

From: Ann Kingman <annkingman@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 29, 2009 12:32 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Corporate control of our food system

Dear Department of Justice,

I am the mother of two young daughters, with no ties to the food industry except as a consumer of food that I put on my family's table.

Over the past year I have become increasingly concerned about food safety and how the food that we eat affects the health and welfare of my family and other families in our country. I believe that much of my concern is due to the fact that a few large corporations determine what goes into my daughter's bodies.

I am concerned that a few companies control our meat industry, and operate in such a manner to value profits over the health of consumers. I am convinced that the rise in e.coli and other meat safety issues certainly stem from the overcrowding practices and reliance on antibiotics given to livestock. The fact that America's obesity epidemic exactly coincides with the prevalent use of of high-fructose corn syrup and processed soy in most of the foods on grocery store shelves is something I cannot overlook, and I believe that the blame lies with the huge corporations that insist on farm subsidies for corn and soy so that they may buy these ingredients cheaply. The links to early puberty in girls and the increase in breast cancer among American girls and women cannot be ignored.

These huge conglomerates are too powerful in their lobbying and political activities and are putting my family and others at risk. A recent New York Times article quoted Dr. Kenneth Petersen, assistant administrator of the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service: "I have to look at the entire industry," Petersen said, "not just what is best for public health."

As our food system is held hostage by a few large corporations, I am trying to turn my purchasing power to local family farmers and livestock producers, even though it has tripled the time that I spend shopping time and increased my grocery expenditures by 50% or more. Frankly, I spend the money so that I can sleep at night, knowing that I am giving my family the healthiest food that I can. However, my children and most other American children still eat school lunches, and visit restaurants with family members and friends.

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this very important issue.

Sincerely,

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