

**From:** Michelle van Kriedt <michelleswell@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 29, 2009 12:55 PM  
**To:** ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>  
**Subject:** US food supply feedback

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Dear U.S. Department of Justice,

I'm writing to express my concerns over the business of food in our nation and the decisions that the food manufacturers and producers have made and continue to make that continue to affect the quality of food items sold in supermarkets and in restaurants.

Since you'll be receiving many letters that repeat the same facts, opinions and concerns, I'll try not to belabor my statements.

Basically, what I believe is fundamentally wrong is how food and agriculture producers could change the ingredients and methods of which food is raised, harvested and/or manufactured without informing the public beyond the fine print on the ingredients on the product labels (and in many cases this was never done). One example that comes to mind is the switch from cane sugar to high fructose corn syrup in many products a few decades ago. At some point, cereal and soda pop that used to be sweetened with cane sugar became sweetened with high fructose corn syrup. Prices remained the same or swelled with inflation, yet the cost to use high fructose corn syrup is significantly cheaper than cane sugar, so profits for the food producers increased many-fold. This is almost criminal to me. Another example is the change in the way in which chickens and eggs are grown. It's no secret that chicken "farming" has evolved to a state of high-tech coops that result in the greatest yields. This has resulted in increased production and big profits for Tyson and other similar companies. However as the methods of raising chickens has changed, no one thought it was necessary to inform consumers that the chicken they are eating is now produced in "manner X" instead of "manner Y". Again, the onus has been on the consumer to "figure it out". I presume that Tyson and other similar chicken producers would posit that consumers don't have to consume their product - and stand firmly on a freedom of choice platform. Yet, here is where I think such loose accountability for the producers is, again, almost criminal: If a very high percentage of chicken is produced in the Tyson way, so much that most consumers would find it very difficult to purchase chicken products made in a more natural manner, then, in effect, most consumers have NO CHOICE but to purchase the chicken products made in the Tyson manner. Only recently has the interest in organic, natural, free-range, etc., hit the mainstream. Still, a large percentage of the population has little or no access to these products and is essentially forced to purchase the "corporate" chicken products at both the supermarket and restaurants, whether it be because of the much lower cost of "cheap corporate" chicken or the convenience factor of obtaining the non "cheap corporate" chicken.

In conclusion:

- 1) Being able to change production methods and ingredients without educating the public in a thorough manner is unjust
- 2) Putting the onus on the consumer to "figure it out" for themselves discriminates against disadvantaged populations, namely low income, less educated, and even large segments of the middle and higher income populations that expect the government to stock supermarket shelves with "safe" products. The food producers/manufacturers are aware of this and take advantage of consumer behavior. It is unjust to knowingly do this and profit from it.

Sincerely,  
Michelle van Kriedt  
Marin County California