

From: Emily Bates <frogtoad77@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 30, 2009 9:02 AM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comments Regarding Agriculture and Antitrust Enforcement Issues in Our 21st Century Economy

I am a college student, avid cook and consumer of food, and a gardener.

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

When I look around my local supermarket, I see very little organic produce and organic food products. This severely limits my right to purchase wholesome, flavorful, unadulterated food. As a consumer I want to see bountiful organic options at all of my local supermarkets, and I want small, local farmers to have the opportunity to sell their fresh produce to the supermarkets so that I as a consumer can have access to fresh, local, preferably organic foodstuffs.

I would also like more information about the products I purchase: this includes labeling of GMOs (in all products, produce and otherwise), labeling of hormone use in all meat and dairy products, labeling of antibiotic use in all meat and dairy products, and labeling of pesticide use in all products.

I am deeply concerned about the state of the nation's food, as it becomes ever more adulterated by GMOs, overused pesticides, growth hormones, and antibiotics.

I am also worried about the future of land viability in the United States if factory farming and large-scale monoculture crop growth is allowed to continue as it is right now. Monoculture crop growth (particularly of corn and soybeans) destroys the natural richness of the soil: it causes soil erosion, mineral and nutrient depletion, and runoff of pesticides into the nation's bodies of water.

Factory farming and monocultures are heavily subsidized by the government, making it extremely difficult for small-scale family farmers to survive. The loss of small-scale family farms is absolutely detrimental to America's food supply and to citizens' health: citizens' access to fresh, local, sustainably grown food is limited and, as small-scale family farms disappear, decreasing rapidly.

As an American citizen and consumer, I want to see more small-scale family farms growing regional, seasonal, organic produce in a sustainable manner that benefits the earth as well as all American citizens. I want to see an end to factory farming and subsidized large-scale monoculture growth across the U.S., and a turn to organic, sustainable farming. Rather than having my government subsidize unsustainable methods of growing food and raising livestock, I want my government to subsidize local farmers who grow organic foodstuffs in a sustainable manner.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns on this matter. I look forward to following this investigation in the coming year, and I expect to see a drastic revision to America's food economy and food policy quickly enacted.

Sincerely,
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