

From: Christina Oatfield <christinaoatfield@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 29, 2009 9:12 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Food & Justice investigation

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing in regards to the investigation being conducted about large agribusinesses.

I am a senior undergraduate student at UC Berkeley, studying Environmental Sciences and writing a thesis about sustainable food cooperatives in university communities. Last year a group of students and I mobilized students to fight plans to bring a large fast food chain onto our campus. We were successful in stopping the plans from moving forward, but it was quite a battle to be fought. The health of the student body and the ecological footprint of the UC Berkeley campus were pitted against the profits that both the student union and the fast food chain wanted to make from the deal. When questioned about their ingredients, representatives from the fast food chain admitted that most of their food came from large agribusinesses all over the country and that none of it was organic to their knowledge. Their menu items all exceeded FDA's standards for a healthy mean in terms of fat and/or sodium levels.

Students at colleges and universities all across the nation are fighting to get more environmentally sustainable and healthy food options on their campuses but are often faced with the challenge of costs. It is often more cost effective for an institution to choose food that is unhealthy and produced in environmentally damaging ways because of federal subsidies for certain crops and lack of government policies to encourage sustainable agriculture.

Large-scale agribusiness hurts student communities that are strapped for cash but want to eat food that is healthy, sustainable and just.

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The Berkeley Student Food Collective is trying to open a cafe, produce market and community center by the fall to promote healthy and sustainable foods. Can you help? www.foodcollective.org