

Monsanto, Monsanto Quite Contrary

Monsanto, Bayer, Seed Ownership, and Major Investors

Monsanto and Bayer

Monsanto was a major U.S. agricultural biotechnology and seed company. In 2018, Bayer AG, a German pharmaceutical and agricultural company, completed its acquisition of Monsanto for approximately \$63 billion. Monsanto became part of Bayer's Crop Science business, and Bayer subsequently discontinued the Monsanto name as a standalone corporate brand.

Bayer remains the corporate owner of the businesses acquired from Monsanto. Bayer is a publicly traded corporation rather than a privately owned company controlled by one individual or family.

Bayer's current business is divided primarily into Pharmaceuticals, Consumer Health, and Crop Science. The Crop Science division includes agricultural seeds, crop-protection products, and related agricultural technologies.

Was Monsanto Trying to Buy the World's Seeds?

The statement that Monsanto was "trying to buy the world's seeds" is broader than what the documented corporate record establishes. Monsanto did, however, acquire numerous seed companies, seed genetics businesses, and agricultural biotechnology assets over several decades.

The acquisitions increased Monsanto's presence in commercial seed markets and its ownership or control of particular breeding lines, seed varieties, and patented agricultural traits. Monsanto also licensed genetically engineered traits to other seed companies.

This led to concerns about market concentration, competition, intellectual property, and the degree of influence that a small number of corporations could have over agricultural seed markets.

U.S. antitrust authorities examined several of Monsanto's transactions. The U.S. Department of Justice, for example, documented Monsanto's acquisition of DeKalb Genetics and raised competition concerns involving corn seed and biotechnology.

The Bayer acquisition produced another major antitrust review. In 2018, the U.S. Department of Justice required Bayer to divest approximately \$9 billion in agricultural assets before the Monsanto acquisition could proceed. The divestitures included seed businesses and other agricultural assets intended to preserve competition.

Therefore, a more precise description is that Monsanto pursued **significant expansion in the global commercial seed and agricultural biotechnology industry**, rather than that it was literally attempting to purchase all of the world's seeds.

Seed Ownership Versus Seed Genetics

There is an important distinction between owning physical seeds and owning intellectual property associated with seeds.

Agricultural companies can own or license:

- Seed varieties
- Plant breeding lines
- Genetically engineered traits
- Patents
- Biotechnology technologies
- Crop genetics
- Herbicide-tolerance traits
- Insect-resistant traits
- Licensing rights

A company does not necessarily need to own every physical seed in order to have substantial commercial influence over a crop. Control of valuable genetics, patents, breeding material, and licensing arrangements can provide significant influence within particular agricultural markets.

Bayer's Major Investors

Bayer AG is publicly traded and has shareholders throughout the world. It does not have a single individual owner who owns Bayer outright.

Large institutional investment companies can hold Bayer shares on behalf of investment funds and their clients. One important example is BlackRock, which has disclosed a significant position in Bayer.

It is important to distinguish between an investment-management company holding shares and that company personally "owning" the underlying business. Large asset managers frequently hold shares through funds and other investment vehicles for millions of investors.

Bayer's shareholder structure is therefore different from a privately held corporation controlled by one family or individual.

BlackRock and Other Institutional Investors

BlackRock is one of the major institutional shareholders associated with Bayer. Its disclosed voting interests can change over time as shares and financial instruments are bought, sold, or otherwise adjusted.

Other large institutional investment companies may also hold Bayer shares, including major global asset managers. Their ownership percentages should be checked against current regulatory disclosures because institutional holdings change.

A shareholder having a significant percentage of a publicly traded company does not automatically mean that the shareholder controls the company. Voting rights, the company's shareholder structure, board governance, and the nature of the shares or financial instruments involved all matter.

Bayer's Current Corporate Structure

Bayer describes Bayer AG as a holding company with operating subsidiaries worldwide. Its Crop Science business is the part of Bayer most directly connected with the agricultural businesses that came from Monsanto.

Bayer's 2025 Annual Report and 2026 shareholder materials remain the appropriate primary sources for examining its current corporate structure and shareholder information. Bayer reported that its 2026 Annual Stockholders' Meeting was attended by shareholders representing 59.42% of the company's statutory capital. ([Bayer Global](#))

Bayer also maintains a public archive of its annual reports and financial reports, allowing its ownership, financial structure, subsidiaries, and corporate activities to be examined directly. ([Bayer Global](#))

Bottom Line

The documented history supports the following points:

1. Monsanto was a major agricultural seed and biotechnology company.
2. Monsanto acquired numerous companies and agricultural genetic assets.
3. Monsanto became a significant participant in commercial seed markets.
4. Regulators raised competition concerns about some of Monsanto's acquisitions and market positions.
5. Bayer acquired Monsanto in 2018.
6. Monsanto's former agricultural businesses are now part of Bayer's Crop Science division.
7. Bayer is publicly traded and has many shareholders rather than one private owner.
8. Major institutional investment firms can own significant amounts of Bayer stock on behalf of investment funds and clients.
9. Saying Monsanto was "trying to buy the world's seeds" is an interpretation that should be distinguished from the documented record of acquisitions and market expansion.

10. The more precise issue to research is the **concentration of ownership and intellectual property in commercial seed markets**, including seed companies, patents, breeding genetics, licensing arrangements, and agricultural biotechnology.

Primary Source

Bayer's official 2025 Annual Report and 2026 Annual Stockholders' Meeting materials are available through Bayer's investor-relations website. ([Bayer Global](#))

Bayer also provides information about its current shareholder and corporate governance structure through its investor-relations materials. ([Bayer Global](#))