

**From:** katelyn hale <disastamountain@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 31, 2009 12:07 PM  
**To:** ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>  
**Subject:** Comments Regarding Agriculture and Antitrust Enforcement Issues in Our 21st Century Economy

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To whom it may concern,

I am writing you today because I am quite concerned with the current state of affairs in our national food and agricultural sector. The fact that a huge portion of the decision making processes that determine its health are consolidated in the hands of corporate powers is unacceptable. These make me mad:

- The fact that the majority of land in the midwestern United States is being used to grow corn that isn't fit for human consumption until it has been cooked down into high fructose corn syrup and other corn-based products that have little to no nutritional value. Not only are farmers struggling to keep their land, there is a high correlation between consumption of high fructose corn syrup and diabetes. Not cool.
- The fact that small farmers who don't want to be a part of that system still struggle, trying to keep a balance between doing all of the work themselves or hiring farm workers or apprentices who often get paid illegally low wages.
- The fact that there are at least hundreds, if not thousands, of corporate lobbyists in DC who are so involved with government regulators that it can be hard to separate out who is working for the government, and therefore for the benefit of the common good, and the corporations, or for the good of corporate interests.
- The fact that, because of loose regulations, consumers don't know what exactly is in the food they buy.
- The fact that small farmers can't slaughter their own animals because of regulations that make it hard specifically for them to do so. Instead, animals have to be shipped hundreds of miles (like in Oregon) to the nearest huge-scale slaughter house or meat packing plant. Gross.
- The fact that factory farms don't just provide horrible living conditions for animals, but horrendous working conditions for the people that work there!
- The fact that food that is grown responsibly, with practices that are ecologically sound and socially just, is too expensive for the consumer, yet those who produce it (farmers and farmworkers) still aren't getting paid enough to make a living!
- The fact that one company controls the majority of seeds in the United States.
- The fact that the federal government subsidizes farmers who grow staples, many of which don't provide people with food but actually animals (for whom it food is toxic anyways!!) I'm referring to the corn industry.

Please pay attention to what all of us citizens have to say about this issue! The constitution says, "We the people of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America." Our future depends heavily on policy decisions made by YOU. Please handle that responsibly.

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this important matter. I look forward to following the hearings process in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Katelyn Hale  
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