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Mr. Jim Steele  
Contributing Editor  
VANITY FAIR  
4 Times Square, 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10036

Dear Jim:

Thanks for your recent correspondence and your interest in Monsanto Company. As someone who values research, you've undoubtedly seen that the name "Monsanto" has been associated with a company headquartered in America's Heartland since 1901. However, [today's Monsanto](#) is a relatively new company that took shape in the year 2000, and is today 100 percent focused on agriculture.

At Monsanto, we apply innovation and technology to help farmers around the world be more successful, produce healthier foods, and better animal feeds, and create more fiber, all while reducing agriculture's impact on the environment.

Agriculture is facing great challenges: increasing population, limited arable land and precious fresh water resources, among others. Farmers are being asked to address these challenges in an environmentally sustainable way while also balancing pressures that face them on their farm.

Helping address these topics is not only important, but at Monsanto we believe they are essential in helping farmers succeed today and tomorrow.

This introduction to you describes Monsanto's focus and commitment to the success of farmers and agriculture around the globe. It's important because you've raised questions on complex topics which face our business, questions that seem to cast doubt on our intentions.

These topics range from patented technology in seeds to accurate labeling in milk. You've also asked questions involving intricate socio-economic situations in India, a developing country where Monsanto is a participant in the agricultural industry, that are rooted in decades of social norms and practices that pre-date Monsanto and biotechnology. And finally, you've asked questions about two site remediation areas Monsanto is managing today on behalf of other corporations.

I've put together some information on all of these areas to address your questions. I also hope that you will include the important context and other content contained in this letter that highlights the very positive contributions Monsanto has brought to farmers and the global agriculture industry in the last decade, and importantly, the bright promise we see for farmers and agriculture in the future.

### **Protecting Technologies to Drive Innovation and Productivity**

Agriculture has changed. And modern agriculture has successfully leveraged new approaches and technologies that are helping farmers be more productive and efficient. Advanced seed technologies developed by Monsanto, and other companies, have helped address some of the most difficult challenges farmers have faced since the beginning of agriculture, including decreased productivity caused by yield-robbing weeds and insects.

Take as an example, corn yields, which once were averaging slightly more than 70 bushels per acre just decades ago to the recent national average of more than 150 bushels per acre in 2007. These strong productivity gains have been accomplished while reducing the overall impact of agriculture on the environment.

Innovative technologies, such as the Roundup Ready cropping system among others, have enabled the practice of no-till farming which has been credited for reducing soil erosion by more than [1 billion tons](#). Still other innovations, like our Bollgard technology, have helped plants protect themselves from harmful insects by using naturally-occurring proteins. These types of technologies have reduced, and in some instances have replaced, the need for multiple applications of pesticides by nearly [200,000](#) metric tons during their first decade of use.

And [future tools](#) are being developed for farmers today to help their plants continue to yield more in the face of environmental stresses, like drought.

Monsanto spends more than \$2 million (USD) a day in research to identify, test, develop and bring to market innovative, new seeds and technologies that benefit farmers. For a biotechnology advancement, the research and development process typically takes between 8 to 10 years from discovery to being commercially available to farmers.

Protecting our customers' interest in research that will bring new advancements and future productivity tools to their operations is critical to their success, and to ours. One tool in protecting this investment is patenting our discoveries and, if necessary, legally defending those patents against those who might choose to infringe upon them.

In this area, you've asked for the company's position on two specific court cases involving claims of patent infringement and to quantify how many legal actions have taken place and the total funds generated in these types of settlements.

Unfortunately, we're unable to provide comment on specific cases or on settlements, but I hope we've addressed the sentiment of your question in why protecting these technologies is essential to our success and those of our customers.

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Growers have many technology options and seed varieties to choose from in the marketplace. We're pleased that increasingly they are selecting Monsanto seeds and traits because of the value they bring to their business. In fact, last year we estimate nearly 200,000 farmers in the United States alone chose to use Monsanto technologies on their farms.

While the vast majority of farmers and seed dealers follow the licensing agreements they sign with our company, there have been a tiny fraction who have chosen not to honor their agreements over the years. Monsanto then has an obligation to the thousands of our customers who have chosen to honor their agreements to enforce enforcing our patent rights to protect the integrity of the licensing process and to maintain a level playing field in the marketplace. The growers who honor their commitments have made it abundantly clear to us that others should not be allowed to reap the benefits of the technology without paying for its use.

To that end, when claims of seed piracy and patent infringement are made, we first seek to gain a better understanding of the claim by gathering and reviewing information. If the claims can be substantiated, we approach the grower to discuss the claim and our findings and begin discussions about a possible resolution. A small number of these individuals have opted to take their situations to court. However, the majority of cases within this very small group are settled out of court and in many instances, the grower has remained a Monsanto customer.

