

JGP Special Seminar

(Division of Natural Resource Economics English Lecture Series No.8)

Consolidation in the Global Seed Industry: Drivers and Impacts

by Dr. Philip Howard (Michigan State University)

Much of the food we eat is derived from plants grown from seeds, or from animals that consume these types of plants. The seed industry has changed dramatically in recent decades, however, moving from one characterized by thousands of small and mostly family-owned businesses, to one in which more than 60% of proprietary seed sales globally are controlled by just four corporations. Importantly, these same four firms are even more dominant in global sales of pesticides. The impacts of these changes have included higher prices for farmers, fewer seed varieties, reduced rates of innovation, and a decline in seed saving. These trends are driven by changes in government policies that include reduced antitrust enforcement and increasing intellectual property protections on seeds, as well as a system that incentivizes large firms to continually increase their power. Dominant firms are facing increasing public opposition, however, and alternatives such as open source and heirloom seed firms, while currently very small, are growing rapidly. This resistance illuminates key leverage points for addressing the negative impacts of consolidation, and potentially to reverse these trends.

All interested students and faculty are welcome to attend!!



Dr. Philip Howard (Associate Professor, Department of Community Sustainability, College of Agriculture & Natural Resources, Michigan State University) His research focuses on the 'food system'. He currently has three main projects:

- characterizing consolidation in the food system, particularly in the rapidly growing organic sector
- exploring inequalities in 'food environments' and their potential relationships with health outcomes
- studying consumer interest in 'ecolabels' as a potential strategy for improving the livelihoods of small- and medium-scale farmers

Time & Date 15:00 – 17:00
Sun. July 14, 2019

Venue: Mizuho Hall (B1F)
Faculty of Law/Economics
East Bldg. Main Campus,
Kyoto University

Language English

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