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To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: competition in the agriculture sector
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December 23, 2009

Legal Policy Section
Antitrust Division
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450 5th Street, NW. Suite 11700
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To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer my views on competition in the agricultural sector for the 2010 public workshops. I hope you will find them helpful.

I farm with my wife and son. I'm the fifth generation on the farm; my son is the sixth. We farm primarily corn and soybeans, and have a few Angus cows. We are an average size family farm that rents most of our ground but also own about one third of our acres.

New genetics and biotechnology have made us all better farmers by helping us improve our farms. We have more seed choices than ever before to help us chose seeds that are the best for our farm. Numerous seed companies provide a variety of genetics that may or may not be packaged with traits from primarily three technology providers; Monsanto, Pioneer, and Syngenta. It's a very competitive business. Our seed corn for the 2009 crop was priced in a range from \$210 to \$270 per bag. This is a big investment for us. A bag of seed corn usually covers 2.2 acres.

In making seed choices, we look at history and see what has worked on our farm. The Environment and return on investment are the drivers in our seed selection decision. We look at our harvest and soil maps to help us decide which genetic package and traits will help us the most with yield and stewardship. We factor in the results of trial programs from other farms, but we're counting more and more on our own trials because of the technology we have on the harvesting equipment. Just this morning, I reviewed the yield monitor and field maps for the farm as we make our decisions for the coming year. We try to match seeds to the productivity of each field. Finally, we look at economics. It's a harder decision than it used to be because we have so many choices, not only in the genetics but also in the package of traits that go with them.

I usually plant two or three different brands of seed. They usually all have biotech traits. We take a look at what's available and what will work best on our farm both in performance and for the environment. Seed price then enters the equation. The seed economics do change when the price of the corn I am producing is \$3.00 rather than \$4.50 per bushel

We have made some changes for the 2010 crop, just because of competition in the marketplace. For example, we were 90% DeKalb the past two years, but we felt like we could get similar genetics and traits with equal performance from a different company for less money. It is important to have the competition and choices as we

make our decisions. We look at what is available and what our experience has been. There have been times when the lowest cost seed has been the most expensive in terms of return. We don't usually buy the cheapest seed available, because we need to stay on or near the leading edge of what is available with genetics and traits. With new technologies yields are increasing 4 to 5 percent per year while lowering other inputs such as fertilizer.

I believe we need both public and private research. Investment in research is investment in the future. Research in the public domain is important to keep basic research discovery available to all. However a lack of public commitment has put a severe limit on public research. Therefore private research and development has become extremely important and many companies have made the investment. For this to continue private industry must see a pathway for profit. If companies are not allowed a return on their investment, they won't make the investment. The rate of private research has been accelerated by intellectual property rights with seed and traits. This has provided farmers with better tools and improved methods.

Farmers have become more efficient since biotech seed became available. We've lowered our environmental footprint while increasing productivity. All of the charts across the country show inputs of fertilizers and chemicals per bushel of corn produced continue to decrease. Those ratios keep getting better. The biotech traits have also allowed us to reduced tillage, which also helps us better protect the soil and reduce soil loss. The seed choices we have today help us produce more food, feed, and fuel while helping us improve our sustainability. We are leaving the farm in better condition for the next generation.

Once again, thank you for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Leon Corzine
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