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To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Corporate control of food

I am writing because the DOJ has asked for input from folks about how corporate control of the food system has affected them. I am a new gardener. I garden for my own sake. However, I also belong to a couple of CSAs - a meat CSA and a veggie CSA. Why? I know the farmers, I know how my food is raised and grown and I know that no pesticides, herbicides or bad treatment has gone into the growing and raising of food that I am now serving at my table.

I live in an ex-urban part of Kansas City. I have one grocery store within 2 miles of me. That is a luxury compared to some parts of the city where they can easily get a package of potato chips (\$.99 per 3oz = \$4 + a pound for something that is about as nutritious as eating sand) but cannot find a bag of fresh organic carrots. When they can - that 1lb bag of carrots cost less per pound than the chips - but the chips and the company that makes them are subsidized by the US Government. Does this make sense? No. Corporate control of food has not only damaged the cost of food - keeping it low (small farmers cannot compete with artificially low prices AND subsidies that go to Con Ag, ADM, Smithfield), but even that price is not reflecting the true price of the food being manufactured by corporations.

The tons of pesticides, herbicides and anti-biotics being poured into our food daily must be taken into account as a cause of our health care woes. A study going back to the 1950s when Monsanto, et. al. switched from making bombs with nitrogen chemicals to dumping tons on farmers - and the switch from multicrop to monoculture plantings (hence the use of corn, corn syrup, high fructose in nearly everything manufactured today) would reveal a direct link to the 'diabesity' epidemic we see today.

There is a slogan hanging over my 7-11. I think it says it all: Tacquitos - \$.99 - Hunger Solved. Well- we are the fattest country in the world today and yet we are starving. Eating empty calories provided cheaply by giant corporations which result in disease and poor health and an early death is the stuff of science fiction, but it is happening today. In the country side where farmers used to practice and support the local economies/grocery stores, etc, now belong to Monsanto, et.al. giant corporations that grow feed stock - which is what the American people have become. Feed Stock. When you grow feed to put in faux food - to feed millions of people - we cease to be real. We are the stockyards of America now and until and unless the food policies change in this country - you will continue to see a decent into that science fiction scenario.

Giant corps should never get subsidies. Food policy should always favor healthy over convenient. Regulations should cover pesticides, herbicides and anti-biotics NOT organic farming techniques which use none of these.

My husband and I do not make a lot of money. But we made a decision that we would be part of the local/back to small farms movement. It has served us well. But we have the transportation to be able to get to the places that sell the food we want to buy. Why can food stamps be used for processed food (a big Kraft Mac n Cheese) and not be used to buy ingredients for a salad, or fresh beans.

Teach people to cook again - and relieve organic and small farms from some of the onerous regulations forced on them when they put these into play 30 years ago (thank you ADM), and you will see a difference.

Thank you for even wanting our comments.
I hope others will do the same.

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