

**From:** Mary Saunders <swirlingtheuniverse@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, December 19, 2009 12:08 AM  
**To:** ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>  
**Subject:** Comments

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

I recently sat in on some sessions of the Oregon Board of Agriculture.

I was horrified by what I heard and subsequently researched. Small farmers can be told they can grow a crop (canola) for which they can buy seeds. Then laws can be passed fining them for growing the crop, with people allowed to come on their property and take the crop.

How can this be in a country that used to have a bill of rights?

Something must be done to protect our family farmers from draconian injustice.

Monocropping and monoculture leave us terribly exposed to crop failure.

Scientists recently booed Sec. Vilsack when he tried to promote the industry.

If scientists can get that upset about a particular industry's relationship to government, just imagine how upset ordinary people will get when the extent of harm, more coming up in independent science studies all the time, becomes a health crisis in addition to a financial crisis?

Other countries do not want to buy tainted food from the U.S. This is already an issue.

Many believe it already is a crisis, making the health care debate concerning insurance a refractory problem unless harm from the agro-chemical industry is factored in.

I hope whomever reads this letter remembers Bhopal, India, and all the people who were killed and handicapped by that event. An important anniversary comes up in the coming year.

While men kill themselves in India over crop failures, women in China commit suicide with pesticides.

Here, we have terrible degradation of many of our rivers, including the Potomac, where the damage to fish was recently discussed on the Colbert show with Nicholas Kristof.

The ability of monopoly companies to control information is eroding quickly. The federal government can admit the revolving door and the erosion of reputable science now or later.

I encourage you to admit the damage and to embark on a road to reparation and harm-reduction.

There are ways to remediate some of the substances that are now so ubiquitous in our environment.

To regain credibility in the world, where most of the independent scientists have been doing the research that has now been replicated in many places, admissions must be made.

Research must proceed as quickly as possible on how to remediate endocrine disruptors, how to sequester and destroy seeds that carry genes that can cause adverse effects

in humans, and how to restore heritage plants that have been contaminated with genetic materials that can contribute to anti-biotic resistance and to other serious challenges to health.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Mary Saunders

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