

From: Marlen Boivin <sagemb@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, December 28, 2009 10:31 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comments Regarding Agriculture and Antitrust Enforcement Issues in Our 21st Century Economy

My name is Marlen, a beginning backyard farmer, an avid cook, and a person engaged in community support. My husband and I live in WA, so we're blessed with diversity of local food resources. It's hard for me to even perceive how I could live in certain parts of the country surrounded mostly by corporate farming and monocrop farming. Our experience of buying from local farmers at our neighborhood farmer's market is an exponentially rewarding experience: fresh, flavorful food picked earlier that day, an intimate knowledge and support to who is growing it, and the knowledge that we are voting with our dollars to encourage local family farms, increase organic and local farms that don't use pesticides, chemicals or GMO seed.

I am concerned about the consolidation of corporate power in the food and agriculture sector because it distorts the actual and perceived value of food in the U.S.; and continues to increase the distance between those who consume it and those who grow it. This has a negative impact on the resources required to produce and transport it, let alone the distortion resulting from the subsidies that are provided to corporate farmers to keep the perception that food costs are lower than they truly are, not to mention the corporate farmers who are being paid to grow nothing and the negative impact it has on small farmers having to keep their prices somewhat parallel at their expense.

This consolidation also erodes pure food and contaminates pure land with the chemicals and processes that big agri-business uses. Big agri-business is just that, it's lost the 'culture' in agriculture, and the concern for the real people and the environment we inhabit.

Thank you for not only listening, but taking steps to reduce the incestuous relationships between corporate power and the way food is grown.

Marlen Boivin
2838 – 35th Ave W
Seattle, WA 98199