

From: Anne Wolfley <awolfley@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 30, 2009 9:19 AM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Cc: Anne Wolfley <awolfley@hotmail.com>
Subject: Agriculture and Antitrust Enforcement Issues in Our 21st Century Economy

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am very concerned that our food supply is becoming consolidated into the hands of a small number of corporate entities. It not only has serious environmental consequences and is hurting small farmers, but the food produced is much less healthy and of lower quality.

I live in North Carolina, where we have lots of small farms but have been losing them at a staggering rate. Large hog operations are taking their places. There are more hogs in North Carolina than there are people and they produce two to five times the amount of waste that humans do. Just take a drive through rural Eastern North Carolina and you won't need to see a waste lagoon because you'll be able to smell one from miles away. I will never forget the terrible flooding in 1999 from Hurricane Floyd that caused hog waste lagoons to overflow and release nitrogen- and antibiotic-rich waste into the rivers. I am lucky enough to live in central North Carolina where I do not directly face the consequences of this problem. Most of the people who do are poor and not white.

We also have lots of chicken and turkey operations. The animals are kept in such cramped conditions that they have to be fed antibiotics prophylactically to avoid disease. The farmers are forced into contracts with poultry companies that give the companies all the power and say. The farmers are always at risk of losing their contracts while they barely scrape by.

There are sustainable ways to grow hogs, chickens, turkeys, goats, cattle and all of the other animals we eat. There are sustainable ways to grow vegetables and fruits. In reality, only the small farms are doing it. The large, multinational companies responsible for the environmental degradation and poverty of small farmers are actively preventing it from happening (whether they're intending to or not). As a nation we must do something about the consolidation of the food supply before it is too late. I would love to see government subsidies for small, sustainable farmers that would enable them to compete with large corporate processors. I would love to see meat, dairy and produce from small farmers at my neighborhood grocery store.

Please help make that happen.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments.

Sincerely,

Anne Wolfley
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