From: Sarah Fahrendorf <sfahrendorf1@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, December 18, 2009 3:07 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comments on Agriculture & Antitrust Enforcement

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am a breastfeeding mother who wants to be able to make sound buying decisions for my family when I chose what food to serve them.

I consider myself a "greenie" but I don't sign on to every petition that various interest groups send my way. This one hit home, so I am drafting some comments to send you. Thank you for investing your time and resources into this important matter.

I would like to be able to purchase food with labels about how it's made and where it's imported from---to the extent possible.

Mainly I hope to avoid genetically engineered products such as Roundup ready corn, BT corn, and any other sort of GMO that prevents farmers from keeping the seeds. I think that is a total tragedy and ruinous of agricultural traditions. If we really cared about feeding the rest of the world, why have we not done a better job of it, now that pesticides and fertilizers are so available?? So, I don't buy the argument that GMOs can help us stop world hunger. That's a political challenge, not a scientific one. Also, I am distrustful of the impact that pesticides, etc have on humans. As we know, some chemicals can have an estrogenic effect on fetuses and cause baby boy's penises to grow improperly (hypospadius). Other chemicals may have a tendency for causing cancer. Either way, it would be better to use less and use less harmful ones. I hate to think of the harmful chemicals I must be passing on to my son when he nurses.

I would also like to be able to support local businesses whenever possible, because it helps create a more stable and a friendlier local economy. It promotes greater accountability to the people who live and work in and around the processing centers. To a great degree, I care less about price than I do about investing in my neighbors. When it comes to buying vegetables or meat, it's important for us to appreciate what goes into production. Kids need to learn this and all of us need to respect this. Going to the farm shouldn't be a history lesson.

When I read about massive food recalls, I feel anxious for myself and my family. I also feel disturbed when I read about factory farming and the conditions animals are subjected to. Who wants to be part of a system that tosses baby male chickens into a grinder??? That is wrong and harms our human psyche and capacity for compassion.

The answer is not to hide the information that makes people uncomfortable. The answer is to provide information about how things are produced and that means labeling.

A free market will only produce what consumers really want to the extent consumers have the truth.

Give people a chance to make the right decisions. And use your authority to lead by regulating these processes better (maybe outlaw some of them) so that we get the outcomes that make us a richer nation in that we support each other more than we support businesses that are so far removed from the people that they no longer operate for sound, long term goals.

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