

**From:** Elizabeth Claman <elizabethclaman@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 29, 2009 2:56 PM  
**To:** ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>  
**Subject:** comments regarding food safety and antitrust enforcement

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I am a retired educator and a staunch public-health advocate. I live in a community dominated by low income families who need help to access services in order to improve their children's health and their overall well-being. I am deeply concerned about corporate consolidation in the agricultural, processing, and supermarket sectors, as I see its repercussions every day in my community.

Our food supply is not safe. I sincerely believe that it's just a matter of time before a major outbreak of a food-borne illness hits. As I reflect on this inevitability, I feel completely powerless. I can choose to grow my own (which I did some this summer, but I am disabled and my disability limits my gardening) and I can choose to shop at the local farmers' markets but many people in my community can't do either of these things, so they're at the mercy of large supermarkets and therefore of the agribiz conglomerates.

The profit structure of large corporations is completely misaligned with positive nutritional and health objectives. As food and agricultural corporations have grown and consolidated, their lobbies have become ever more powerful, ultimately influencing every aspect of US agricultural policy -- with consequences that are seriously detrimental to public health. It upsets me no end that my tax dollars subsidize the production of corn syrup, for example, which is significantly contributing to the U.S. obesity crisis -- which then requires even more of my tax dollars to address.

Additionally, I feel very strongly about climate change. The carbon footprint of our agribiz-produced food (1500 miles from farm to plate, on average) seems like an inevitable byproduct of corporate concentration -- large corporations will always want to centralize production to create efficient economies of scale. There are certainly real benefits to efficiency and centralization in some sectors of the economy, but transporting tomatoes or beef or milk across the country -- when much of it could be done just as well more regionally -- does not make any sense. I strongly urge you to remedy this worsening situation for the good of those in my community and others across our nation.

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

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Claman

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