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Sent: Monday, December 28, 2009 8:23 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Importance of Biotech

December 28, 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'd like to take the opportunity to submit a statement to the USDA and Department of Justice before the public workshops for the agriculture sector begin next year.

My twin brother, Roger and I run a farming operation that farms 3,000 acres in Warren County, Ohio. We have one full-time employee and my son, who just graduated from Ohio State University, will also be working with us. We also sell seed and chemicals to a lot of area farmers, and have a pretty good understanding about the agriculture community in this area.

The first important thing I want to point out is that there is significant price competition between seed companies as they try to earn a farmer's business each year. And with 10-15 brands of seed, and nearly 100-150 hybrids and varieties of corn and soybeans, farmers have many choices while making their seed decisions.

Another thing to acknowledge is how much the pace of innovation in farming has increased since the introduction of biotech seed. Without a doubt, yields are better, we can withstand stresses better, everything is better. These seeds with Round-Up technologies and other traits are making farmers better. Poor farmers are now decent farmers, farming is easier now, and everybody is making more money.

I appreciate the amount of research private seed companies are doing, because they are coming up with seed traits and varieties that are performing better for farmers and incorporating more value in the over-all output of the seed, the crop and the farm. It is for these reasons, as well as higher yield, standability and emergence that farmers are planting the biotech seeds, which gives us the opportunity too be more competitive, especially in a global market.

Price always comes into play when making seed decisions, but it pales in comparison to the performance and quality and yield of the crop. Farmers have to decide if they are going to plant genetically modified crops or not, which most do, and then they make their decisions on test plots and proof in research. Seed companies offer pricing incentives and deals to farmers all over the place which ultimately puts the farmer in control and enhances the competition.

Farming is better now than it was ten years ago, and I think it has everything to do with the innovations in seed technology and farming practices. In my opinion, things are running smoothly in the farming community today.

I appreciate the time and opportunity to voice my opinion regarding these matters, and I hope my views are taken into consideration.

Sincerely,

Rick Howry
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