From: beachcomber4real@aol.com
Sent: Thursday, January 7, 2010 6:18 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: MONSANTO

S. Ash Mills-Epstein
122 E. Penn St.
long beach, NY 11561-4131

January 7, 2010

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 ORDINARY consumer, I am VERY concerned about Monsanto's control over the seed supply. I am sure I am joining ranks of people who have no radical or orthodox views, but much concern and fear for our future. The word "fear" in this context conjures up visions of kooks and crazies and sci-fi Armageddons. But I venture to say that only stock holders in Monsanto would have a reason to champion this company.

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,

S. Ash Mills-Epstein