

From: Harry and Elaine Hamil <hhamil@buncombe.main.nc.us>
Sent: Thursday, December 31, 2009 8:44 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Competition in the Agriculture Industry

Ladies & Gentlemen,

I sent comments earlier today via the Pesticide Action Network. I am now sending them to make certain you receive them.

I am writing because I am concerned about the lack of competition in agricultural markets.

For over 14 years, my wife, Elaine, and I have worked reviving local, healthy food for local people here in western NC. We started and coordinated a seasonal farmers tailgate market—the Black Mountain Tailgate Market—and started a year-round store for local, healthy food in 2003—the Black Mountain Farmers Market.

Due to the vertical integration of supermarket chains and industrial agriculture processors, the infrastructure needed to make local, healthy food available at modest prices has almost entirely disappeared. Our year-round market cannot obtain as much local food as it needs for its customers.

In addition, the recent spate of federal legislative and regulatory actions have the additional consequence of stopping small competitors from developing because they cannot meet the capital needs to comply with inappropriate regulation.

I, myself, have been unable to obtain definitive guidance from the FDA on registration of facilities under the 2002 Bioterrorism Act despite multiple phone calls and e-mails. They will only point me to poorly worded and inadequate materials they have published.

My wife and I have invested 6 figures plus years of our lives and tomorrow we will start 2010 by discussing if it is time to "throw in the towel."

I will happily document EVERY claim that I have made. All you have to do is contact me.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment though I will be astonished if it makes any difference..

Sincerely,

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