

From: jeaberg@verizon.net
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To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comment

Jeanne Bergen
PO Box 478
Philmont, NY 12565-0478

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 public seed supply.

By buying up 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, ones that are genetically modified to be dependent on the chemicals they manufacture.

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.

Just as we protect animal species from extinction, we should also protect plant species, and especially the tens of thousands of varieties of food plants, from companies (like Monsanto) that are consciously eliminating them.

I urge you to consider in your investigation the importance of allowing a multitude of seeds, the foundation of human life, to be available to the public in the marketplace.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Bergen