the government, dictating what I can and cannot eat.

Sincerely,

J. G. GERSTLEY