

From: Brent and Katie Berry <bbrent@centurytel.net>
Sent: Wednesday, December 23, 2009 4:24 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comments about food safety in the USA

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to add my comments to help the Department of Justice make a determination if Big Food has too much control over the food supply and safety of the United States. In fact, after having back room bribery and Millions of dollars in lobbying money to sway politicians in Washington DC---I would have to say Big Food more than likely works the same way as all the big money lobbyists owned by corporate America that seem to have the lions share of political sway in decisions and laws made by 'our' politicians.

My family and I have Celiac Disease and have found it nearly impossible to be able to purchase ANY processed or packaged food item in our local grocery store that is actually FREE from Gluten---even if the package states it is Gluten Free. This is because of the seeming lack of knowledge of cross contamination of gluten in these large factories. It seems that Food Production has become SO centralized, that many, many different food products are made on shared equipment. Either the lines are not cleaned thoroughly or the cleaning products themselves are made from gluten containing grains. The many and exploited loopholes in food labeling allow companies to not tell the consumer if the lines are shared OR if ingredients from suppliers are made from gluten containing ingredients! This is not only unfair---but downright dangerous. Apparently, the profit of Big Food comes before the safety of the consumers purchasing this food---that directly profits Big Food.

In fact, Kraft and Nestle and other Big Food manufacturers are so arrogently confident of their food 'safety' that they don't actually have a Gluten Free list. I just have to trust that when I read a label and I don't see identifiable gluten---that it actually is gluten free. We have been made sick many times by 'trusting' big food. The fact that when I call their 800 Numbers to complain, and they send me a check for what I paid for the product without even proving that I bought the product---tells me that they can afford to lie to consumers!

The Meat industry in America apparently is owned by about 5 companies. The fact that people are still sickened and die from E Coli proves just how corrupt this system is. Apparently, ground beef is purchased from ALL OVER THE WORLD!!! Scrap pieces of beef that might be part rotten, have fallen on the floor and are actually treated with AMMONIA to disinfect before put in the grinder. There is just one caveat---the grinding facility will NOT get beef from suppliers if they TEST FOR eCOLI???? This is sick because it puts the profit of Big Beef over the safety of the American Public. My family has gotten sick from frozen Angus Beef Patties from Costco. There is no ingredient label---but Costco assured me the meat IS Gluten Free. After learning what I did about how this 'Ground Angus' is actually made---we threw the rest of the package away and don't eat grocery store ground beef anymore.

Yes---the Government needs to break up the Trusts that are destroying American Small Farmers and Small businesses---not to mention the health of America!!! There should be NO reason that a package of disgusting Food-Like Product called Doritos costs less than fresh fruits and vegetables! The American Public is being swindled out of our health and our wealth by Big Food and Big Business in America today. These Big Companies have SO much money to pay their lobbyists to get their way in Washington DC---the field is unfairly stacked. This needs to change. I hope my letter will make a difference, because we find buying and eating safe and Gluten Free food in the USA to be a VERY difficult thing. And I find that my voice and the voice of others with Celiac seems to be drowned out by reps from Big Food that calmly assure us that 20 ppm of gluten or undisclosed ingredients are just fine for us---no matter what we say. Our food bill for a family of four is approximately \$1000-1500 a month. We buy very little meat, cheese, lots of fruits and vegetables (with very little variety) and very little packaged Gluten Free foods. The bulk of our food is fresh and our bill is outrageous. If we could drink toxic soda and eat toxic Standard American Diet food---our bill would be half that. Then again---we would be dead in six months.

Sincerely,

Katie Berry
Salmon, Idaho