

From: Eric Kreidler <ekreidler@visi.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 23, 2009 11:07 AM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Patenting of seeds is bad for America

Hello,

I am writing as a concerned American citizen and as a human being who eats food.

It is my understanding that large corporations in our country are legally permitted to patent genetically modified seeds for crops such as soybeans, and then use their gigantic armies of corporate lawyers to prosecute American farmers for the age-old agricultural practice of saving seeds. Obviously, given the weight of money in our "justice" system, the small farmers are promptly obliterated in court or forced to settle with these massive corporate giants.

I find this to be staggering, appalling, and shocking — on principle and for the following reasons:

1. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This seems so fundamental, but the freedom to save seeds seems like a basic, cost-free means for our farmers to help save our planet. Think of the resources that the corporate seed growers use to grow new seed — resources which would not be necessary if farmers were allowed to save seed. How much unnecessary pollution do they create? And all of this at no cost to them — just another "externality" that we citizens must pick up as we subsidize the corporate welfare system.

Pollution and wastefulness. Two signs of a corporate citizen not exactly living up to their responsibilities.

2. MONOPOLISTIC PRACTICE

How can it be legal to dominate a commodity market like this? By forcing farmers to buy their particular seed — and prosecuting farmers unfortunate enough to live NEXT TO a field using the GMO that happens to blow over the property line — such conditions practically ask for monopoly. And as far as I understand it, monopolies are not legal in our country.

I for one would like to buy non-GMO soybeans, but I imagine they are nearly impossible to find at present in our country.

3. LACK OF BIODIVERSITY

It seems monopoly in agriculture only invites potential disaster to the monopolized crop. If the right blight comes along, this market-induced lack of diversity could be devastating.

4. ABUSE OF POWER

Reports of corporate hired goons roving the countryside intimidating farmers into compliance or submission are truly mind-blowing. Such practices are a violation of the public trust in the highest order. In a true democracy, such practices would be punished by revoking of corporate charters and dissolving of the corporation, and probably jail time for executives.

5. ABSURD FOOD LABEL LAWS

Why are our corporate food industries allowed to stifle the first amendment? This goes beyond the seed-patenting issue, but why do our laws permit food giants to use their muscle to silence any fair criticism?

I'll admit I feel slightly intimidated even writing this letter. Which is crazy!

What I would like to see happen:

1. The overturning of precedent and laws that allow GMOs to be patented
2. The legally required recusing of any judge or justice with ANY lifetime employment by a food industry company when deciding on a food industry-related case (i.e. Justice Thomas, who apparently allowed the patenting of GMOs, a blatant and disgraceful conflict of interest on his part.)
3. Swift anti-trust action against any food corporation guilty of monopolistic practices
4. Massive penalties and taxation for deliberate anti-environment business practices such as the active interference with the common sense practice of saving seeds
5. Penalties for any business practice found to discourage biodiversity in a vital food crop

This is a classic case of the interests of the "market" (a.k.a. Big corporations and/or monopolies) being placed ahead of the interests of the people. Regulating or banning dangerous business practices is a fundamental part of our daily life (anti-narcotics laws, for example.) I feel my health and safety personally threatened by this practice of aggressively guarding GMO patents, and I see both anti-trust action and the overturning of GMO patent laws as the only way to protect the public interest.

Sincerely,

Eric Kreidler
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