

From: Deborah Schumacher <writer@ptfoodcoop.coop>
Sent: Tuesday, December 29, 2009 2:47 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: comments

Below are my comments that I would like to be taken into consideration at the Department of Justice's antitrust agricultural workshops beginning in 2010.

Greetings. I'm a writer and gardener interested in promoting local food and farming in my community. As I prepare to place my seed orders for this next growing season I'm reminded that the seed industry is becoming increasingly consolidated, as is the agricultural industry in general. Even as my community tries to nurture local seed production, local farmers are struggling to stay afloat. The food cooperative where I'm employed struggles to compete in a difficult market where chain grocery stores are able to slash prices.

I'm concerned about the health and safety of food brought to market, but I'm also concerned that food safety issues will adversely affect small-scale producers by forcing on them one-size-fits-all regulations that favor larger production operations.

In my opinion, the healthiest food system is one that is local and regional in scale and that produces food appropriate to the place where it's being raised or grown. I believe we need more farmers raising food in ways that protects our environment and that's healthy for us to eat. I hope we can start to reverse the trend of consolidation starting in 2010!

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my comments.

Sincerely,

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