

**From:** Denis & Kath <body@olympus.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 31, 2009 9:53 PM  
**To:** ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>  
**Subject:** public comment

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I am very concerned about a few large companies controlling the sale of seeds. My gardener friend says seeds have gotten more expensive and there are only a few seeds in each package. We are losing the variety of plants that have adapted over time to different climate, soil and sun conditions. It concerns me that the companies who own the seeds are also genetically modifying seed. It seems they can destroy the regular seed and then only have the genetically modified one available. I find this more disturbing that the obvious idea that they can continue raising the price on all the seeds that grow the food people eat. I am also VERY concerned that the pollen from a field of genetically modifying seed can blow into a non genetically modified crop or an organically growing crop and contaminate it by cross pollinating ruining this crop and this farmers work. Yet, the company who owns the genetically modifying seed has successfully sued the farmer who's field was contaminated and who's crop was ruined since he didn't have the right to grow the genetically modifying crop, which we wasn't trying to do ! I am also upset that our foreign aid includes giving genetically modified seeds to starving people. These people then need the herbicide to let this seed grow and at the end they can't save the seed for next year and it was sterile anyway. So the next year they starve again or go into debt to buy more seed and chemicals. This isn't doing anything for the starving people !

I do not understand how a seed could be patented and owned. That seems as crazy as someone owning the air I breath or the water we drink. And yet companies own seeds and are trying to buy the water. Some of the seeds that are genetically modified or bioengineered then need a specific herbicide chemical which just happens to also be made by the same company. I thought we didn't allow monopolies? Isn't that why Ma Bell was broken up? Over time as weeds become more resistant more herbicide is needed. Sounds like a great deal for the company.

As I understand it we first started using chemical fertilizer, herbicide and pesticide after WWII. With these chemicals it would be possible to grow cheap food and end hunger world wide. When that didn't happen then GMO's would be the answer to cheap food and ending starvation. My experience is that conventionally grown food continues to get more expensive, contains more chemicals, has less flavor, lower nutrition and now it's genes are crossed with things that could not occur naturally.

I started eating organic food in Oregon in 1987, when it was still certified by Oregon Tilth or the State of California. I began eating organic produce as I became aware of the chemicals that were found in conventionally grown foods. I continued eating it because the flavor was superior. Later I learned organically grown food had more vitamins and minerals. I started reading labels on the things I bought in the grocery store and started making informed choices on what I bought. Then there was rBGH injected into cows so they would produce more milk. This wasn't good for the cows and I didn't want to drink the milk with a synthetic hormone in it. At first dairies couldn't label their milk as no added rBHT as the large corporation making the rBHT sued anyone labeling their milk that way. I switched to organic milk. Then I stopped drinking milk at all and found a huge reduction in the menopause issues I was experiencing. What I am trying to say is I have spent a lot of time and effort over the past 22 yrs learning about the "food" that is available to me and trying to make an informed choice about what is best for me and my family. Along the way I felt that the large corporations that are now involved in the majority of food available have done everything they can to keep me and the rest of the public from finding out exactly how they make my food and exactly what is in it. I believe I have the right to know this.

From everything I know, I believe that conventionally grown produce and meats are not good for me nor my family. I no longer shop at a grocery store unless we are traveling. I no longer enjoy eating out at restaurants or other people's homes.

My only choice is to buy local and organically grown foods for me, my family and my friends to eat. This takes a lot of my time, to buy the food at farmers market, or directly from a farm or to pick them and freeze. It means going one place for my produce, a second for eggs, a third for milk, a fourth for apples and potatoes, then a stop at the cheese factory, and the bakery for bread. What I can't find locally I buy from the local Food Coop store. Seasonally I buy fish, chicken and beef from separate people and keep in the freezer. I am grateful that I live in an area where this is possible.

There are young people in my area who want to farm, have interned or apprenticed with a farmer and can not afford to buy the farmland. In spite of all the land use planning our farmland is worth more to a developer to build houses on.... we can not eat houses.

My friend's 9 yr old granddaughter had a huge cancer growth on her back. Where does a 9 yr old get cancer from?... the chemicals in convenience "food", fast "food"

and junk "food" (none of which is really food) which she ate because her two parents work full time in order to make ends meet.

The local farmer who raised chickens for meat found it cost over \$5/lb to raise them. How can he make a living when Wal Mart sells Turkeys for 29 cents/lb ?

I apologize for this jumping around and I am running out of time. This is not what I had planned for New Years Eve and it is time to get back to my family. This is an important issue for me and my family. There are a lot of things I would like to see change. I appreciate your interest in these matters and hope that it can lead to changes for the better. I found out about the comment period during the holidays. I know a lot of people are traveling and don't check their email. I think you would receive more input had the comment period not been during the holidays.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Sercu

Blyn, WA