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**Sent:** Wednesday, December 23, 2009 11:18 PM  
**To:** ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>  
**Subject:** Agricultural workshops - comment

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Good evening,

I'm a wife and mother, I've worked for nearly 40 years as a full-time public relations practitioner, and my husband and I are new farmers in Western Wisconsin. Thank you for taking my comment on this very important issue.

Like most Americans, I've noted the ever-increasing incidences of E. coli contamination in the foods produced by the large meat-packing operations, as well as by the vegetable processing plants. I've also become increasingly alarmed by our government's suggested fixes: irradiation and genetically-modified crops. Both are costly, technical responses affordable only by the largest of the processors while ensuring less nutrition to the American people.

The 30-year trends in agricultural policy, regulation and practice also continue to advance the success of the large operations while shutting opportunity for smaller-scale farms and processors. Food safety strategies that focus on plant fixtures instead of on measuring the safety of the food product itself also work to the benefit of the industrial complex. Ironic when you consider that it is the meat and vegetables coming from these large operations that are endangering Americans all across the nation.

The food safety regulations are at best unworkable, and the newest ones – NAIS among them – are red herrings. NAIS is a measure that favors the huge operations to the immediate economic detriment of the small farmer. It is a measure that – by its nature – cannot assure food safety, yet is being sold to the public as just that. Just take a look at who supports NAIS – large operations.

It is a very sorry day when America's small business operators – and that's what small- and medium-scale farmers are – have doors opportunity shut by their very own government regulators. But then again, should we be surprised? The executives leading our farming and food-regulating agencies formerly held positions of highest power in many of our nation's largest industrial food and processing companies.

This concentration of power – both within our federal agencies and within the industrial farming, processing and distribution system – puts our nation's food supply at risk. It jeopardizes the health of families and the economic well-being of this nation. Small farms, small-scale processing and regional distribution systems will help get better tasting, fresher and more nutritious foods into more communities, while providing more jobs and diminishing the opportunity for massive food contamination.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my views. I will look for news about the workshops and this investigation.

Respectfully,

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