



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE

LESTER SPELL, JR., D.V.M.
COMMISSIONER

December 16, 2009

Legal Policy Section
Antitrust Division
U.S. Department of Justice
450 5th Street, NW
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This letter is a comment submission for the Antitrust Division of the U.S. Department of Justice and the United States Department of Agriculture's joint public workshop series, beginning in Iowa on March 12, 2010.

To Whom It May Concern:

Since introduction into the marketplace in 1996, biotech seed has changed the way farmers choose seed varieties in order increase yields and maximize profits. An overwhelming majority of farmers have sought biotech seed varieties because of the advantages these seed varieties offer. One important advantage of biotech seed is that it has enabled farmers to conserve precious natural resources while still feeding an ever growing world population.

Agriculture has evolved into a very sophisticated industry with advanced scientific breakthroughs, and intellectual property protection is essential to ensure companies their investment is safe. Increased research and development, such as biotech seed varieties, is the future of agriculture, and without it, the world could face a severe food shortage in the not too distant future.

Farmers will rely heavily on future technological advancements in order to increase food production to levels experts predict will be needed for future public consumption. Therefore, it is imperative that the United States maintain a robust, competitive agricultural industry that promotes innovation and supports adequate intellectual property protection. Research has delivered groundbreaking results in the past, and with a healthy, competitive market, I anticipate agricultural companies will continue to achieve remarkable advancements in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lester Spell, Jr., D.V.M." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lester Spell, Jr., D.V.M.
Commissioner