

From: janine_sanders@earthlink.net
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To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comment

Janine Sanders
1320 Grandview Av
Martinez, CA 94553-1807

December 30, 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."

As an organic consumer, I am particularly concerned about Monsanto's control over the seed supply.

I am shocked that companies can be allowed to develop products for which the seeds or grown crops will respond only to that company's own fertilizers or pesticides. This is agri-monopoly. Americans and the world who eat American grown crops should be aware of what they are eating. Obesity, unexplained diseases and poor nutrition are resulting from these practices that are wrong and only benefit the shareholders of Monsanto and the like.

I am also concerned about the negligent use of water in areas that are considered deserts. Our Department of Agriculture needs to address areas such as the San Joaquin Valley, CA, where water is wasted daily and crops are being grown, water must be channeled in from afar and the rainfall is 10 inches or less annually.

Residents also waste our water as most residents in the entire Central San Joaquin Valley, Ca do not have water meters. Therefore the faucets go on without a thought. This waste must stop.

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,

Janine Sanders
925 229-4172