

From: Amy Breau <abreau4@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, December 18, 2009 8:39 AM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comments

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

I have two children with food allergies and intolerances. They both have GERD and one has asthma. The main trigger for their symptoms is sulfites in foods. It took me YEARS to figure this out because there are sulfite residues in processed corn products that are NOT LISTED on the label, but nonetheless cause my children to have major health issues that impact their breathing, sleep and behavior. Cornstarch, corn syrup, maltodextrin, dextrose--the list of processed corn products with sulfite residues goes on and on, and this means that they can't eat most processed food.

The limit for the amount of sulfites in foods required to be reported on labels is set far too high, protecting large corporations and harming consumers.

In addition, my children get stomachaches from non-organic corn. I'm not sure why this is, exactly, but it has occurred to me that most conventional corn in this country is a GMO, at this point, and it is pretty much inescapable in our corporate controlled food system.

Because limiting my children's intake of processed and conventional corn has such a positive impact on their health and our family life (the abilities to breathe and sleep!), I spend an inordinate amount of time shopping, cooking and cleaning as I prepare almost everything from scratch.

This degree of labor is not possible for most parents of children with GERD and asthma--and mine can't be the only ones negatively impacted by the poor quality of our food supply. It is interesting to note that increasing asthma rates have kept pace with the introduction and increase of processed corn sweeteners and other products in our food supply.

Based on my experience and that of friends and family, I believe that many of the chronic health and behavior issues we see in children today are at least partly related to the poor quality of our food. Subsidies for corn depress the cost and make processed corn products artificially cheap, displacing healthier ingredients to the detriment of health.

I see this as a social justice issue as well. My family is able to work around this system because we're financially able to have me focus efforts in this area. People who by necessity must choose the least expensive and least time consuming foods to feed their families--poor families and single parents--bear the brunt of the personal and public health problems caused by subsidizing corn.

I appreciate that the Obama administration is concerned about issues of food and health. The food we are feeding our children is NOT the same food that we, our parents and grandparents were raised on. I don't need to wait to see the ripple health effects over time of this experiment we are conducting on this generation--I can see direct effects on my children.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Amy Breau

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