

From: Anne Kantola <AnneKantola@MACApr.local>
Sent: Friday, December 18, 2009 2:04 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Cc: anne@annekantola.com
Subject: Our food supply / US ag practices

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am simply a consumer and summertime gardener. I do my level best to incorporate organic and locally-grown foods into our diet because I am both alarmed and concerned at the level of chemicals in our environment and suspect that all manner of disease is caused or exacerbated by insidious additives, chemicals, drugs, and genetically-modified products that some call "frankenfoods". I believe we the people (yes, **us**, USA citizens) have the right to know what is in our food, how it has been modified (GMOs; irradiation, etc.), where it comes from, and to have it grown by farming operations that are not controlled by corporations such as Monsanto and Cargill. These companies have behaved reprehensibly toward our environment, toward other competing companies and individuals (including farmers), and toward countries that may not know better (emerging and third-world countries looking for a leg up). These companies behave monopolistically and appear to intend to crush any who come against them. I have read the Omnivore's Dilemma; I've read about Monsanto suing farmers for fees because the farmer's plots have been wind-pollinated by Monsanto's seed (any lawsuit should be the other way around – and how does this affect our organic farmers); I've read about the false and misleading claims these companies make to secure their overbearing (monopolistic) positions. These companies make huge profits, which is okay in and of itself, but attendant is their extremely powerful lobbying capacity and they just steamroll over opposition, direct legislation in their favor and have the financial wherewithal to control or sway legislation and what and how information is disseminated to the public, with little apparent regard for anything other than their own power and profit. I belong to a food cooperative and any time outcry and opposition is waged to retain organic standards, the right and/or requirement of disclosure about and/or labeling of the products we consume, these corporations fight hard with great financial backing and power against such measures that help the public but may illuminate the truth about these companies and/or their products and their effects.

Please, please:

- Do Not succumb to the Monsantos of the world. No business or entity should have overriding power.
- Do champion our environment, our freedom, our common sense, and our small farmers who struggle to keep their place. There has been so much consolidation in the agricultural business that too few have too much power.
- Recognize that there is a **huge** growing demand for wholesome, locally-grown foods, also organically-grown foods.
- Create and maintain a legal and fiscal environment fostering small business and competition – for them to emerge and flourish – that's one of the foundations of our democracy!!! We are not Russia or Venezuela!!! We are the **UNITED STATES** and peoples.
- Thoroughly investigate all facets of this issue (our food supply!) before acting.

I buy a ¼ cow from my girlfriend, whose family grows 1 or 2 per year for friends and family. The cows are healthy, grass-field fed animals – no hormones or antibiotics (these are whole topics in and of themselves with regard to what they do to the environment and/or individuals!), no industrial cramming of bodies, no irradiated processing, not even many grains. These cows are the way we grateful people should consume cows – no ecoli or hideous bacteria there, grown by individuals that consume their own meat, processed by businesses that a part of their own communities of people that consume the meat.

The same goes for produce from seed that can be harvested, planted and will grow (rather than from a monopolistic infertile seed that must be purchased annually from a corporation).

Thank you for your consideration,

Anne Kantola
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