

From: Cecilia <coco@planetaccess.net>
Sent: Tuesday, December 29, 2009 2:31 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comments Regarding Agriculture and Antitrust Enforcement Issues in Our 21st Century Economy

My name is Cecilia Hutchings, I'm married, I'm a homemaker. After many years working in the printing industry I'm currently unemployed. I'm 51 years old, I have two adult children. I do not have any health problems, I am not being treated for any illness, I am not taking any medications. I raise horses in rural Oklahoma.

The complaint I have with a corporate food system is that I have to travel many miles for any food. I also have to arrange meetings to pick up food through a food cooperative.

There is a Walmart that sells food approximately 20 miles from me. The other food store is a small grocer about less than ten miles in a nearby town. The latter only sells foods that are packaged. The produce there has been grown with pesticides and the poultry the sell is raised in commercial chicken houses. The beef there is from feedlots. The other meats are processed and the pork is from concentrated animal feedlot operations. I never shop there. Once in early 2009 I stopped there for peanut butter. I couldn't buy it because it contained chemicals I never heard of along with peanuts.

When I need milk I have to call the farmer and arrange to travel to her farm approximately 30 miles away. There is no other dairy farmer nearer to me than her. But there is plenty of land and farms inbetween her and I. She's not permitted to sell her milk in stores. I wish she was.

When I want chicken, pork, beef, goat, lamb, venison, bison or fish I have to place an order through a food cooperative, except for fish and venison because those are not sold through the coop. Or to have any meat I must travel a long distance to a store that carries healthy meat. That store does not sell traditionally raised chicken though.

Only this year, 2009, was I finally able to buy chicken when one farmer decided to raise some and sell through the food cooperative. I don't know if his chickens must be sent out of state for processing because until October of 2009 there was not processing plant in the state and he cannot afford to build a processing plant. But there is plenty of room for many plants.

Now late in October of 2009 one man opened a small chicken processing plant in my state. It is the only one. His employees are people sent by court order to a drug program he runs. He operates the facility with that special arrangement. This facility sells to the public but I live too far to go there for chicken.

There should be more facilities, more farms, more stores, more markets so we can have fresh food raised and grown in traditional, healthy environments. Industrial agriculture food is unhealthy in my opinion.

I believe one of the reasons I stay healthy at my age is because I avoid eating industrial agriculture foods with chemicals, chemicals found as ingredients in most processed foods and beverages are abundant but healthy food is scarce. I also avoid vegetables and fruits grown with pesticides.

Getting normal food requires a lot of unnecessary effort, it's difficult to find when some things would ordinarily be grown around me, and it sometimes, usually costs more.

Real food should be all around me, priced competitively, available in many markets. It is not.

Thank you so much for reading my letter and for taking the time to gather comments.

Best regards,
Cecilia Hutchings