Bayer Monsanto Merger Gets U.S. Approval, Conquering Last Regulatory Hurdle

Last Tuesday Bayer AG received U.S. antitrust approval to takeover Monsanto, clearing the last major regulatory hurdle for the 66 billion dollar deal to happen. The deal has received antitrust approval from most jurisdictions around the world. Bayer is still waiting for Mexico and Canada's approval, but according to a recent statement, the company believes the deal will close by the June 14 deadline. If the deal is not completed by June 14 Monsanto could pull out or seek a higher price.

Approval from the U.S. Justice Department is contingent on the sale of $9 billion in Bayer assets to BASF. The sales of those assets include the Liberty herbicide brand as well as the company's canola, soybean, and vegetable seed businesses. These products compete with current Monsanto products.

Makan Delrahim, head of the Justice Department's Antitrust Division, says that this is the largest divestiture in U.S. antitrust enforcement history.

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Acquiring Monsanto is the latest move in a series of steps to transform the 154-year-old company. Bayer used to be a plastics business. Now they are considered a "life-science" company. Bayer will be equal parts health industry and agriculture industry.

When the deal goes through there will be three massive global corporations that control the world's agriculture industry: DowDuPont, Syngenta AG, and Bayer-Monsanto.

The DOJ's weak divestment requirements will do nothing to stop Bayer-Monsanto from controlling more and more of our food system. This merger will damage the bargaining power of family farmers, prevent farmers from accessing diverse seed varieties, and allow seed prices to rise." – Tiffany Finck-Haynes, senior food futures campaigner with Friends of the Earth via Bloomerg

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