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To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comment

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December 29, 2009

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."

I am 67 years old and in excellent health only because I have spent many hours seeking out food that hasn't been tampered with by the industrial giants - food conglomerates, conventional seed, fertilizer, and pesticide companies, genetic engineering companies and the like. My grown children are doing the same, in spite of the extra money involved.

It is a lot of work to feed ourselves so that we sustain health rather than destroy it. It shouldn't be so hard to get sustainable, whole and healthy food from land you know and farmers you trust. We are lucky to have excellent farm markets and a co-op grocery. Many people aren't so lucky and thus are forced to purchase industrial food, void of nutrients, health robbing, and addictive with the salt, sugar, and fat calories.

In the long run, we pay more in terms of health insurance, medical bills, taxes to support those who can't afford health insurance, because we have not done the preventative measures for good health. Children should have health and cooking classes that are NOT sponsored by some conglomerate so they become healthy adults. Are we going to let the lobbyists of the large medical, farm, and industrial food corporations dictate what we shall eat and how we will be cured of our diseases, or are we going to give our bodies the proper nourishment so we never have these medical crises in the first place?

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.

Sincerely,

Glenda Kapsalis