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

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January 16, 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 a Registered Nurse, I have witnessed an extraordinary pattern of immune suppression in the average person. There has been a shift in people's attitudes, unbelievably accepting this new level of immune suppression as "normal" or feel they cannot do much to remedy the situation. The human immune system is necessarily supported or destroyed by the quality of the food consumed. The manipulation of plant genetics in the food supply has only partially known consequences and most of that information has been carefully suppressed, as the average person would not freely choose GMO food if they were informed of the health consequences.

If the reader would consider the effects upon your own family, perhaps, like the effects of some drugs that were rushed to market for a profit, only to discover their lethal effects and a family member had been irreparably harmed. The unknown and hidden information on the effects of the GMO seed, the human assumption that manipulating the genetics of our food is acceptable because a corporation "owns" plant genetics is simply blind folly. The assumption by anyone that we know the long term effects of these action is false. Or as a worst case scenario, it may be the intended goal of a small group to create disease for unspeakable purpose.

The Monarch butterfly died when landing on GMO corn silk. The bees, upon which our very life depends for food, are dying for unknown (perhaps unspoken) reasons. Is that not enough, to give someone of integrity, pause to reconsider the path that plant genetics has taken? And for what? Short term quarterly profits for Wall Street? Or worse?

I urge you to keep seeds, plant genetics in the public domain, in the marketplace and consider the irreparable harm done by releasing GMO plant genetics into our fields. This is the stuff of science fiction, but is happening in your world and mine. We need to protect our families, our children and our food supply. As plant species become extinct it is only a matter of time before humans sicken and follow. The reader of this is not protected either. Please act to protect our plant species from Monsanto's actions before it is too late. Thank you for reading this.

The following paragraphs were not written by me, but I agree with them and wish to include them here.

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.

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,

Claire M. Ross