From: Mary Louise Mutch FSPA <mmutch@fspa.org>
Sent: Wednesday, December 23, 2009 3:42 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Corporate Consolidation of the food I eat

I am an eater of food and I am deeply concerned about corporate consolidation in the agricultural, processing, and supermarket sectors, as I see its repercussions each time I shop for food.

The profit structure and incentives of large corporations are distinctly misaligned with positive nutritional and health objectives. 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. It makes my blood boil that my tax dollars subsidize the production of corn syrup, for example, which is significantly contributing to the obesity crisis -- which is then requiring even more of my tax dollars to address.

Additionally, while I don't consider myself a strong environmentalist, I feel very strongly 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.

Sincerely,
Mary Mutch

mmutch@fspa.org