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To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comments on Agriculture, Antitrust

Comments Regarding Agriculture and Antitrust Enforcement Issues in Our 21st Century Economy

I am a college student who had the opportunity this last fall to work at an organic chestnut orchard in Lawrence, Kansas. I consider myself extremely lucky to have had the experience of participating in the food production process first hand, especially at a small local farm. Working outside with friends, participating in harvesting, sorting, and cleaning, and seeing the chestnuts I had picked sitting on the shelf of a grocery store were experiences that made me feel an intimacy both to my food and to my community.

I care deeply about the fortunes of such small farms. If large corporations are allowed to control food and farming, however, it does not seem to me that many college students will have experiences like mine. Of the grocery stores in town, it was only the locally owned stores with community values that welcomed the organic chestnuts I harvested onto their shelves. Health food stores also bought the nuts in large quantities. The owners of the farm, however, had a very difficult time making contact with the large corporate chain of grocery stores in town, and ultimately sold them none.

I want to get my hands dirty and help food find its way from the field to my table, and plan on returning to the chestnut farm during harvest time for as long as it exists. It is my hope that community gardens and small farms like these find the market they need to be successful. Corporate-controlled food distribution does not allow that, which is something I would like to see change.

Thank you for considering my opinion on this issue. I will follow this years' investigations with hope.

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