

From: julietcunningham@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, December 29, 2009 2:32 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Corporate Control Over Our Food Supply

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I am a chef and small business owner in Saint Helena, California. As someone who's interested in community gardens, environmental justice, composting, and eating more nutritious food, I think about food issues a lot. I'm very concerned about the consolidation of power in the agricultural and food processing sectors, for a number of important reasons:

Our food supply is not safe. Through my professional awareness, I firmly believe that it's just a matter of time before a major outbreak of a food-borne illness hits. I feel completely powerless here. I can choose to grow my own (which I did some this summer) and choose to shop at the local farmers' markets (this was easy over the summer, but much harder in the winter.), and try to frequent restaurants that use local produce. But that's not enough to keep me and my family safe from a widespread epidemic. I can do these things some of the time, but I can't do them all the time, so I feel like a sitting duck.

It seems that food prices are set by just a few large corporations. I watch prices rise, and feel there's really nothing I can do about it. My food budget is stretched. I don't like to imagine what it's like to feed a larger family.

Finally, food from the large grocery stores tastes like nothing compared to food I buy at my local farmer's market, which is fresher and tastier. I'd love to buy local food all year long at my supermarket, but there doesn't seem to be a way for the small farmers to get their products into these big chains.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concern on this matter. I look forward to following this investigation in the coming year.

Sincerely Yours,

Julie C. Cunningham
Chef/Owner, Glass Mountain Inn, Saint Helena, CA.