

**From:** Amanda Byrnes <byrnesa@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, December 18, 2009 10:29 AM  
**To:** ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>  
**Subject:** Comments

---

I am writing because I am deeply concerned about the lack of competition in agricultural markets. I am particularly concerned about the activities of agribusiness companies like Monsanto, who not only dominate the agricultural markets but are also known to use strong-arm tactics on local farmers.

I grew up in an agricultural area and have seen firsthand how current government policies have favored agribusiness over local family farmers. I'm only in my thirties, but can name any number of family farms that have gone bankrupt due to pricing policies that favor milk solid imports and undermine local, U.S. dairy production. And that's only one example.

It is my belief that the true future of U.S. agriculture lies in a return to smaller, localized, sustainable food production. This belief is shared by many in the environmental, pro-farmer, healthy communities, and organic/sustainability movements. Americans have a right to know where their food is produced, how it was produced, and by whom. A mandatory labeling system would be a great start, since most Americans, if given an informed choice, would opt for cruelty-free, pesticide-free food that is produced in ways that don't pollute air, soil, and water, or damage the health of agricultural workers and local communities. No one would willingly choose to support a monopolistic business that mistreats its animals, workers, and the environment if better options were more affordable and clearly labeled.

Furthermore, something needs to be done about the revolving door between corporate lobbying groups and federal regulatory agencies. The phrase "fox guarding the henhouse" springs to mind for fairly obvious reasons. In an age where many Americans are deeply cynical about whose best interest the government is acting in, it is time to demonstrate that cronyism will no longer be tolerated.

Thank you for considering my comments on this very important issue.

Sincerely,

Amanda Byrnes

, 02144