From: programs@theosophical.org
Sent: Monday, December 28, 2009 1:13 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comment

Ruthann Fowler
831 Bloomingdale Road
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137-3211

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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.

But, my main 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 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.

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.

I watched Food, Inc. and became incensed that Monsanto has 75 investigators to spy on small farmers and intiminate them and all the other small farmers in a particular area by filing lawsuits against farmers who collect & use their own seeds to plant their crops. Obviously, Monsanto has the financial resources to outlast & outspend the small farmer and in this way get their compliance with buying the Monsanto seed.

We are also becoming tooooooooooo dependent on just a few varieties of seeds. That dependence could have catastrophic effects on our corn supply, for example, if a bug could wipe out a particular type of seed.

I also think that the corn subsidy, if any, should only go to the small farmer, not these behemouth corporate farms.

Sincerely,

Ruthann Fowler
630-690-1539