

From: eicanfly@yahoo.com
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To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comment on Monsanto seed monopoly

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December 19, 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.

If, in the current economy, it becomes necessary to sustain my family by growing our own food it would be practically impossible for me to save and use my own seed to replant the following year. Many of the seeds currently available and affordable on the market today are designed to produce sterile seeds thus insuring one has to purchase them every year. This a major concern for myself and many others and we are forced to find and obtain expensive "heirloom" varieties to ensure subsequent crops for food. My real concern is that if, in this unstable international environment, something were to happen that disrupted food production and availability, this monopoly that Monsanto has managed to create for it's own greedy benefit would seal the fate of many Americans and others too. This is a very scary idea, that we would have mostly sterized seeds and not be able to sustain ourselves as our ancestors have for thousands of years. I trust you Mr. Obama, that is why I voted and campaigned for you!! I trust that you won't allow this dangerous and criminal behavior to continue. Please put the interests of your people before those of this bully corporation.

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.

Sincerely,

Eileen Reeger
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