From: cool_dan@juno.com
Sent: Monday, December 28, 2009 12:08 AM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: My concerns about the Monsanto situation

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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.

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.

My biggest 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.

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 un-natural genetically-altered strains 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).

What's more, since they can spread to and dominate the crops owned by neighboring farmers, without their knowledge or consent/participation (for example, falling off a truck by the roadside and/or carried by bees/bugs from nearby fields), and since Monsanto patents it's strains and actively searches for "infringement" cases to prosecute, organic farmers everywhere are having to go to extremes to protect and keep their own crops and the fruits of their own labor.

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 of keeping seeds (the foundation of human life) at least in the marketplace, if not in the public domain where they truly belong.

Sincerely,

Daniel