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Sent: Tuesday, December 22, 2009 6:53 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: taking control of your food

Dear reader,

One of my biggest health concerns is the condition of available food in my community. I am surrounded by a number of large grocery chain stores that sell most of the same products. Even at my house in the college town of Columbia, MO the closest grocery store in any direction is Wal-Mart. I'm sick of buying cheap Wal-Mart food full of artificial ingredients, high fructose corn syrup, and preservatives that make normally decomposable food last years. It's disgusting. I am not a strict health nut and I do enjoy fast food every so often, yet it drives me crazy that I can't find organic, locally grown, REAL FOOD unless I want to spend all my money finding a Trader Joe's (which they don't have in Columbia). I would like to speak for many people my age who don't know about this opportunity to tell people in positions such as yours in saying that I DEMAND REAL FOOD: food I know isn't passed around in the hands of Wal-Mart, Kraft, Hormel, and other corporations more concerned with keeping down prices through sacrificing our integrity by hiding the fact that they put chemicals into our foods, pesticides in our lands, and whatever else on our plates. I wish that 'saving green' meant saving our food and not the cash in our pockets. And although I realize being hyped about saving money is the American way, we also feel the same about keeping taxes low... yet anyone in government could tell you honestly that raising taxes can sometimes save a nation in debt, and that maybe someone can devise a plan that will keep the money out of the greedy hands of the corporations like Wal-Mart and into the pockets of local people, people that need to save money, and the people that need to be inspired to eat local, authentic foods, foods not laced with preservatives and chemicals. I really hope you take the time to think about how complicated our system of government and business is, and why it is tied together. Without some cutting of the ties to big business then our government is no longer run by the people. Citizens can vote on paper, but it's the government that gives us choices. And in going along with the green movement I think it is very smart of someone to step up and show the citizens of America that they can't be blinded by cost-cutting tactics when it substitutes legitimate love for our earth, our environment, and our own bodies. I don't want to be forced to eat Wal-Mart's preservative-ridden food, yet the only other option is drive back home to an expensive health food store or eat the grass

in my front lawn. America needs real options and real explanations... Thank you!

-Elizabeth Essman, political science and environmental studies student at University of Missouri, Columbia