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Sent: Thursday, December 24, 2009 5:14 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comments Regarding Agriculture and Antitrust Enforcement Issues in Our 21st Century Economy

I am a rich media consultant. I provide technical professional services to small and medium business, helping them to improve product quality and profitability. I am deeply concerned about corporate consolidation in the agricultural, processing, and supermarket sectors, as I see its repercussions every day in my local stores, restaurants and in the news.

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 lobbyists have become ever more powerful, ultimately influencing every aspect of US agricultural policy, with consequences that are entirely detrimental to public health. It makes me very mad that my tax dollars subsidize the production of corn syrup, for example, which is significantly contributing to the obesity crisis which, in turn requires yet more of my tax dollars to address. Healthy sustainable food production is expensive, while corporate consolidation has made poor quality food, created under environmentally damaging conditions, inexpensive.

Additionally, I consider myself a strong environmentalist and feel very strongly about climate change. The carbon footprint of our well-traveled food is enormous, and seems like an inevitable byproduct of corporate concentration, in that 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 to me. In addition, decentralized food production improves local economies and strengthens family commitments to the land and future generations.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion on this important matter. I look forward to following the hearings process in the coming year.

Best regards,

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