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Sent: Tuesday, December 22, 2009 10:08 AM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Big Business and Food

I am concerned about the lack of good food at affordable prices. There are many worries that come to mind when purchasing conventional food - GMOs, factory farms, food safety (ex. E. coli), nutritional value, food disparagement laws, carbon footprint, and the list can go on. I don't want to support an industry that doesn't have the consumer's best interest in mind.

I want to be able to purchase fresh local food at reasonable prices. I want to be informed about where my food came from and how it was made. There should be stricter guidelines for what organic, free range, cage free, grass fed, etc. actually means. It would be helpful for all grocery stores to have mass produced, government backed, recognizable signs (I'm thinking like the food pyramid) *Organic = said definition* , if the food doesn't meet it, it can't use those terms on their packaging. It should also be mandatory for companies to reveal if their product is made from GMOs. At the very least, it must be listed in the ingredients list: *INGREDIENTS: corn (made from GMOs), sugar, etc.* I don't want to be consuming a science experiment. Preferably, they shouldn't permit GMOs at all, until studies prove that it is safe for human consumption, but at the very least the consumer should be informed that they are consuming it. Sometimes I would like to purchase conventional food over organic because of the price difference, but I'd rather not chance the conventional because of their secrecy.

To me, organic is nice, but not necessary. For example, I purchased my Thanksgiving turkey from a local turkey farm, not organic, but the turkeys are raised by traditional farming methods. I didn't have to worry that the turkey I bought was injected with antibiotics or was living in cramped quarters with hundreds of other turkeys, beaks removed, in their own feces, possibly sick and malformed.

I hate paying \$5/lb for ground beef, when conventional is \$1.50/lb. It is one reason that I have cut back tremendously on my meat consumption, it is just too expensive. And I don't want to chance buying grain fed beef because the risk of E. coli is sooo much greater compared to grass fed. I also don't want to support large factory farms that have acres and acres of feedlots filled to the brim with cows who are injected with hormones standing in their own feces. And what happens when that animal waste runs into our water system? Plus the number of slaughterhouses in the country has diminished greatly, which creates longer commute times for the meat to get to the grocery, therefore, more energy wasted and more carbon emitted. There is a monopoly in the meat industry and monopolies need to be broken up.

So basically, I try to buy local and from real farms, but it is not always possible either because of lack of selection or price. I wish the consumer would be a priority instead of the almighty dollar. The food disparagement laws are a perfect example of the lack of importance on the consumer. Thank you for your time.