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Sent: Monday, December 21, 2009 9:32 AM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comments

I am writing as an American and as a young lawyer interested in environmental issues because I am concerned about the lack of competition in agricultural markets, and the centralized system that puts our food distribution too much at risk for accidental or malicious contamination.

Much of our food is no longer as "wholeson" as most consumers assume it is - and have a right to assume it is - despite improving food safety methods in the last few decades. Instead of protecting consumers and assuring sanitary and open practices, current laws allow for food companies to hide information such as where it was grown, what pesticides were used on it, and even if it was genetically modified in some way. This ability to hide information that the public deserves to have access to is outrageous and unacceptable.

We deserve to know how and where the food available in our stores that we buy to put into our bodies and our families' mouths has been grown and produced, especially when "conventional" produce is grown with wholly unsustainable methods involving pesticides, which then pervade the environment and our bodies, and artificial fertilizers, which do not raise crops as nutritious as truly biodynamic soil does, and which also enter into our waterways, causing premature eutrophication when algal blooms flourish on the artificially introduced phosphorus and nitrogen.

Instead of working to protect public information regarding the growing of our food, and the integrity of the ecosystems around us affecting our own bodies, current laws instead work only to protect industry interests that do not want their practices known to the public. This is, again, unacceptable, and must be remedied immediately.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Lauryn Slotnick

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