

From: Weeza Matthias <weeza.matthias@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, December 19, 2009 9:47 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. This has affected me personally very directly. Because all our food sources are mixed, I no longer trust our food supply to not be threatening my health. I was diagnosed with breast cancer January 23rd, 2009. I met with the dietician who strongly recommended organic produce & meats as much as possible. As I am living on a disability income of \$19,500 per year, this is completely impossible. I have a port-a-cath in my chest so I can receive IV medications every three weeks for a year. This puts me at much higher risk for infection, and our food supply is no longer safe for a multitude of reasons:

1) With the supply of meat controlled by a handful of corporations, meat from MANY animals is mixed and can be found in a single pound of food. The possibility of contamination is therefore maximized instead of minimized. This makes me very concerned about eating Any non-local meat at all.

2) The revolving door between the food industry and government oversight allows very lax standards & inspections. It also strongly contributes to the use of antibiotics in animal food. As a physician, I know this creates a major part of the antibiotic resistance that this country experiences compared to anywhere else in the world. If you don't know this, ask the CDC's epidemiologist, some of the best in the world. The use of hormones to raise animals is dangerous because it directly contributes to conditions like mine. Excess bioactive hormones in the environment probably contribute to the growing numbers of both prostate & breast cancer. In Puerto Rico several decades ago, the age of menarche went down significantly because estrogen was being fed to chickens to make them mature faster and fatter.

3) I'm 58 years old. All my life, the numbers of farmers have dwindled, almost no farmers can make a living off of supplying our food, and ultimately, the control of the food supply in a few hands makes the primary goal of the food industry profit for corporations instead of the individual. This directly hurts large numbers of people financially who would have lived and worked off of farming, while raising the price of food astronomically.

4) It is terrifying to go to the store to buy food, eyeing each item with the concern about what chemicals have gone into its production, knowing that 99% of the manufactured chemicals are highly likely to cause a cancer recurrence.

Because I am on disability, but have scientific training, I am willing to respond further to these issues if it is so desired.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

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