

From: Elizabeth Howdeshell <atlashds@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2009 10:19 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comments

I am writing because I am concerned about the lack of competition in agricultural markets and the unjust way Monsanto and other Big Food companies are taking over, and rendering our food supply unhealthy.

I am the owner of a private preschool/elementary school. It is scary, the number of kids these days, with allergies, asthma, ADHD, weight problems, and other ailments.

We have a strict rule of No Junk Food on site. However, we cannot be one hundred percent sure whether the food we are eating is healthy, because it might be genetically modified.

GMO labeling should be mandatory!

Also, small farmers should be supported. They should not feel threatened by big companies like Monsanto, and they should be allowed to sell their goods without going through all the inspections and following unjust laws, made up by big companies as barriers to entry, just to keep the little guy out.

My small school had only 15 kids in it two years ago, but I was required to follow all the laws the big schools, with 1000 students, had to follow. We had 3 exit doors in each room, and the whole school was only 4 rooms, but we needed to get a ten thousand dollar fire alarm (and the kids were only with us 4 hours a day, 4 days a week). We were nothing like the big schools. We were more like a small home school co op. We also had to spend \$9000 getting connected to city water (when our well water had been tested and was perfectly healthy).

All this to say that I know first hand, how unjust it is for small organizations to have to follow rules made with big organizations in mind (or made by big organizations as barriers to the little guys). Our community needed a school like mine (we cater to bright kids who were not challenged in public schools), but I almost gave up). Fortunately I didn't.

We are now considering adding a farming school for grades 7 to 12. We hope to create small farmers, and we want them to have a fair shake at living off of their hard work.

More than anything else, however, I worry about the little children coming through my school, with allergies, asthma, ADHD, etc. Please, I beg of you, help our children. They cannot help themselves.

A song by Sting keeps running through my head. "Believe me when I say to you I hope the Russians love their children too". Another version could be "Believe me when I say to you I hope Monsanto loves their children too".

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Howdeshell
Cary, NC

Elizabeth Howdeshell

, 26513