

From: Ross Garwood <rdg@nctc.net>
Sent: Saturday, January 23, 2010 5:55 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agricua@usdoj.com>
Subject: letter of comment from Ross Garwood

1/07/2010

Legal Policy Section
Antitrust Division
U.S. Department of Justice
450 5th Street, NW. Suite 11700
Washington, DC 20001

To Whom It May Concern:

In response to the upcoming public workshops that are going to be held by the Department of Justice and the Department of Agriculture, I would like to submit my opinion on some of the matters that are important in this area.

My father began farming when I was young, and I then started farming just out of high school. Today, my son helps on our farm/ranch, around 400 acres of which are crop land, in Nebraska.

Each year, other than a few small reference plots, I rely on one brand of seed. Lately, I make these selections based on the different seed and technology choices available at different price points and the results from trial programs on our farm as well as neighboring farms. Even more recently, we have begun using technologies such as yield monitors and field maps. The price of seed makes a big difference in our decision as we balance the equation of profitability versus fees.

Every major brand is represented in my area, and farmers have at least ten to choose from. I don't believe they necessarily compete on price as much as they compete on service and performance, but farmers make decisions based on different factors. There are price incentives available here and there, as some farmers will change brands to find a better price. On the other side of the coin, some farmers will switch seed companies and pay a higher premium based on the promise of better performance. I also believe there are more seed choices available today than there were ten years ago.

And it is of my opinion that the biotech seed innovations have uncomplicated the farming process significantly, making it is safer and easier. Yield has increased, while reducing fuel use and pesticides. As private research has increased, the rate of new development and has helped the farmer. Although it may cost more, the intellectual property rights need to be somewhat protected in order for research and development to increase. On the contrary, the frustrating thing about public research, especially at universities, is that they want to keep the information that they find, which I believe creates a conflict with farmers, as that research is funded by public money.

Seed innovations have provided farmers with tools we otherwise may not have had, which gives us the opportunity to compete in a local, regional and national market. Our biggest concern, however, should be how significantly we can compete in the international market. Competition between seed companies is still in-tact today, and we should find a fair balance between the farmer and the

resources available; and the farmer will still make his decisions based on the needs of his farm. But while other countries are using the same innovations for free, while we are paying more, they will surpass the United States' agricultural productivity, leaving us in a position to where we can't compete in the global market

I appreciate your call for public comment and hope that you will take my views under advisement. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Ross Garwood
47149 Frontier Rd
Amelia, NE 68711