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Sent: Tuesday, December 29, 2009 3:37 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Consolidation of Corporate Power in the agriculture sector

Good afternoon. I am a 57 year old citizen who votes, is a gardener, a parent, a wife, a daughter, a sister, a friend, and who is very concerned about what has happened to our food supply and monopolies over our food. I have lived long enough to see some frightening changes in my short lifetime with corporations having too much power. I know of cases where those industry giants have persons who have worked in their businesses writing our FDA regulations and other standards. This is frightening.

I am greatly concerned about the consolidation of corporate power in the food and agriculture sector.

I have seen a rise in diabetes in this country as well as autoimmune disorders and other mystery illnesses that could be traced back, if studied, to some of our food practices. We have serious outbreaks of bacteria like E. coli, too many chemicals used in growing all kinds of foods, injections of hormone growth drugs injected into our food all to increase profit, not safety, and other concerns about factory farming where corporations are making huge profits but at the risk of our citizenry health. **If we do not have a strong nation, by having strong individual citizens, eating real food, we have nothing.**

I do believe in competition in the United States, but that healthy state of competition has been consolidated by huge mega corporations, often given tax breaks, which then causes our food prices to rise. Without healthy competition, we have a monopoly. A monopoly is never good for citizens, the country, the world, but a few individuals. More important than costs of our food is safety, though. I am concerned when I see small local farmers put out of business by big corporations and our U.S. laws allow this practice! I am also concerned about less in the U.S. budget for meat and other food inspectors. I am also concerned about food coming into this country with less standards than our own. Finally, I am concerned that big corporations have bullied our country into accepting many of the numerous food items in the store sold as "food" when we should have higher standards of identifying food and a tax on what isn't, for instance a Twinkie, or even some of the processed meals and food on the shelf.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to weigh in on this important subject.

Sincerely,

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