

**From:** Theresa Talarek <leapingfrog55@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 22, 2009 8:53 AM  
**To:** ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>  
**Subject:**

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Hello,

I am a gardener, educator and homemaker living in a rural area. We have a small farm and are surrounded by other, larger farms.

I am very concerned about the concentration of power concerning agriculture and the food industry. This concerns me on many levels.

First of all, allowing so much power among so few companies is like putting all your eggs in one basket. When something goes wrong, there is a tremendous effect. We are, now necessarily, dependent upon these powers. Our very health is in their hands, and we have little choice.

As a gardener and rural resident, I am concerned greatly about the contamination from GMO crops. We try to raise organic gardens so that we can trust the food we are eating and so that we can remain in optimum health. This should be the birthright of every human being, but this is now threatened. GMO crops contaminate nearby crops, giving us no choice in the matter. Also, it is very disturbing that companies like Monsanto, whose GMO crops contaminate other crops, will hold other growers responsible for having contaminated crops and saving the seed.

As a gardener, I am also deeply concerned about the inability, and even illegality, of farmers and others saving seed. Seed-saving is an ancient and reliable practice. It has created great diversity in the world of agriculture. This diversity creates strength in the cultivated plant world and in the health of human beings. It also is our hedge against disaster. When seed-saving is illegal, discouraged or impossible, we are inviting disaster to our agricultural system, our vast food system, and to the health of our country's people and the planet. In America, we are not only affecting our own country, but others as well. For example, in the disguise of "helping" the population of Iraq, America has destroyed their essential seed-saving traditions by insisting they grow certain crops and use certain seeds provided to them. Their own varieties are becoming lost.

As a parent and consumer, I am concerned about the availability of safe foods available for purchase. It is estimated that 90% of the foods available in supermarkets have some GMO ingredients, and yet this is not allowed to be listed on labels. We want to know what we are, potentially, buying. Some of us make great effort to find foods (from sources other than the supermarket) that we are sure are safe. But not everyone has the knowledge to do this, or the awareness of the dangers of not doing this. Furthermore, this is very difficult for people, especially families, on low income or with very little time (and, with current economic conditions, so many more families find themselves in this condition.)

The current system that includes great power to very few corporations, lack of labelling concerning GMO products, the pressure on farmers to use GMO seed, and the contamination of non-GMO fields and gardens defies any reason and any sense of true freedom and choice that we, as Americans, are promised. Please begin the process of breaking this anathema to our Constitution and to what American is supposed to be all about.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Theresa L. Talarek King