

From: karyndemartini@sbcglobal.net
Sent: Friday, December 18, 2009 11:08 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Department of Justice's workshops on Agriculture and Antitrust Enforcement Issues in Our 21st Century Economy

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US Department of Justice

Dear US Department of Justice:

I am so pleased to hear the Obama administration is taking an active role in investigating the current practices of our farming where big business is concerned. I look forward to hearing more about 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 the high cost of organic food and how that pricing makes it unavailable to the poor and many constituents of the middle-class. With childhood obesity and many adult illnesses spinning out of control, we need to provide more fresh, healthy, organic products for all of America. I also am very concerned with the slaughter practices of animals and how bacteria can spread during these practices making our food unhealthy.

In addition, I am worried about our seed supply, genetic modification of foods, and corporate control of big business that is putting hard working and ethical farmers in untenable positions. In particular, Monsanto's control over the seed supply is disturbing.

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.

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. This is unacceptable.

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 all of my concerns and take into consideration 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.

As a wife and mother raising a 15 month old girl and pregnant with our second child, a son, I greatly appreciate you taking the time to read this email.

Many thanks,

Karyn DeMartini