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Sent: Sunday, December 20, 2009 1:29 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comments

I am writing because I am concerned about the lack of competition in agricultural markets.

All people deserve to be nourished, body and soul--food and water are at the heart of this. Each person deserves to eat nutritious food, free of chemicals, toxins, and genetic modification. If companies choose to use these methods, then the public has a right to know. All food and seeds should be appropriately labeled so that farmers and consumers are able to make educated choices.

I refuse to buy any non-organic food. I object to Monsanto's domination of farming because I believe in supporting my neighbors, so I buy local, sustainable food. It is becoming more difficult to know what to buy, though... Monsanto's monopoly interferes with the ability of farmers to make a decent living for themselves. Though our farmers are struggling, large corporations like Monsanto are making money. Each small farm that goes out of business creates more of a market for mass produced food. Monsanto is determined to run certain farmers out of business. If I knew which farmers used their seeds, I would boycott them in any way possible.

Why small farms? Why do you think of the cute little farm down the road? Why do we have this idyllic picture of our friendly local farmer tending his crops and animals when it couldn't be further from the truth? Because deep down inside, we know that food raised properly, without chemicals, hormones, or modified genes, is best for ourselves and our families. There is a reason nobody pictures huge, stinking facilities where cows are fed hormones and antibiotics and milked silly. There is a reason people don't want to know that cows are not supposed to eat grain and that it gives them stomach ulcers. There is a reason nobody wants to hear that these stomach ulcers perforate, causing widespread infection, and that when these cows die, most of them have liver abscesses because of this. This is one example of how factory farming is impacting our health and the health of our environment. Monsanto is part of the larger problem. Monsanto puts profit before all else. It would be idealistic of me to think they are different in this respect from most other corporations...instead I believe we must vote, with our ballots and our dollars, to let them know that they may not make a profit this way. You must help us in this fight--stand against them--tell them this is unacceptable!

As a nurse, it saddens me when my impoverished patients are overweight and undernourished. We need to rethink our entire food system, including the domination of the markets by large corporations like Monsanto. From seeds to chemicals, growing to distribution, our country needs to tend to its small farmers. They are the farmers who will provide us with long term food security. They are invested in farming for reasons beyond profit, unlike Monsanto. They generally feel a need for responsible stewardship to the earth, and are committed to being a vital part of their local communities. Small time farmers (and businesses) invest in their people, their land, the community's future. Though many small farmers use Monsanto's seeds, fertilizers, and chemicals today, they do so to remain competitive. Often they participate against their better judgement and even their morals, but feel trapped. With no other way to support their families, they do what they have to do to put food on the table.

Damage to people and their families from chemical exposure on farms is unacceptable. Why do we allow companies like Monsanto to spray these toxins on OUR FOOD? And then we expect people to work with these crops, in constant contact with them. Would you bring your child to play in this fields? Would you risk your husband's health? Furthermore, Monsanto's increasing monopoly on seeds and chemicals allows them to gain more control of the market. This impacts what can be grown and the prices of the crops.

The day is coming when the American public, and indeed the world, will understand how much our cheap, processed, toxin coated, genetically modified food is costing us. I want that day to begin now, with the recognition of Monsanto and it's products for what they really are. Trash. Garbage. Filth.

I AM ANGRY.

I AM PASSIONATE.

AND I AM PART OF A MOVEMENT THAT WILL BE HEARD.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,
Rachel Ritter

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