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Sent: Tuesday, December 22, 2009 2:53 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comment

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December 22, 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 & supporter, 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. If ever we were dooming our survival as a species, it's now, through our attempts at manipulating the food supply to be chemically dependent. Clearly the only outcome of such a practice is to force everyone to become utterly dependent on a single company for our very existence. It's obvious that such dependency could lead to an absurd amount of power in the hands of very few.

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. Personally I prefer food that is NOT covered in toxins, and I prefer the option to choose between 20 types of potatoes, 50 types of apples, etc. Not 3 or 4 of each.

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. This also sabotages the farmers who do not wish to rely on purchasing new seeds every season,

those who would rather stick with the natural method of gathering the seed from their own fields; if their plants have been polluted with these engineered traits, their livelihood is ruined, as their plants will not go to seed.

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. Such companies are the enemies of any and all who wish to preserve the wonders of the earth for ourselves and future generations.

I thank you for taking the time to investigate this very serious matter. With big businesses being in control of a vast majority of farming in this country we are losing biodiversity, careless chemicals are being dumped into our atmosphere & water, & our topsoil is disappearing at an alarming rate. I urge you to investigate the key players in these activities thoroughly and hold them accountable for their attempts to monopolize & degrade life itself... for all our lives are inextricably intertwined with the lives of the plants we eat.

I know I'm not alone in feeling scared for our collective future; it seems it's being threatened on so many fronts at once. Surely the place to start fixing things is at the root of our civilization, our basic necessities for survival, our food and water. These things above all else must remain free from monopolization, for the health of all. Thanks again for your time, & please, bring us justice in this matter.

Sincerely,

Kelcey Midkiff