

From: Cameron Farlow <farlowce@email.appstate.edu>
Sent: Thursday, December 31, 2009 10:33 AM
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 student, gardener, cook, activist and future farmer living in the mountains of North Carolina. I have worked with farmland protection in Western North Carolina helping keep farmers on the land and protecting valuable open space from encroaching development. Currently, I am working to introduce a sustainable local food system at my university as a graduate student, and helping to establish a local USDA certified meat processing facility. I am deeply concerned about the consolidation of power that has taken place in the food and agricultural sector of the United States Economy.

The industrialized large scale character of modern agriculture is a threat to food safety, the survival of medium to small farmers and rural communities that depend on them, and the health of the environment. Large scale farms and processing systems based on efficiency over quality present a greater risk for contamination and food-borne illness than traditional small scale farming. Medium to small scale farmers cannot compete with large scale producers and often become vulnerable to corporations who control every part of the supply chain keeping them perpetually in debt. In addition, large scale industrialized agriculture promoted by corporations favors monocultures which require large amounts of chemical additives which degrade soil, water, and air quality and present a long term threat to our food system.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concern on this matter. I look forward to following this investigation in the coming year.

Sincerely, Cameron Farlow