

From: Elizabeth Statmore <statmore@earthlink.net>
Sent: Monday, December 28, 2009 5:43 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Public Comment on food monopolies and threats to food safety

Dear Agricultural Workshops at the DOJ:

I am a writer and school volunteer in San Francisco. As someone who's interested in community gardens, environmental justice, composting, and eating delicious and nutritious food, I think about food issues a lot. I'm very concerned about the consolidation of power in the agricultural and food processing sectors, for a number of important reasons:

Our food supply is not safe. As we have seen over the past few years, it's only a matter of time before a major outbreak of a food-borne illness hits us again.

I feel completely powerless here.

In my small urban garden, I can only grow so much of my own food, and while I shop at the local farmers' markets, it's not always possible — and certainly not enough to keep me and my family safe from a massive epidemic.

This powerlessness makes me feel like a sitting duck.

Food prices are set by just a few companies. I watch prices rise, and there's nothing I can do about it. My food budget is stretched.

Finally, food from the large grocery stores tastes like nothing. I heard groundbreaking urban farming entrepreneur and MacArthur genius grant winner Will Allen speak recently. He said that much of the imported food we eat is simply cellulose, and I believe it.

The food I get at local farmers' markets is always tastier and fresher, but I don't always have time to go to them, and they're more expensive. I'd like to be able to get fresh, local food at my supermarket, but there doesn't seem to be a way for the small farmers to get their products into these big chains.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concern on this matter. I look forward to following this investigation in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Statmore
San Francisco, CA