From: Jim Wells <homegrown53@hotmail.com>
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To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comments Regarding Agriculture and Antitrust Enforcement Issues in Our 21st Century Economy

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There are many, many aspects of the control that large "food" (if you can call it that) companies have over the food system that have and do negatively impact me. Most of them apall me.

As a former biochemist and budding geneticist, I left the field precisely because I discovered that "food chemistry" had become the scence of figuring out how to MIMIC food using synthetic chemicals and that plant genetics were turning from selective breeding into genetic engineering--and any fool with half a knowledge of evolutionary biology and biochemistry ought to be able to tell that bioengineering is a series of major disasters just waiting to happen.

Such Frankentein fears are hard for rational people to want to believe are possible, even though transgenic migration is not a theory--it is a proven fact. Buit I scoff at the arguments that say that the odds of a dangerous result are very low because the evolutionary biology record shows that by far genetic mutations in nature are deleterious and thus the organisms that contain them are not viable. I scoff because Humans are living proof that those low odds yet lead to surviving mutations, that many of them are negative, and that the organisms with those mutations can crowd out and destroy all other life forms.

It is the giant "food" companies that drive the bioengineering. They do it strictly for greed, and the result is products that look like food, but are devoid of life.

I could buy the argument that in a capatilist system, the consumers are the real drivers, and the agribusinesses are simply responding to what consumers want--except for such facts as that those companies influence legislation and court opinions that consumers are not to be given the information upon which to make informed decisions about whether the food products are what they want. The most ludicrous form of that argument is the testimony I have seen of food company lawyers telling the court that their clients should not be required to list certain ingredients on their labels because "then no one would buy their products." Hey, wait a minute--isn't that precisely the virtue of capitalism?

Instead, more and more of the choices of food to buy at my grocery store contain ingredients that are produced by and for the corporate "food" giants by neans I bekieve produce food that is harmeful to me, but I cannot know this because therer is no disclosure on the label.

The very idea that a company such as Monsanto can put farmers out of business simply by suing them for patent infringment when their patented genes migrate and then contaminate a farmer's plants that the farmer then saves seed from in order to plant the next year, and then, under the law, the farmer is guilty unless proven innocent IS OUTRAGEOUSLY WRONG.
Instead, it should be Monsanto that gets sued for their genes escaping and contaminating the farmer's strain.

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