

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

To Whom it May Concern:

I am a concerned citizen who has become aware of injustices stemming from the corporate control of food in America.

I am a low to middle income American. I spend the vast majority of my time socializing with other lower-middle class citizens. This is my community. For the past several years we have all begun to notice a huge inequity in America, one that (to my knowledge) does not exist in most other countries. The inequity is that in America higher quality food is vastly more expensive than lower quality food. The net result of this is that people on tight incomes cannot afford as many vegetables, fruits, and chemical-free foods than high income people. This leads to diabetes and obesity, which in turn leads to various other painful and expensive medical conditions, furthering the economic desperation suffered by low income individuals.

This simple fact is almost indisputable. Scientific studies seems to support it, and empirical observations certainly do (please consider diabetes rates on Indian reservations; some of the poorest communities in the US). What I have found more astounding, however, is that not only is this a simple matter of cost, but also of corporate control and mis-information. For instance, the insidious use of flavorings to increase food consumption, especially in products that are deeply harmful to the human body (transfats, high sodium levels, etc). Further more, corporations are powerful enough to fight labeling guidelines that would benefit people. For instance I learned that a 'transfat free' food does not in fact have to be transfat free, it only has to have less than 1 gram of transfat per serving. The serving can be as small as the vendor chooses, which allows food containing transfat to be mis-labeled. This example is only one of many, many instances of blatant mis-information. Corporate lobbying for the repression of information is just as damaging. The lobby to allow GMOs into organic foods is a good example. Though I do not know of studies that conclude or disprove the impact of GMOs on body (probably because of corporate lobbying), I do know that eating GMO food is not a risk I would like to take right now, and if corporations can repress my ability to have that information and choose for myself, that is a breach of basic constitutional rights. I express the thoughts of so many people, not conspiracy theorists or fringe voters, but citizens who have watched food become more and more processed, more and more addictive and less tasty.

I could probably write many, many more pages about the injustices of corporate food control, how it pollutes our water ways, causes diseases in our most vulnerable populations, increases our health care costs and takes power away from the American consumer, however, you hopefully have many letters to read and facts to look for. I encourage you to be courageous, please stand up for the American public and have the courage to begin changing the status (corporate) quo.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to watching the proceedings of this inquiry.

Sincerely,
Lynn Scharf
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