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Sent: Saturday, December 26, 2009 12:09 AM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comments

I am writing because I am concerned about the lack of competition in agricultural markets. A few giant businesses like Monsanto have an incredible amount of power over where food comes from and how it's produced.

With Monsanto's patented genes being inserted into roughly 95 percent of all soybeans and 80 percent of all corn grown in the U.S., the company also is using its wide reach to control the ability of new biotech firms to get wide distribution for their products. This creates many causes for concern for example the contamination of heirloom corn seeds in Mexico from Monsanto patented GMO seeds and the ability of Monsanto to control seed costs and ultimately the cost of food.

For the first time in history, one company has unprecedented control of the sale and use of crop seed. They have accomplished this in three main ways: control of germplasm through ownership of seed companies; domination of genetic technology and seeds through patent acquisitions; and breaking age-old farming tradition by forcing farmers to buy new seed each year rather than saving and re-planting seed.

Buying or merging with most of the major seed companies, including their recent acquisition of the giant fruit and vegetable seed company Seminis, has made Monsanto's the largest GM seed vendor in the world, providing 90% of the GM seed sown globally.

If Monsanto doesn't actually own the seed purchasing companies, it has been known to impose the condition that a minimum of 70% (reduced from 90% by government regulators) of its patented seeds are sold by subsidiary companies. This ensures that its seeds are the most readily available to farmers.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Rachel Sumner

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