Monsanto directs funds gained through this process to agricultural education and scholarship initiatives.

### **Milk, Dairies, and Accurate Labeling**

In our correspondence, you've asked about Monsanto's role in the dairy industry and the current discussions around accurate labeling. As before, I wanted to provide some very important context and background.

[Bovine somatotropin, or bST](#), is a naturally-occurring protein produced by all dairy cows. It's a necessary component of milk production. Supplementing dairy cows with bST enables dairy farmers to produce more milk using fewer cows and other resources which ultimately benefit the environment.

All milk and dairy products meet stringent safety requirements and pass regular inspections by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture making milk one of the safest foods available.

Milk produced by cows supplemented with bST is the same, safe, nutritious milk as that which comes from cows not receiving supplemental bST. Regulatory agencies and independent scientific and academic organizations throughout the world have reviewed and studied the use of supplemental bST in dairy production for more than 20 years and determined it to be a safe, responsible and effective management tool for dairy farmers.

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Monsanto supports accuracy in consumer labeling. Dairy product labels that make unqualified absence claims, such as no hormones or bST-free, imply a safety or quality difference and are misleading to consumers. These labels undermine consumer confidence in dairy products. To that end, we applaud the efforts many states are making to ensure accuracy in consumer labeling for dairy products.

Monsanto supports many industry groups across all areas of agriculture. And we have provided assistance to the Center for Global Food Issues, CGFI, and to American Farmers for the Advancement and Conservation of Technology, known as AFACT.

Both organizations support positions that Monsanto also believes in. However, both organizations are self-directed in what they do and say in the marketplace.

### **Suicides in Cotton Growing Regions of India**

In our last correspondence, you added a question about the unfortunate suicides which occurred in certain cotton-growing areas of India. As before, following is some important context and information with regard to this unfortunate situation.

In 2007, there were a number of media reports on farmer suicides which occurred in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, India. This region is an important cotton growing state in the western part of the country where insect-protected cotton and other varieties of the crop are grown.

These farmer suicides were certainly tragic and unfortunate. Farmer suicide is a deep-rooted socio-economic problem in some parts of India with many influences, but with no indication of any single cause. Studies conducted by many reputable groups cite overwhelming debt and family issues as top concerns among a long list of other influences. However, these same unfortunate circumstances predate the introduction of biotech cotton there in 2002.

As an agriculture company working closely with farmers, Monsanto is committed to enhancing the lives and livelihoods of these small holder farmers by offering quality products and technologies and constant innovation.

### **Anniston, Alabama and Nitro, West Virginia**

And finally, you asked about two sites: Anniston, Alabama and Nitro, West Virginia. Again, some background and context.

In 1997, the company formerly known as Monsanto ("Old Monsanto") spun off its chemical businesses as Solutia Inc. In 2000, Old Monsanto merged with Pharmacia & Upjohn to form Pharmacia Corp. In 2002, Pharmacia Corp. was acquired by Pfizer Inc. and spun off its agricultural businesses as Monsanto Company ("New Monsanto"). A provision in the spin-off agreement states that in the event Solutia fails to meet its environmental obligations outlined in the 1997 spin-off agreement, New Monsanto would be responsible for them on behalf of Pharmacia. This is what happened when Solutia filed for bankruptcy in December 2003.

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As we've reported in various filings with the SEC, Monsanto, on behalf of Pharmacia Corp., paid approximately \$550 million in 2003 as its contribution to settle various claims in court cases in Anniston, Alabama. We're also working closely with Solutia Inc. on ongoing remediation projects in Anniston.

In Nitro, West Virginia, Monsanto is handling this case on behalf of Pharmacia Corp., a unit of Pfizer. We expected the class action status to be conferred, and we're preparing for the case. We believe the allegations are without merit and we'll defend ourselves vigorously.

### **About Our Business**

And in closing, you had asked about the seed and trait penetration in our crops. I've provided some information below. Because we create traits that we sell within our own seed brands and also license these technologies to other seed companies, it's impossible to determine how broadly Monsanto traits are used.

However, we can provide the 2007 market share of [our seed brands](#), most of which also contain one of more biotechnology traits, as that has become the clear preference of our customers.

For 2007 in the U.S. corn seed market, our national brand – DEKALB – held a 23 percent share and our family of regional brands through American Seeds Inc. (ASI) had a 9 percent share.

In U.S. soybeans, our national Asgrow brand had a 20 percent share in 2007, and our ASI regional brands had a 7 percent share.

Thanks for the opportunity to share our story with you and with your readers. It is our sincere hope that the context that surrounds each of these topics is included within your article.

Sincerely,

Darren Wallis  
Monsanto Public Affairs