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**Sent:** Tuesday, December 29, 2009 6:55 PM  
**To:** ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>  
**Subject:** Farmers deserve fair markets

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Next year's Department of Justice and USDA hearings are a sorely-needed first step to address concentration of ownership in American agriculture. These hearings should address the broad implications of anti-competitive practices. A combination of vigorous enforcement, regulation, and legislation will be needed to restore competition and level the playing field.

Our food supply, from seed to grocery store shelf, essentially belongs to a handful of companies. As a result, prices are rising, research and innovation are restricted, fair contracts are difficult to negotiate, and farmers' and consumers' choices are limited. The problem is worsening.

American farmers and consumers deserve an open and fair marketplace. Family farmers, independent companies, and public research are vital to the future of agriculture. These hearings can be an important step as the Justice Department and the USDA work to restore fairness and competition. Please use them to correct these concerns.

Sincerely,