South Dakota
Agri-Business
Association

December 30, 2009

Legal Policy Section
Antitrust Division
U.S. Department of Justice
450 5th Street, NW.
Suite 11700
Washington, DC 20001

To Whom It May Concern:

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.

The South Dakota Agri-Business Association (SDABA) is the leading in South Dakota of crop input professionals and is dedicated to safe and economical crop production. We represent over 350 agri-business professionals throughout South Dakota.

Since the first commercial biotech crops were grown in 1996, plant biotechnology has been rapidly adopted by farmers. Increasingly, farmers are now planting biotech seeds because of the clear benefits they bring. Crops commercialized to date have been modified to improve agronomic traits like insect resistance and herbicide tolerance or a combination of the two.

These technologies, in combination with modern plant breeding success, better fertilizer technologies and improved irrigation systems among other innovations, are the true hope we all can rely on to feed a hungry world.

Today's seed industry is more dynamic and innovative than ever. There is more competition in the marketplace than any other time in the history of agriculture.

Each season, farmers turn to the marketplace to choose seed products – this motivates seed companies to offer the best new seed products every year as they strive to earn farmers' business. The famers make independent choices in selecting seed products that they believe will give them the greatest yields and greatest profit from their farms. Agricultural research has produced seeds that deliver optimal results for farmers.

Agricultural research has delivered great results over the last century, increasing yields and lifting millions of people out of poverty and hunger. Intellectual property plays a fundamental role in the promotion of agricultural research and innovation. Intellectual property protection is necessary to reward innovation and ensure the plant science industry maintains its strong science base and continues to innovate.

To meet the needs of the growing world population, food production must increase by up to 50 percent to the world population, which is expected to reach 9 billion by the year 2050. Consistent and adequate intellectual property protection is essential to the ongoing development of newer and more sophisticated products and technologies to better serve farmers' needs and ultimately benefit consumers.

Sincerely,

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