

From: decompose@mac.com
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To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Agriculture and Antitrust Enforcement Issues in Our 21st Century Economy - Comment

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US Department of Justice

Dear US Department of Justice:

Thanks 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 American, a businessman, a supporter of American farmers, an environmentalist, and an organic consumer, I am greatly concerned about any corporation or small group of corporations gaining control over the seed supply. I am therefore gravely concerned over the monopolistic dominance of Monsanto.

By buying competing seed companies and patenting life, Monsanto may have gained control over as much as 90 percent of seed genetics. This might be perceived as anti-competitive behavior that skews markets and may subject both farmers and consumers to the unchecked power of a company that can raise prices at will.

Another 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. Additionally, I understand that the plants produced from certain types of seeds Monsanto sells produce either no seeds, or seeds that do not grow - stopping the natural cycle of life and forcing the farmer to become "addicted" to cyclical seed purchases.

The vast bounty of food crops that farmers have cultivated and improved upon over many generations should not be allowed to be bought up and put out of commission by a corporation that appears to be focused on narrowing the variety of foods available in America - and around the world - to the few varieties that the corporation controls. This is not in the best interest of human health, environmental health, or national security.

It is of grave concern that Monsanto's genetically-modified plants can cross-pollinate with organic and traditional varieties, destroying the unique characteristics of those varieties 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. I have also been led to believe that Monsanto may have brought law suits against farmers whose

non-Monsanto crops have been infected with Monsanto product via natural cross-pollination. If what I hear is true Monsanto has sued these farmers as if the farmers had stolen DNA, when in fact the genetically modified DNA has been transferred via, of all things: nature. To me this seems an extraordinary injustice, and was made possible only when it became possible to patent life, i.e. specific gene strands. That law should be reversed immediately, and cases based upon it - including those settled out of court - should be retroactively reversed.

The same way we protect animal species from extinction, we should protect plant species, especially the tens of thousands of food varieties, from companies that are eliminating them.

I urge you to please include in your investigation a consideration of the importance keeping seeds both in the marketplace and in the public domain where they truly belong.

Sincerely,

Rob Branch-Dasch