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**Sent:** Wednesday, December 23, 2009 9:47 PM  
**To:** ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>  
**Subject:** corporate control of food supply's effect on poor communities

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> To whom it may concern,  
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> Having worked for over 10 years directing child crisis programs in  
> Bronx public hospitals and public schools, I have witnessed  
> personally what poor nutrition does to the health and mental health  
> of my clients as well as myself.  
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> Jacobi hospital (a public hospital) hosts a McDonalds restaurant  
> where poor families can be seen eating right before they attend  
> their appointments at the new Childhood Obesity Clinic. McDonalds  
> can also be found next to nearly every school in the Bronx. These  
> are the safe havens where kids, parents, and other adults hang out  
> (the parks are way too dangerous). Kids are obese, diabetes is  
> rampant, and it is not uncommon to see adults with missing limbs  
> due to untreated and poorly managed diabetes. Kids can't focus and  
> learn as their blood sugar levels spike and crash. And their  
> families' diet-related health issues can be traumatizing for  
> children who lose family members to preventable diseases and who  
> wonder when their mother will lapse into another coma or their  
> father have yet another heart attack.  
>  
> And for me, I live in one of the most privileged neighborhoods in  
> NYC; yet locally grown non-corporate food still eludes me much of  
> the time. Even though I'm willing to pay \$9.99 per pound to get  
> grass fed organic beef at the local grocery boutique, it is  
> nonetheless imported from Australia. I'm sure I could eat healthy,  
> nutritious, organic, free-range, grass-fed, hormone-free food if I  
> became fetishistic about it, but I, like most people, must contend  
> with competing priorities.

And like diabetes, high-blood pressure, and other diet-related killers, the corporate takeover of food that goes largely unseen, not fully tasted, and not experienced until its consequences are visited upon us much later. When the context of one's life changes unnoticed, it is hard to respond with outrage. But for myself at least, all it took was a little awareness for me to react viscerally to the idea of a few corporations controlling the production, distribution and retail of our food supply. I want to have the option to eat healthy, and to support local growers and farmers. I believe strongly in the humane treatment of animals and people (including workers). I don't want to ingest genetically modified corn-fed factory-farmed beef and chicken, doused in ammonia, fortified with hormones and laced with e-coli and listeria. I believe that economies of scale and mass production do not work when it comes to our food supply.

I'm not a radical liberal, environmentalist, socialist, or vegan, but I do expect our President and Congress to stand up to special interests in the food industry and agribusiness, in the insurance industry and pharmaceutical companies, in the banking and financial sector, and in foreign lobbying organizations that do not necessarily have our best interests at heart. President Obama has the charisma and intelligence to bring about the change he so eloquently voiced in his campaign, but if he does not show some spine, someone less eloquent, less charismatic, less intelligent and less sane will get

elected to do this job, and I do not look forward to this kind of change. People know something is deeply wrong with the way our democracy operates, which is why all the conspiracy theories are cropping up.

Break up these monopolies, revoke patents on seed stock, enforce FDA standards, and shake things up. Best of luck.

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