

From: Sandra Stowell <sstowell@firstraven.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 22, 2009 12:51 AM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comments Regarding Agriculture and Antitrust Issues

My name is Sandra Stowell. I am a resident of Port Townsend, Washington. I shop for my food at local grocery stores, my local Food Cooperative, and I participate in a community garden that produces most of my vegetables for six months of the year.

I choose this local gardening effort because it allows me to control how my food is grown. I know that it is grown by volunteers who share the produce under the guidance of an expert organic gardener who is paid a fair hourly rate for her part time work.

When I buy food in most grocery stores, I do not know if the product is free of unnecessary and potentially dangerous chemicals. I do not know if the farm workers are well paid or have a safe work environment. And I don't know if the seeds are patented by some international corporation focused on ever higher profit for fewer and fewer people.

I am on a fixed income with a tight budget. I could buy my food for less than I currently pay if I bought everything from Safeway or other large chain groceries. I do shop there, and I am grateful for their organic products. However government standards are not enough. We need smaller local farms, with less wasteful transportation. We need local jobs that provide a living wage. We need safe fresh nutritious food, not food engineered for attractive appearance, long storage and easy transportation. Community based farmers need the right to save seed for the next crop, and need a fair share of governmental support.

Please consider all of these issues, and thank you for this opportunity to express my concerns.

Sandra J. Stowell
316 33rd St.
Port Townsend, WA 98368