From: cccquilter@yahoo.com
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To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comment

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December 18, 2009

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 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.

TheVAST 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.

I am extremely concerned about the small family and organic farms, which are the backbone of true agriculture in this country. I buy local when I can and grow my own when I can, and refuse outright to purchase any foods that come from big agribusiness. I wish to support the small family organic farms as much as possible, and this is what our government should also be supporting, because they can make an important and lasting effect on our economy.

Sincerely,

Catherine F Clark