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

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US Department of Justice

Dear US Department of Justice:

Note: I am also concerned that through pa

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.

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.

Through patenting new variations of life, companies like Monsanto are not held responsible for any negative effects that result from the newly genetically modified seeds, food, animals, etc. There is no social responsibility here and that is absurd in an industry that is toying with life and not even researching or allowing others to look into the dangerous outcomes because it's the company's intellectual property. Jeremy Rifkin, Head of the Foundation on Economic Trends, points out that, "None of these corporations has ever invented a gene de novo. All they are doing is tampering with and modifying genes that already exist. None of these organizations has ever created a new organism, either a simple organism or a multicellular organism. They're simply modifying existing organisms that have been the product of millions of years of evolution. I think that we need to understand these genes as discoveries of nature. They shouldn't be private inventions. We've got to keep this gene commons open for future generations." The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office's policy statement asserting that, "Any organism on this planet, any gene, and cell-line, any organ, any tissue, is potentially patentable as a human invention," needs to be re-examined and changed. **

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,

Jessica
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