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Sent: Wednesday, December 30, 2009 1:45 AM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Food for people not profit

Hello,

I am a citizen who likes to eat healthy food. But I am very frustrated about the U.S. food supply, particularly the effects of the industrialization and consolidation of the industry. I have no control over what is in my food, it seems. In order to eat healthy food, I need to grow my own or buy directly from a farmer, or else pay high prices. It's very difficult to find food that doesn't contain ingredients I try to avoid like high fructose corn syrup, artificial food dyes, genetically modified ingredients like corn or soy, or palm oil. It's also dismaying that some companies tell you their ingredients and practices are proprietary. If I am not allowed to know how my food was made, then I don't want to buy that food. Yet I have few affordable alternatives - and often the alternatives I do have are not only more expensive but highly inconvenient (i.e. driving further to get them).

Also, a large majority of farmers use toxic chemicals to grow food, and I have no control over that. I don't see why it is legal, quite frankly, but it is very unfair for those of us who live and work near these farms that we must be exposed to these chemicals in order for them to make a profit. Yet these chemically-treated foods are all most of us can afford, because we have to pay premiums to buy foods that weren't produced in a way that harms the environment. I would really like to buy meat from animals raised on pasture, and I would like to buy directly from a local farmer so I can support my local economy. However, this is difficult too, due to the shortage of slaughterhouses that will work with independent farmers. When a nearby restaurant tried to serve local meat recently, they found they would have to drive the animals 8 hours away to have them slaughtered, which is a tremendous cost and waste of gas, but it's also rather cruel to the animals. The lack of a nearby USDA-inspected slaughterhouse that will work with small farmers essentially meant that the restaurant couldn't serve this meat.

The patenting of the genetic code for food is in my mind not only unethical but should be illegal. This is flagrant corporate greed, and the Dept. of Justice must amend corporate law to not allow this to happen. The fact that this is even a matter of public discourse demonstrates a society gone astray, and it is my sincerest wish and request that the Dept. of Justice intervene.

Thank you for considering my comments.

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