

From: peter@poetics.org
Sent: Sunday, December 20, 2009 4:38 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: A call for inquiry on Monsanto

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December 20, 2009

US Department of Justice

Dear US Department of Justice:

I appreciate 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 a resident of an long-standing agricultural township in Ohio (in Greene County), and as a long-time zoning commission member, I am particularly concerned about Monsanto's control over agriculture and the seed supply.

By buying seed companies and aggressively patenting multiple variants, 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

My main concern is that we do not know the long-term effects of human manipulation of seed genetics, and Monsanto may be unwittingly creating a "monstrous hybrid" of monoculture that could threaten the diversity human life depends upon. Is there is a single genetic source for a majority of certain food stocks, that source will become vulnerable to systemic threats. The right (wrong) threat and humanity could starve.

The current problem 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,

Peter Jones, Ph.D.