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Sent: Wednesday, December 30, 2009 10:57 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comments Regarding Agriculture and Antitrust Enforcement Issues in Our 21st Century Economy

I am an aspiring young farmer, a university student of environmental studies, and a food-enthusiast. I feel deeply concerned with the corporate control of our food system in the United States.

As someone who has worked on small non-profit farms, and knows many small farmers, I have seen firsthand the struggle against the highly subsidized prices of large agribusiness. Healthy food should be affordable to all, not just to the wealthy, and thus small farmers should not have to raise their prices to unreasonable levels simply to stay afloat. I feel restricted when I shop for food, wanting to support healthy and equitable food production and avoid industrially produced foods, but not wanting to or having the means to spend significantly more on healthier foods. This is extremely backwards.

The increasing corporate control of the food industry in this country prevents us from truly being aware of what we are eating - what we are putting in our bodies. It is unbelievable that even that knowledge is hidden from us. In addition, the modes of production in large agribusiness are not only extremely harmful for the environment - fertilizer and pesticides runoff, feces runoff from animal production, immense greenhouse gas emission, etc. - but also for those people employed to work in the farms and factories, due to the unjust labor conditions and exposure to toxic chemicals.

Food should nourish us and give us joy rather than make us sick and anxious. A different food system is possible, but in order to make it possible the U.S. government must withdraw its support from the corporate controllers of our food system, and transfer that support to small, local, healthy farms and the communities for which they provide.

I appreciate your consideration of my comments. Looking forward to the investigation in the coming year.

Happy new year,
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