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Sent: Tuesday, December 29, 2009 10:52 AM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Agribusiness/Corporate Control of Food Supply

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to you because I have concerns regarding the amount of power corporations have over our food supply. Like the banks, I believe they are too big to "fail" and, therefore, are too big to exist. Having our food supply in the hands of just a few companies does not bring the value or nutrition the American people need nor does it protect the biodiversity that will protect us in the event of a blight or surge of antibiotic resistance as we are seeing now with e. coli. Also, it is and has been a long standing concern of mine that we blindly use so many pesticide, fungicides, antibiotics, etc. These large agribusiness farming practices are only helping to strip the earth of its vital nutrients, thereby depleting the nutrients in our food, while setting us up for an eventual plague on our food supply that will inevitably result in food shortage and possible famine. These products also run off into our water supply where they are not filtered out and are known to cause species depletions, kill offs, and deformities in fish, frogs, birds, and other wild life, so one can only imagine what they are doing to the American people.

Additionally, I am very concerned about the use of GMO's in our food supply. Specifically corn, which has been proven to give stomach cancer to lab rats in several trials, and soy. I try to buy as much as I possibly can that is organic in order to avoid GMO's, hormones, pesticides, etc. in my food, but when one is eating out, one cannot always find organic foods and one can certainly not avoid GMO corn or soy which are used as "filler" in nearly everything we eat--affording us little nutritive gain, but larger profit margins for the big corporations I am sure. We also feed it by the shovel full to our livestock (I work in the the agribusiness/animal feed sector, so I am well aware of many of our practices concerning our livestock) which are not meant to be eating corn at all, let alone nutritively deficient, toxic corn or soy, and then we supplement it with a bunch of other products to increase their nutritive gain and boost their immune systems when they get sick because of what we are feeding them and the conditions we keep them in in the first place. Are these sickly inferior animals that we are ingesting quality meat? Aren't we no better than what we eat?

As for the use of corn and soy as food additives, I have avoided high fructose corn syrup for years, rarely, if ever, ingesting it, but it is exceptionally difficult as it is in everything--things that you wouldn't even think need sweetener like crackers and salad dressing. Isn't it time we regulate how much of this harmful product we allow into our food? As I mentioned, I actually do try to avoid non-organic products because of the use of GMO corn, but most don't have the knowledge or cannot afford themselves the luxury I provide myself by eating organic. In regards to the use of soy, it is something which, even in organic markets, is hard to avoid as a filler. As long as I could buy it organically it did not concern me so much as soy is suppose to be good for you, right? Well, this summer at the age of 31 I was diagnosed with an estrogen sensitive breast cancer. With no history of it in my family, I set out to learn as much as I could about the disease. Turns out there is not much conclusive data on soy, but it is generally regarded that the more processed it is, as with anything, the worst it is for you, so all that filler in our foods of soy by-products, is doing more harm than good, especially if it is of the non-organic, GMO variety. The diagnosis of breast cancer also resulted in me doing further research into the use of pesticides and fungicides in food production (many of which act as estrogen mimickers in our bodies) which is likely a factor in the increase of breast cancer incidences we are seeing in both men and women, but also in decreased sperm counts and drops in species numbers in everything from humans to frogs and alligators.

I go to great lengths to ensure that I am eating the best possible food that I can. If I could grow it myself I would, but I live in an apartment so that is not feasible. Instead, I visit 2-3 different grocery stores per week, reading dozens of labels before I purchase to make sure that, even if a product is organic it is soy free. I am also fortunate enough to live fairly near a wonderful farmers market where I can pick up many fruits and vegetables in season which I am happy to do to support the small local farmer and my community, but I would like to see

more organic produce offered. Its a lot of work, but I take my food more seriously than ever since my breast cancer battle began.

The above only touches on a few of my issues with our food supply, largely they are linked to corporate takeover of our food supply. We have been over producing, over harvesting, over manipulating, and over processing our food supply for too long and it has wreaked havoc on our environment and our health. What once seemed like a good idea and the answer to the world's problem on how to feed the hungry, has turned into a Frankenstein monster and is no longer even recognizable as food in our over processed, over farmed, over chemicalized food supply chain and there is no possible way that it is offering the American people the quality of food we deserve. As the American people are beginning to awaken with "Slow Food" and Organic revolutions in their kitchen, please do your part to support those efforts and make good quality whole foods available to all whether at their local farmers market, their local supermarket, their restaurant, or even their local Wal-Mart. It is time to tighten the regulations on our food supply and protect the American people's health and not the corporations pocket books.

Sincerely,
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"Having courage does not mean that we are unafraid. Having courage and showing courage means we face our fears. We are able to say, "I have fallen, but I will get up."" -*Maya Angelou*