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To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comment

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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.

This Big Business approach is dangerous when applied to how we feed ourselves. In the current economic and environmental climate we need to diversity not merge.

By buying seed companies and aggressively patenting life, Monsanto has gained control over as much as 90 percent of seed genetics.

This not only affects small farmers and seed companies who can not compete with their uncouth practices but also risks our food supply. Diversity of seed protects us from environmental changes. And this is a time of great change. As we face a world where the climate is changing more rapidly than ever we need to be able to rely on seeds adapted to conditions and seeds that can be passed on to future generations. The potato famine was largely due to lack of diversity. We need to encourage heirloom seeds - our heritage and our future.

Not only is Monsanto making it difficult for small farmers and seed sellers but it also making us more dependent on 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.

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.

Farmers have the right to have their seeds remain clean! Organic farmers are doing a service to the community and the environment. They should be protected from this contamination not prosecuted for it!

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,

Anja Schiller