

**From:** Kitty Bolte <kitty.bolte@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 30, 2009 6:22 PM  
**To:** ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>  
**Subject:** Comments Regarding Agriculture and Antitrust Enforcement Issues in Our 21st Century Economy

---

Hello,

I am high-school student who works for a youth empowerment program that trains at-risk youth in sustainable agriculture and also as a field hand on a local organic farm. I am deeply concerned by the corporate consolidation of agriculture, dining hall and other institutional food suppliers, and supermarkets. For one thing, the centralized control of food systems enjoyed by corporations makes it difficult for small farms such as the one I work for to gain access to purchasers such as schools, universities, and hospitals. For youth such as myself who are exploring careers, seeing small, organic farmers struggling makes farming in a sustainable manner unattractive. Additionally, this centralization means that food travels an unnecessarily long distance between farm and table. This is wasteful of limited resources such as oil, exacerbates climate change, and results in lower quality food. The produce available from my school's cafeteria, for example, is usually old and tasteless (and has a low nutritional value) because it took so long for it to get there. More serious than a lack of fresh produce, however, is a lack of produce in general. In many neighborhoods in my community, the only stores which sell food are convenience stores, and these are stocked with products full of high fructose corn syrup and partially hydrogenated oils, both of which have been linked to heart disease and diabetes. For people on a low income and/or with limited transportation, there is no option apart from these stores, and locally owned grocers and farmer's co-ops can't compete with the subsidised corn products available in places like 7-11. For a period of time during the summer, the program I work for ran a farmstand stocked with vegetables we grew in a poor neighborhood in my town. Since we are not a famr trying to make a profit and are funded by non-profits, we were able to make our prices competitive with convenience stores. The response from the neighborhood was extremely enthusiastic; people were very excited to have access to healthy vegetables. However, it should not be the responsibility of non-profits to provide people with healthy food. We need a food system that can accomplish this on it's own. A food system that can do this is not a a centralized, corporate-controlled affair. Rather, it is localized and based on small, family farms.

Thank you for prividng the opportunity for individuals such as myself to comment on this important matter. I look forward to the coming investigation.

Sincerely,  
Kitty Bolte