

**From:** Dawn Gifford <dawngifford@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 17, 2009 7:37 PM  
**To:** ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>  
**Subject:** Comments

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I am writing because I am concerned about the lack of competition in agricultural markets.

In particular, I am concerned about the following:

? Just one company, Monsanto, controls the majority of seeds in the US, and regularly threatens farmers who don't buy its seeds. The loss of genetic biodiversity, as well as the monopoly that this control represents must be remedied in order to help foster the seed biodiversity, local self-reliance and sustainability needed in a low-carbon future.

? There is a total lack of decent food labels telling you where the food grew, what chemicals are on it, and if it's genetically modified or irradiated. Food labels should also include the amount of added sugar or caffeine, and the US RDA for sugar and protein. Serving sizes should reflect realistic consumption of a particular food.

? There is a "revolving door" of personnel between corporate lobbyists and government regulators. No wonder corporations aren't held to strict, precautionary standards. As a government agency, it should be unbiased, peer reviewed, rigorous science, deference for public health and the precautionary principle that drives our agricultural policies, not agribusiness interests.

? Prices are rising at the supermarket, but small farmers are struggling -- meanwhile big food companies have made record profits this year. We subsidize large corporate farmers to overproduce commodities used for biofuels, animal feed and junk food, driving down prices at the expense of farms and the environment. At home, many families can't afford to buy the US RDA of fresh fruits and vegetables required daily to maintain good health.

? Food is grown and raised in ways that are terrible for the environment, with methods that pollute the water, poison the soil, and threaten our long-term food security. In fact, in order to make the transition to a low-carbon, sustainable economy, we must also transition our farming systems to organic, agroecological and permaculture systems that build topsoil, sequester carbon, require few inputs and maintain the biodiversity and genetic resilience in the face of climate change.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Dawn Gifford

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