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To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comment

Margaret Cantu
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December 21, 2009

US Department of Justice

Dear US Department of Justice:

Legal Policy Section
Antitrust Division
U.S. Department of Justice
450 5th Street NW, Suite 11700
Washington, D. C. 20001

My name is Marge Cantu. I am a 71 year old retired auto employee and am in relatively good health. I have been eating organically most of my life and owe my good health to this reason. I also support our local farmers.

I am concerned about the consolidation of corporate power in the food and agriculture sector.

Prices are rising at the supermarket and I don't feel like I can do anything about it because a lot of big food companies are making record profits in this year of economic crisis and consumers are paying exorbitantly more for food. Even the food is not safe anymore because of factory farms, animals being fed antibiotics and hormones (RgBH), and the disgusting smell near farms for people who live and work near them. I'm concerned about my family's safety as the outbreak and spread of bacterial like E. coli happens much faster when meat and vegetables are processed in big centralized locations.

Fresh fruits and vegetables, that we think are healthy, are actually irradiated which kills all the enzymes in order for it to have a longer shelf life. If our bodies don't have enzymes, we die. Healthy bodies have good enzymes.

Local farms are going out of business and many small farmers can't compete with prices set by industrial farms and consolidated buyers.

I believe the citizens of America would pay more for food that is healthy and nourishing and not devoid of vitalizing vitamins and minerals.

I also believe that, given half a chance and making conditions more favorable for small organic farmers, and encouraging organic farmers to go

back to the farm, would give our economy a huge boost.

Thank you also 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.

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.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my comments.

Copy to: agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov

Sincerely,

Margaret Cantu
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