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Sent: Tuesday, December 29, 2009 10:18 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject:

I am a student at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, as well as an avid environmentalist and a public-health advocate. I work within the community improving access to healthy, whole organic foods. I am deeply concerned about corporate consolidation in the agricultural, processing, and supermarket sectors, as I see its consequences every day and am constantly figuring out ways to fight for food justice.

The profit structure and incentives of large corporations are distinctly 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 entirely detrimental to public health. It makes my blood boil that my tax dollars subsidize the production of corn syrup, for example, which is significantly contributing to the obesity crisis -- which is then requiring even more of my tax dollars to address.

I feel very strongly about climate change and implore our leaders to push forward wise solutions. The carbon footprint of our well-traveled food (1500 miles from farm to plate, on average) is enormous, and 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 -- doesn't make sense.

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this important matter. I look forward to following the hearings process in the coming year

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