

From: David Goodman <dgoodman.david@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 1, 2009 9:59 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: We need to stop the concentration of agribusinesses for the benefit of the people, farmers, and the planet

To whom it may concern:

I live in Iowa, where fifty percent of our very rich topsoil has been irretrievably lost, and where we have created and are creating a dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico through agricultural poisons and lost topsoil flowing downstream into the Mississippi and into the Gulf.

The concentration of agri-businesses is illegal and against the anti-trust laws of the United States. It has hurt family farms and our environment with much too little or no oversight. Our future has been hijacked by a lack of oversight, and by greed.

But it is not too late if we can use the existing laws to provide anti trust litigation against egregious agribusinesses, who have used their near monopoly power to bully farmers and to control many sectors in agriculture.

When fewer than ten companies control poultry, hogs, and cattle, corn and soybean seeds, and when these firms require CAFO production to keep costs down, where these confined spaces are highly toxic for animals and humans, this has to be stopped. There is a reason why there is little transparency in CAFO poultry and cattle operations.

The concentration of ownership has dictated the terms of farming practice and made it hard to compete against these low cost operations, that are cheap on a very superficial level, but very expensive in terms of health, true soil fertility, and livelihoods lost.

When the commodity inputs, such as corn and soybeans are artificially kept below the cost of production through government subsidies, the economic externalities are also toxic and non-competitive to healthy, sustainable agricultural practices. They are non-competitive because these perverse non-rational subsidies support low nutrition and high fat diets, that promulgate obesity and diabetes (among other diseases). They are non-competitive simply because profits can be huge with substantial economies of scale for these large agribusinesses at the risk of our soil, our health, our well being and our future, and this has to be stopped.

There is a concentration of ownership in the agricultural space that is unhealthy on all levels, and patently illegal. Please stop this illegal concentration of ownership in the agricultural sector for the benefit of all. Our future depends upon this.

I would be happy to discuss these points.

Sincerely,

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