

From: VerNeal & Carmie Marotz <vcmarotz@nntc.net>
Sent: Monday, December 28, 2009 4:50 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject:

December 18, 2009

Legal Policy Section
Antitrust Division
U.S. Department of Justice
450 5th Street, NW. Suite 11700
Washington, DC 20001

To Whom It May Concern:

I learned of the upcoming agricultural public workshops that will be held by the Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Agriculture and thought, as a seed dealer for 31 years, as well as a corn, soybean, alfalfa and livestock farmer in northeast Nebraska, I'd like to submit a comment for your consideration and to be included in the public record.

Since the introduction of biotech seed, I have witnessed many changes over the years. Yield has increased tremendously and with the Round-Up technologies available, farming has become much easier. The use of pesticides have decreased, as have fuel use and labor costs. And today, many farmers who are choosing to purchase more expensive seeds, because of the different traits available, are increasing the chance of top-end yield per acre.

I believe there is definitely price competition between the six-eight major seed companies in our area. Most farmers plant one to two brands on their farms, which keeps the competition going. Some plant one seed brand, while a few farmers grow up to three brands on their farms. Every farmer is different, so not everybody makes their seed decisions based on price. Many choose seed companies based on service, the traits they offer, and other technologies like field mapping and yield monitors, as well as previous years' performance.

Private research has also increased the rate of new development in my opinion, and has helped the farmer compete on a larger scale. Private investment in seed technologies are steadily stronger than that of public programs like universities, but because biotech seeds can offer better performance and higher yield, farmers stand to gain more profitability.

Farmers in my area are satisfied with the seed choices, varieties and prices they have available to them, and I hope you take my statement into consideration.

Thank you,

Verneal Marotz
85470 567th Ave
Winside, NE 68790