

From: Winston McLean <winmclean@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 29, 2009 2:14 AM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Give Us Back Our Food...NOW

Comments Regarding Agriculture and Antitrust Enforcement Issues in Our 21st Century Economy

Hello,

My name is Winston McLean and I am a Junior at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. After watching the documentary Food, Inc. I have become incredibly more aware of the issues revolving around the consolidation of corporate power in the food and agriculture sector. With this new awareness about the truth behind industrialized farming it has made me increasingly angry. I have so many problems with our current system that I wouldnt be able to fit them all in this one letter. But let me just first start off by saying this:

The system that is currently in place is one that practically forces consumers to take part in thus continuing the downward spiral. The low prices set at supermarkets by the big corporations are prices that local farmers have a very hard time competing with. For most people who would like to support local farms and local economies they simply cannot because of their financial constraints. The main reason these big corporations are able to offer such low prices is where the big issues lie. For one, the majority of foods contain corn because corn is such a cheap crop. The reason why it is so cheap is because the government subsidizes it. The government subsidizes it so much that farmers are told to overproduce corn. Because of such cheap corn we have found other uses for corn; we now see corn in soda and junk foods and they have been linked to high rates of diabetes and obesity. Corn is even fed to cattle, despite cows not being evolved to actually eat corn, and has greatly increased the rates of a new E.coli strand that affects humans every year (By the way, I am particularly bothered by my last factual statement. I cannot believe that farmers are legally allowed to feed corn to cattle when it has been proven to increase the chances of E. coli. Consumers are literally dying from their very own food. Now that is inhumane.) Therefore the cycle continuesprices set by these big agricultural and food sector are so low that local farms who are actually trying to sustainably produce organic food that will not lead to diabetes and obesity and will not contain E. coli cannot compete. Consumers who are on a tight budget naturally will purchase the cheaper foods and are involuntarily bound to this system.

As I mentioned before, I have too many issues about this topic to list in just this one letter. This issue upsets me so much because I cannot understand the logic behind allowing 4 or 5 big corporations unsustainably and inhumanely produce our nations food, directly feeding our own people hormone injected, genetically altered, anti-biotic containing, chemically enhanced food. How can this happen? How can you let this happen?

I do thank you for the opportunity to submit my comments and I pray that these comments from myself as well as other people from around the nation will be heard and taken seriously. The time for change is NOW.

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