

**From:** liaisonsus@aol.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 23, 2009 12:21 AM  
**To:** ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>  
**Subject:** Agribusiness and the control of food and farming

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Hello,

I am an interpreter, travel facilitator and world traveler as an investigative journalist and I am also someone who's interested in community gardens, environmental justice, composting, and eating more delicious and nutritious food, I think about food issues a lot. I'm very concerned about the consolidation of power in the agricultural and food processing sectors, for a number of important reasons:

Our food supply is not safe. Through my professional awareness, I firmly believe that it's just a matter of time before a major outbreak of a food-borne illness hits. I feel completely powerless here. I can choose to grow my own (which I did some this summer, but I am a business woman who travels a lot and choose to shop at the local farmers' markets (this is easy because there are three times a week markets near my house and office in the different beach cities close by.), and try to frequent restaurants that use local produce... But that's not enough to keep me safe from a widespread epidemic. I can do some of those things some of the time, but I can't do all of them all the time, so I feel like a sitting duck.

It seems that food prices are set by just a few companies. I watch prices rise, and feel there's really nothing I can do about it. My food budget is stretched. I don't like to imagine what it's like to feed a family.

Finally, food from the large grocery stores tastes like nothing. I heard groundbreaking urban farming entrepreneur and MacArthur genius grant winner Will Allen speak recently. He said that much of the imported food we eat is simply cellulose, and I believe it. The food I get at local farmers' markets is always tastier and fresher, but I don't always have time to go to them, and they're more expensive. I'd like to be able to get fresh, local food at my supermarket, but there doesn't seem to be a way for the small farmers to get their products into these big chains.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concern on this matter. I look forward to following this investigation in the coming year.

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