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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FAKE SOYBEAN SEEDS ALLEGEDLY TARGETED  
AND SOLD TO BLACK FARMERS NATIONWIDE AT MEMPHIS CONVENTION

Memphis, TN – A group of black farmers from Memphis, Louisiana and the Mid-South will hold a press conference on Tuesday, July 10, at 10 a.m. in front of the Federal Building, 167 N. Main. If there is inclement weather, it will be held at the Black Farmers & Agriculturalists Association’s corporate headquarters at 287 Madison. The farmers filed a class-action lawsuit in the United States District Court for the Western District of Tennessee Western Division in Memphis on April 19, 2018 against Stine Seed Company of Adel, Iowa, the largest genetic seed trait manufacturer in the world who sells to other giant seed producers like Monsanto and DuPont.

The lawsuit, filed under the Racketeered Influence Corrupt Organizations (“RICO”) Act of 1970, alleges that Stine switched certified seeds with fake seeds and deliberately sold and targeted the fake seeds to black farmers who attended the 67th Annual Mid-South Farm & Gin Show at the Memphis Cook Convention Center on March 3-4, 2017. The plaintiffs and other black farmers purchased over \$100,000 in guaranteed certified soybean seeds from Stine, including another \$100,000 purchase in chemicals from one of Stine’s co-conspirators.

After an extremely poor yield of soybeans during the harvest in 2017, the farmers became suspicious and had certain fields tested for purity and germination of Stine’s seeds by Mississippi State University School of Agriculture in Starkville, Mississippi.

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One of the test revealed that the germination was zero percent. As a result, black farmers lost millions of badly needed dollars to remain viable and to continue to operate their farms.

Thomas Burrell, president of the 15,000 member Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association (BFAA) headquartered in Memphis, along with Bishop David A. Hall, ecumenical support advisor, says the failure of those seeds to perform were a devastating blow to our future potential as Black farmers.

“Once again, black farmers find themselves in the crosshairs of racial discrimination as soybean seeds have now become weaponized and used as a blunt instrument to finish off, once and for all, the few remaining black farmers in America,” commented Thomas Burrell, president of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalist Association. “You can mess your nation up with food security.”

He added that big corporations have created and manufactured chemicals and have eradicated the fruit fly and the boil weevil. Now big corporations are using GMO seeds to help in the eradication of the Black farmers,” Burrell concluded.

You can access a copy of the lawsuit with an email request to [patrogersmm@hotmail.com](mailto:patrogersmm@hotmail.com) or 901.355.9009.



## FACT SHEET

- American farmers, as well as Plaintiffs’ assert the state of Tennessee, Arkansas, Missouri, Louisiana and Mississippi (the area covered by the advertisement used by Stine Seed Company regarding the 67<sup>th</sup> Annual Farm and Gin Show in Memphis), has one of the highest concentrations of African-American farming communities in the (Mid-South) in the entire United States.
- Black farmers are highly populated for farming soybeans in Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi, Kentucky, Alabama, Louisiana, Kansas, Ohio, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Kansas, Minnesota, Iowa, South and North Dakota.
- A “socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher” is, for this section, a farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group whose members have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. See also, 7 U.S. Code § 2279 and 7 CFR 760.107.
- In 1997, the Secretary of Agriculture, Dan Glickman admitted that the government (USDA) had systematically discriminated against blacks when it delayed, denied and frustrated the farmers’ ability to secure loans and credit which caused many of them to lose the land.