

From: uRDietitian@gmail.com
Sent: Tuesday, December 29, 2009 5:11 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Access to Food (and thus, nutrition) is a fundamental right! Give it back to the people.

I am a Registered Dietitian, public-health advocate, and mother. I work with low income families helping them to access services to improve their children's health and their overall well-being. I am deeply concerned about corporate consolidation in the agricultural, processing, and supermarket sectors, as I see its repercussions every day in my work and in the lives of friends and family.

The profit structure and incentives of large corporations are distinctly misaligned with positive nutritional and health objectives. Not to mention the values of most American consumers, if they were aware of the realities of our food supply. As food and agricultural corporations have grown and consolidated, their lobbies have become ever more powerful, ultimately influencing every aspect of US agricultural policy -- with consequences that are entirely detrimental to public health. It infuriates me that my tax dollars subsidize the production of unnecessary crops to over-feed livestock and the american public. High fructose corn syrup, for example, which is significantly contributing to the obesity crisis -- which is then requiring even more of my tax dollars to address the health problems associated with long-term, excessive consumption. The research is available to prove this point, but it's not what is being marketed to the public because of the negative impact it would have on our current farming practices and the corporations who are profiting from this system.

Additionally, I feel very strongly about the environmental impact of factory farming. The carbon footprint of our well-traveled food (1500 miles from farm to plate, on average) is enormous, and seems like an inevitable byproduct of corporate concentration -- large corporations will always want to centralize production to create efficient economies of scale. There are certainly real benefits to efficiency and centralization in some sectors of the economy, but transporting tomatoes or beef or milk across the country -- when much of it could be done just as well more regionally -- doesn't make sense.

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

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