

**From:** Amy Peters <stringrrl@optonline.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, December 6, 2009 1:55 AM  
**To:** ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>  
**Subject:** Consolidation in the food system

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I am extremely concerned about many facets of our current food system:

- I am very concerned that the vast majority of the agriculture in this country is commodity crops, grown on extremely large, monoculture farms. Large quantities of chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides are used and are destroying the soil and contaminating the water tables. (We need more small and medium sized farms that actually produce real food in a sustainable way!)
- I am concerned that genetically modified seed is being used to grow these crops which have yet to be proven safe.
- I am concerned that large corporations who develop these GMO seeds, (i.e., Monsanto, Cargill, Bunge) control too large a share of the world's seed supply.
- I am also concerned that these corporations are attempting to make the age-old practice of seed saving illegal.
- I am concerned that too much of our livestock is produced on factory farms or CAFOs - which are inhumane and are a tremendous source of pollution.
- I am concerned that because of the "commodifying" of our food supply, the only really "cheap" food is food that can be made from these commodity crops, like corn. Food that is cheap is generally not nutritious. One in six young children live on the brink of hunger in 26 states in the U.S., according to a new report issued by Feeding America. The rate of food insecurity in young children is 33 percent higher than in U.S. adults, where one in eight live at risk of hunger.
- I am concerned that despite this country's (and the world's) agricultural "productivity," that hunger still exists. Access to fresh, nutritious food is a right, not a privilege, for all citizens. I am concerned that there are "food deserts" in low income, urban areas - where many residents' only food options are corner stores and fast food restaurants.
- I am also concerned that our food system exploits its workers (farm workers, food service employees, meat processing and packaging). Farm workers suffer from pesticide poisoning, meat packers from repetitive motion injuries, etc. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2008 Economic Report, food preparation and serving related occupations are the lowest paid of all occupational categories, followed by farming, fishing and forestry occupations. Real wages of meatpacking workers have fallen from \$20/hour in 1977 to \$10.50/hour in 2001.
- I am concerned that the multinational agricultural corporations are exploiting indigenous people and their lands in poorer countries.
- I am concerned that our smaller, family farms are getting squeezed out by large corporate-owned farms. There is no way that family farmers can compete when these large corporations set the prices.

These are just some of my concerns....

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Amy Peters  
Glen Cove, NY