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Sent: Tuesday, December 22, 2009 2:57 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Subsidize the small farmer and end the large corporate control

I am a university student from New Jersey. interested in environmental justice and concerned about the consolidation of power in the agricultural and food processing sectors, for a number of important reasons:

I would like to see the end of free market economics which allow large agricultural Goliaths to overpower the small farmers, forcing them to move to urban areas and work for slave labor wages, where transforming farms become large mono cultures contributing to irreversible soil erosion and deforestation. There must be more regulations on corporate consolidations and eliminations of local community protections which are unfairly labeled as trade barriers. Fort instance, border controls are not the answer to immigration, where providing incentives for small farmers to provide for their families makes much better sense.

The profit structure and incentives of large corporations are distinctly misaligned with positive nutritional and health objectives, as in subsidizing corn syrup. As food and agricultural corporations have grown and consolidated, their lobbies have become ever more powerful, ultimately influencing every aspect of US agricultural policy -- with consequences that are entirely detrimental to public health.

I am also concerned about climate change. The carbon footprint of our well-traveled food (1500 miles from farm to plate, on average) is enormous, and seems like an inevitable byproduct of corporate concentration -- large corporations will always want to centralize production to create efficient economies of scale. There are certainly real benefits to efficiency and centralization in some sectors of the economy, but transporting tomatoes or beef or milk across the country -- when much of it could be done just as well more regionally -- doesn't make sense.

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this important matter. I look forward to following the hearings process in the coming year.

Very truly yours,

Richard Schwartz

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