

January 7, 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:

I'd like to take the opportunity to submit a statement to the USDA and Department of Justice before the public workshops for the agriculture sector begin.

I farm a rotation of corn and soybeans over 500 acres of land in Northern Missouri, as well as some custom work for my father-in-law. I grew up on a farm, my father farmed for years and I later began farming with my uncle before I went out on my own in 1979.

There are a lot of decisions to make when choosing seed. Performance is obviously important. Which seed traits work better? What has worked better for our farm over the past years? Will this seed produce a satisfactory yield? With energy costs so high, are we using too much fuel and electricity for dry-down? Are there new breakthroughs?

Between the 7-10 brands of seed available in this area, I think price competition between seed companies remains in play. At times, a company may even lower the price of their seed during the buying season, which is likely a result of competition. Some seeds are higher priced than others, but if they aren't worth the money, I won't buy them. Most farmers see the value in some of the more expensive seeds. We may pay more for the seed, but we are spending less on herbicides and pesticides; or whether or not they have drought resistance and higher yield performance. Seed companies today are offering competition not only in price and performance, but also service and overall agronomy as well.

Farming practices today are different than they were years ago. I think technology has improved drastically, but I give credit to the innovation brought on by the biotech seed. There are plenty of choices of seed brand available in my area. And on top of that, there are all kinds of different varieties and maturities to choose from. I only plant one brand on my farms, but they all have biotraits. Farms have gotten bigger and yields have increased, but fuel use and pesticide and herbicide use has gone down significantly.

Private investment research companies are contributing to the overall increase in farm productivity because of the amount of money they are putting in to the research. Because of that, seed prices are higher today, which to me is an acceptable effect, not only because financial output is way down for other sectors of agriculture, as I mentioned before, but they are putting that money back into the research, further developing more and better products. Public programs are doing good research, but lately we have seen more coming from the private

investment. I don't think we would have had the record yields we've been having recently without private research. I believe the private sector has provided farmers with better tools that they otherwise wouldn't have had to compete in a larger market.

I appreciate the time and opportunity to voice my opinion regarding these matters, and I hope my views are taken into consideration.

Sincerely,

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