

From: Howard Patterson <hjpatterns@earthlink.net>
Sent: Thursday, December 24, 2009 4:36 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Corporate Control of Food and Farming

To whom it may concern,

I am a graduate student in environmental science at Portland State University, and am extremely concerned with the consolidation of control in the hands of a few international corporations. In my opinion, organic agriculture, performed as much as possible by small, local, family farms, is the ideal route both to human and to environmental health. Factory farming, on the other hand, dependent on petrochemical fertilizers and pesticides, using monocultures of genetically modified water-wasting cultivars with mechanical harvesting and long-distance hauling of supplies and produce, has an appalling impact on environmental health, generates food that is low in nutrition and high in contaminants, contributes to climate change, and destroys coherent local communities both in America and globally.

A small number of huge, incredibly powerful corporations wield untoward influence with governments worldwide, doing their best to remove environmental protections and to dilute the meaning of protective labels, absorbing small farms as they consolidate their control, patenting ancient genetic information, and addicting farmers to copyrighted seed stocks.

I personally feel the impact in unfair price competition and in the difficulty of attaining organic food, and in the lack of confidence in the quality of food created by corporate pressure on labeling protocols. In addition, I suffer from the ubiquitous low levels of pesticides common to everyone on the planet, whose health effects are only beginning to become clear - and from the damage to the environment in which I live: pesticides are implicated in low reproduction levels of anadromous fish, petrochemical fertilizers and unprocessed manure reservoirs are primary causes of the dead zones around the mouths of great rivers, et cetera.

An important role of government is to protect its citizens from the social, economic, health, and environmental effects of the uncontrolled greed of profit-driven corporations and companies. It is completely appropriate for the Department of Justice to investigate the role of Monsanto and other agribusiness corporations in the degradation of our food supply.

thank you,

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