

Dec. 23, 2009

Dear Dept. of Justice,

I understand there are going to be a series of workshops in 2010 to explore the dynamics of competition in agricultural markets, and you are soliciting comments from the public. Well, here's my comments about the lack of competition in the U.S. cattle industry.

We really haven't seen much of Antitrust Enforcement in our 21st century economy. Since the early 1920's when the Packers and Stockyards Act was enacted into law, there has been a large concentration in the meat packing industry, and is getting worse every year. The Act has never been properly enforced. With just a few packing companies processing a very large percentage of these animals right up to the time of processing, they're pretty much controlling the price of the meat. At the present time we have rising beef prices and lower cattle prices. We are losing numbers of cattle in this country every year, and the feeders are going broke trying to feed them. Consumers are buying less meat because the prices in the store are too high, and at the same time producers are going out of business.

The large amount of meat imports coming into our country has always held our market down. A lot of this imported meat is of very poor quality, and that gives the consumers a bad taste so some have actually quit eating meat altogether. We import meat from some countries that have some very serious health problems with their animals, and that is a dangerous situation. It's high time we take care of our own people first, so maybe everyone in this business can make a decent living.

There's an enormous spread between what the producer received for his cattle and what the consumer has to pay for meat. It's very evident that the meat packers and retailers are getting the lion's share of the profit. There's a lot of things that need to be investigated and fixed in this meat chain. I'm asking that you identify the problems and fix them!

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