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Sent: Tuesday, December 22, 2009 8:41 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comments Regarding Agriculture and Antitrust Enforcement Issues in Our 21st Century Economy

Im Robert J. Leuallen, 62, living in the small town of Paonia, CO. Im writing to express concerns about what I perceive has become an out of control unhealthy and economically dumb food system in our country.

The initial intent of our countrys food system was good, grow more for less cost, help feed the starving in the world, etc. But along the way, farmers went from being farmers to becoming industrialists with concentration constantly consolidating food systems into fewer hands.

Just as in our current economic crisis we are seeing that it is not a good idea to allow a bank to be too big to fail, so too has our food system become too big, it is failing to provide healthy food, but it is too politically and economically big to be changed easily.

The current system rewards those producing less healthy food cheaply (partly because it is greatly subsidized by our tax dollars), and economically penalizes those attempting to grow healthy food.

The ultimate responsibility for eating healthier food falls on the shoulders of us consumers. Increased awareness, education and information about the benefits of eating locally grown organic foods over industrial chemically grown and processed stuff called food will help change the market.

However, our tax funded subsidies and other economic benefits to the food industrialist need to change to help level the playing field in the food market. Fast food joints should not have a dollar menu on the backs of us taxpayers.

There are many others who are more knowledgeable of the specifics of whats broken with our current food system; I hope you listen to them carefully. But the overall concept is pretty clear.

Our current food system is unhealthy and unsustainable, contributing to increased medical costs related to unhealthy foods. Consumers are to blame for their choosing to buy and eat unhealthy foods and government is to blame for subsidizing and supporting the current industrial food production system that makes it harder for healthier food producers to compete, thus limiting those who would like to buy healthier foods.

Evolution will ultimately take care of the situation, survival of the fittest, those eating more healthy foods will survive better and those eating the food substitutes from industrial production will be less healthy and survive less.

But in our society, we have the supposed brain power to make common sense decisions that help move evolution along a quicker, better path. Your hearings appear to be a good step towards this goal.

Thank you for the opportunity for me to provide my humble thoughts.

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