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**Legal Policy Section
Antitrust Division
U.S. Department of Justice
450 5th Street, NW
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To whom it may concern:

Thank you for this opportunity to express our concerns about the food system. We are pleased that the Department of Justice is investigating the role of Monsanto and other powerful corporations in that system. The problems with the food system and the involvement of these corporations impact the health and well-being of every person and our environment. We hope that any manipulation of the food system by these corporations will be exposed, and corrected.

Not only do Monsanto, Dow, DuPont, Cargill, ADM, Syngenta and other corporations have much to answer for, but so do complicit government officials and agencies. However, they could not wield so much power except for the consent of the public. Most citizens are unaware of the grave threats to the security of the food system and apathy ensures that ignorance.

Our children and their children will be forced to confront the inexorable consequences of our choices. Our legacy may include an imperiled food supply, dysfunctional ecosystems, disasters caused by climate change and shortages of water and oil. These conditions may produce millions of refugees and incessant warfare.

We are all guilty, to varying degrees, of neglecting our role as stewards of this planet. We are guilty of thoughtless greed and wasteful consumption of resources. And, we are guilty of arrogance; an arrogance which is foolish, shortsighted, and, so very lethal. In our arrogance, we have thought of ourselves as somehow detached from the very natural world that is our life-support system.

Food security is the right of every human being. This refers not only to adequate quantity of food, but to high quality healthful food. Such food can only be grown sustainably, in ways that do not deplete the soil, nor pollute air and water. Food security is a matter of morality and social justice as well as law.

We offer the following list of specific concerns for consideration.

1. The seed supply must include many varieties of each crop. Monoculture is a threat to the food supply. One need only remember the Irish potato blight as an

example. Biodiversity is not a nice option, it is essential. Different varieties have been selectively bred for different conditions. Some varieties are less susceptible to certain diseases and pests. Monoculture invites a plague of pests and depletes the soil.

2. There must be NO PATENTS on land race seeds. No corporation should be able to patent seeds selectively bred for local conditions in , for example, a small valley in Mexico, by generations of farmers. [Likewise, no company, no individual, should be able to hold patents on our own genes. Yet, the U.S. Patent & Trade Office has granted such patents so that private companies hold patents on 20% of our genes, according to the ACLU. That is heinous!]

3. “Terminator” crops should be outlawed! Seeds = Life. “Terminator” crops are a contradiction of terms. The idea of a plant which intentionally kills its own embryos rendering the seeds inviable is blasphemous. “Terminator” crops were developed by Monsanto. [In India, farmers burn to the ground trial plantings of transgenic crops and they forced their government to ban Monsanto’s “terminator” crops.]

4. The seed supply itself should be produced by many growers, and more and more of that supply should be produced sustainably and organically. Chemical fertilizers release nitrous oxide which depletes the ozone layer and is a powerful greenhouse gas. Chemical fertilizers contribute heavily to the dead zones in bodies of water such as the Gulf of Mexico and Chesapeake Bay. These dead zones are repositories of the sins of agribusiness.

5. The right of any farmer or gardener to save seeds, as has been done for thousands of years, should be protected. No corporation should be able to forbid that practice nor monopolize the market so that varieties appropriate to seed saving are no longer available.

6. The success of large scale organic farming proves that toxic pesticides are unnecessary. They are not only unnecessary but hazardous to the health of humans and our environment. For example, Why does atrazine continue to be one of the two most widely used herbicides in the U.S. when it is banned in the EU? An increasing number of research studies link atrazine with hormonal disruption, neural damage, reproductive disorders and cancers. Why should it be left to the manufacturers of chemicals to decide if safety tests are needed and, if so, the criteria of those tests? Why should the public have confidence in the judgment of Monsanto, one of the manufacturers of DDT, PCBs and Agent Orange?

I (Susan) am afflicted with Parkinson’s Disease. There is no history of the disease in my family. The most probable cause of this degenerative and ultimately fatal disease is exposure to chemical toxins. According to John Wargo of Yale University in his recent book *Green Intelligence*: “Each day most people are exposed to thousands of chemicals in mixtures that were never experienced by previous generations.” I know that such exposure has been lifelong and it angers me that

there has been so little oversight of materials which assault us from every angle. The collateral damage is far higher than any attack by terrorists. As a child in the 1950s I must have consumed dairy products and produce laced with DDT and dairy products contaminated by radioactive isotopes from nuclear fallout, as did millions of others. In recent years, my husband and I consciously avoid products which out gas VOCs; we eat as much organic food as available; and we are careful about the personal care products we use. However, we cannot escape the omnipresence of chemical toxicity. I am intensely passionate about this imposed chemical burden. We look forward to a time when the government keeps the needs of the people as holy and safeguards the common good rather than the corporate good.

7. Please free our food supply from the threat of genetic engineering. The details of the threat from genetic engineering are beyond the scope of this letter. There are reasons why animals reject feed from GE crops. There are sound reasons why many countries, even cities and counties in the U. S., reject plantings of GE crops. New combinations of DNA result in proteins in our bodies that serve as allergens. The drift from fields of GE crops cannot be controlled and the pollen contaminates once organic fields. It has become so insidious that unless a food is prepared with organic sugar, it is probably sweetened with sugar from GE sugar beets (or from high fructose corn syrup from GE corn.) The power of the terrorists within the system needs to be defeated.

8. When we purchase food we should be at peace knowing that the workers who harvested the crops are treated humanely. The truth of their working conditions deprives us of that peace.

When we go to the supermarket or the local natural food store we would like to be able to purchase organic food which is sustainably grown in soil that results in the nutritive values we expect from a particular food choice. We want informative and true labeling as to the origin of the produce, meat or fish. We would like the food we consume to be life-sustaining, not life threatening. This should be the scenario for all consumers, not only those in upscale communities.

Thank you for your consideration of these thoughts we have shared. Please act with the welfare of the next generations in mind.

Yours truly,

Susan H. Smith

Gerald G. Smith

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