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To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comment

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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.

I have many food allergies and chemical sensitivities and I am the one who needs to be in control of what is in the food I eat, not a company whose definition of what is "safe" for me really means what is profitable for them.

I am very concerned about the terminator seeds, for the reasons explained below, and for the plain fact that no corporation should be able to force farmers to mix unwanted chemicals in their crops--nor should consumers be forced to eat the products of these unsolicited chemicals. I couldn't believe that farmers, who for years used seeds over and over, would be expected to buy seeds that die out after one year because Monsanto now held a dictatorship in the agricultural world. This is nothing but forced consumerism, and if the farmers are being forced to buy a certain product because it financially benefits a mega-corporation, will the consumer be next?

It doesn't take a Ph. D. in science to know that some of Monsanto's most notorious products--Round Up and Aspartame, to name two--are so dangerous and deleterious to public health that they should be pulled from the market. It truly frightens me that everywhere I turn, there are attempts to force people to use chemical products that are not safe. It doesn't surprise me that the U.S. has the least amount of regulation on chemicals released in products to the public and also has the highest rate of breast cancer of any industrial nation.

Monsanto doesn't need any more money at the expense of farmers' financial health, or at the expense of public health. Their bullying needs to be checked. It won't matter what changes are made in the health-care system if people continue to be exposed to dangerous bioexperiments and chemicals that are going to cause fatal disease.

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.

The vast 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.

Sincerely,

Lisa Ryan