

From: sjlaverdure@yahoo.com
Sent: Monday, December 21, 2009 7:23 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comment

jenny laverdure
954 Beasleys Bend rd
lebanon, TN 37087-8117

December 21, 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.

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. As a small family farmers daughter I saw the struggle and the pride that went into my father's work with his own seeds that he did year after year. I also remember that frequently his own yields easily beat out any Roundup Ready products that he sold. These farmers put the blood, sweat, and tears into making a plant that will NATURALLY be more resistant to diseases and pests. Monsanto tries to claim that their product yield more, when in fact they don't and they have poor science on their side to try and prove it. Not only do their seeds mess with generations of crops that have adapted over the years, they destroy the livelihood of small family farmers and their pride along with the pride of the communities they try and support. Farmers are stewards of the land and Monsanto is the Grim Reaper.

The seeds are toxic to other plants, even though they claim they won't cross pollinate they can and do interact with other species. Nature will always find a way. Not only are their seeds dangerous, but their chemicals are even more so. The chemicals that they have to put on their seeds strip the natural nutrients of the land and produce less yield, less

nutrition, and more potential harm to generations. 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.

How many news stories in the past few years have popped up about things like salmonella and E. coli in things such as tomatoes and alfalfa sprouts. People should have a right to know not only what they're eating but the potential harm that can come from eating all this GMO food. People cannot know though because Monsanto has stifled the ability for TRUE research to be done on their products to see what long term effects are done. They are able to do this because they shuffle people in and out of agencies like the FDA and EPA -- those who are supposed to protect the American public from dangerous foods. How can they do that when they have a vested interest in Monsanto's GMO foods and are the ones approving the research that was done and trying to claim it was safe.

I'm very offended that companies like Monsanto dare to claim now through TV ads that they are sponsoring farmers and trying to make them seem like they are helpful and supportive to farmers, when they are anything but. They show on the ads farmers out in their fields and running their hands through beautiful grains and then have the audacity to try and claim they are all natural to try and play up their image and pretend they are part of the present green revolution. They are only concerned with making a fast buck at the expense of not just farmers but the natural health and diversity of our present ecosystem and biodiversity of plants. These plants are our food and Monsanto and others like them should not be allowed to own all the seeds that feed people. Monopolies are not allowed with any other business and certainly should not be allowed in the food industry.

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,

jennylaverdure