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

I am writing because I oppose the lack of competition in agricultural markets.

In the face of public scrutiny, lawsuits from competitors, and a Department of Justice investigation, Monsanto appears to be backpedaling on some of its stringent patent protection policies. The New York Times reports that, contrary to expectations of seed industry executives, the company has said they will continue to allow farmers to grow Roundup Ready 1 (RR1) soy even after the patent expires in 2014. The Roundup Ready trait makes crops (such as soy, corn and cotton) resistant to the pesticide glyphosate, which is sold by Monsanto under the brand name Roundup. Monsanto's own officials estimate the Roundup Ready trait is in nine out of ten soybeans grown in the U.S. Introduced in 1996, it is in seeds grown by Monsanto itself as well as licensed to other companies for use in their proprietary seed lines. Previously, Monsanto had plans to force farmers to switch to its successor product, Roundup Ready 2 Yield (RR2Y), before the Roundup Ready 1 patent expired -- by refusing to renew licenses that expired before 2014, and enforcing contract clauses that would require farmers and seed companies to destroy all RR1 inventory before the patent expires. RR2Y will be considerably more expensive than RR1, which is already \$40-\$45 more per acre than traditional soybean seeds. Monsanto has also said they will allow farmers and seed dealers to obtain the old Roundup Ready seeds without limiting their access to the new technology, and that they won't prevent farmers from saving seeds from RR1 crops, as they have in the past.

If Monsanto follows through on the statements, the implications could be huge. The Roundup Ready gene for soybeans was one of the first genetically engineered traits to be patented and become commercially available; once Monsanto no longer holds a patent, RR1 genes will essentially "become agricultural biotechnology's equivalent of a generic drug." This would finally allow universities to use the gene for research purposes, potentially loosening the chokehold Monsanto has on agricultural GMO research. Pesticide Action Network North America will submit technical comments outlining the ill effects of Monsanto's corporate control of large portions of the agricultural research agenda this week.

In light of this, I want to highlight the following:

? Just one company, Monsanto, controls the majority of seeds in the US, and regularly threatens farmers who do not buy its seeds.

? Consumers lack information regarding the origins and contents of their food because of lack of labels that detail where it grew, what chemicals are on it, and if it has been genetically modified.

? There is a "revolving door" of personnel between corporate lobbyists and government regulators. This is why corporations are not held to strict standards. This "door" must be eliminated.

? Prices are rising at the supermarket yet farmers are struggling - and big food companies have made record profits this year.

? Food is grown and raised in ways that are terribly destructive for the environment, both land and marine, with methods that pollute the water, poison the soil, and threaten our long-term food security.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Martin Schulz

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