

From: Robert Douglas <rjdouglas@stthomas.edu>
Sent: Friday, December 18, 2009 10:27 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.

Instead, the adopted agenda called for a shift from the cheap, clean, and, for all practical purposes, limitless energy of the sun to the expensive, filthy, and limited energy of the fossil fuels. It called for the massive use of chemical fertilizers to offset the destruction of topsoil and the depletion of natural fertility. It called also for the displacement of nearly the entire farming population and the replacement of their labor and good farming practices by machines and toxic chemicals. This agenda has succeeded in its aims, but to the benefit of no one and nothing except the corporations that have supplied the necessary machines, fuels, and chemicals and the corporations that have bought cheap and sold high the products that, as a result of this agenda, have been increasingly expensive for farmers to produce.

?Wendell Berry, Another Turn of the Crank, 1995

Of course agriculture must be productive; that is a requirement as urgent as it is obvious. But urgent as it is, it is not the first requirement; there are two more requirements equally important and equally urgent. One is that if agriculture is to remain productive, it must preserve the land, and the fertility and ecological health of the land; the land, that is, must be used well. A further requirement, therefore, is that if the land is to be used well, the people who use it must know it well, must be highly motivated to use it well, must know how to use it well, must have time to use it well, and must be able to afford to use it well. Nothing that has happened in the agricultural revolution of the last fifty years has disproved or invalidated these requirements, though everything that has happened has ignored or defied them.

?Wendell Berry, ?Nature as Measure,? What Are People For? 1990

When profit is more important than the health of the farmer or the land, we have a broken food system that will destroy us if not fixed. Corporate control of agriculture is counterproductive to the security of our country. Give farming back to farmers.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Robert Douglas

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