

From: Jason Baird Jackson <jasonbairdjackson@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 28, 2009 12:42 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comments Regarding Agriculture and Antitrust Enforcement Issues in Our 21st Century Economy

Dear Department of Justice Officials,

My name is Jason Baird Jackson and I am a university professor in the fields of folklore studies and anthropology. In my work as a scholar, I collaborate with rural American communities, including American Indian communities, that are suffering disproportionately the health and environmental costs of the current industrial food system. As a parent of two children, I am similarly deeply concerned about the manifold negative consequences of our current system of agriculture. Corporate consolidation of firms in the agricultural sector are a crucial factor shaping the profoundly negative state our food system has taken.

Communities of modest means have today almost no choice when it comes to healthy, affordable food. Even families like my own, which are not economically insecure, find it nearly impossible to exercise real choice when it comes to the corporate sources from which our food comes. Small farmers and producers face nearly impossible choices in attempting to maintain family farms and small businesses. Cheap, unhealthy, highly processed, commodity-derived food produced by federally subsidized industrial food industries is ubiquitous and, unfortunately unsafe to consumers (as suggested by today's announced recall of e-coli infected beef from Oklahoma, where my research is focused) and unsafe to workers, as indicated by news reports on packing industry illness and injury. Industry consolidation further intensifies the political dominance of these multinational corporate actors, thereby eroding local, state, and national capacities for democratic self-governance. Nothing truly good other than additional corporate profits can come from further corporate consolidation in the agriculture industries. Monsanto's behavior in the seed market should be illustration enough as to why antitrust enforcement in agriculture is a necessity.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important matter. I look forward to following the hearings process as it unfolds during the coming year.

Sincerely,

Jason Baird Jackson
4425 Blackstone Ct.
Bloomington, IN 47408
USA

<http://jasonbairdjackson.com/>