From: Cherie Rogers <cherierogers@earthlink.net>
Sent: Monday, December 28, 2009 7:09 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Big Corps and Our Food

To Whom It May Concern:

I recently read several books by Michael Pollan and viewed the movie, "Food, Inc". While I was aware of some of the information presented, I had no idea of the enormous control, power and influence held by certain industries over the production of one of our most basic needs – sustenance. I am deeply concerned that our government is unable and/or unwilling to do anything to diminish the power of these conglomerates. After all, many of the officials charged with watching over our food supply's health seem to have at one time worked for the very corporations who are threatening to destroy family farms everywhere or at the very least intimidate them into doing what the corporation wants.

Americans want and deserve healthy food. There are many successful, private, small scale farms that do not rely on monoculture, chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides. Food can and should be grown in cooperation with Mother Nature. Government needs to protect and encourage the continuation of small family run farms throughout the country. Monocultures should be discouraged; they are not found in Nature and we put ourselves at great risk when we depend on them.

Of equal if not greater concern is the way we are raising and treating our food animals. It is one thing to raise an animal in its natural environment allowing it to forage for its natural food and then to humanely slaughter it for its meat. It is quite another to raise an animal as do the factory farms in their feedlots and slaughterhouses. My heart goes out not only to the poor beasts who are raised in the factory systems, but also to the laborers who work in these systems. They must desensitize themselves to inhumane treatment and cruelty. The workers are exploited and their humanity is compromised!

Every time I go to the supermarket I notice what is in the carts of those around me. As a health conscious vegetarian, I look for organic produce and the least processed foods I can find. Fortunately, I can afford to pay for these items, but most of the working people with children cannot. I see their carts filled with highly processed foods, Ramen noodles, sodas and high fat, sugar, salt items. Why do they choose those foods? Because they cannot afford fresh fruits and vegetables – the healthy stuff is too expensive! Their children will likely be fat (many already are), become diabetic, vitamin deficient and ADHD. Something is SERIOUSLY WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE! PLEASE DO SOMETHING TO LOOSEN THE GRIP OF CONGLOMERATES OVER OUR FOOD SUPPLY!