

May 10, 2011

Honorable Eric Holder, Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington DC 20530

Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Attorney General Holder and Secretary Vilsack:

In 2010, the five workshops on Agriculture and Antitrust Enforcement Issues in Our 21st Century Economy convened by the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Agriculture established a framework for understanding the impact of consolidated economic power on farmers, workers and consumers.

We commend the Departments for organizing this important series of workshops. They created an historic opportunity for the American public to share our experiences, and many people travelled thousands of miles to participate and testify. Through this process hundreds of Americans—farmers, ranchers, workers and consumers—have shared stories of their struggles to cope with the unprecedented level of concentration in the food and agriculture industries. Hundreds of thousands more showed their concern by submitting formal comments and petitions for the record.

More than a year has passed since the first workshop took place in Iowa on March 12, 2010. The American public now awaits the next steps the Departments will take to address excessive corporate concentration in the U.S. food and agricultural sectors and its devastating impacts on American lives and livelihoods.

We strongly urge the Justice Department and USDA to expedite the completion and release of a final report on the findings and results of the workshops and submitted comments. This report should include an analysis of the scope, causes and nature of the problems and identify changes necessary to begin to address current trends in agricultural consolidation, and develop appropriate antitrust approaches to curtail monopoly or monopsony power of the seed, beef, hog, poultry and dairy industries and end the harmful impacts of unrestrained corporate power on U.S. food and farming. Our rural communities, our food supply and the fate of a major portion of the American economy depend on us fixing this problem.

Finally, as discussed in the fifth and final workshop addressing the farm to retail price spread, it is clear we cannot solve this dilemma unless we are willing to look at the whole picture of the American food chain—from the farm to the grocery store shelf.

We would appreciate receiving an outline of your intended response, with a general timeline for your planned course of action, including the publication of your findings. We hope to hear from you within a month. Please direct correspondence to Patrick Woodall at Food & Water Watch (pwoodall@fwwatch.org, 202-683-2500).

Sincerely,

Agriculture and Land Based Training Association (CA)
Alabama Contract Poultry Growers Association
Alliance for a Sustainable Future (PA)
Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO) -MT
Ambler Environmental Advisory Council
American Agriculture Movement
American Corn Growers Association
American Federation of Government Employees (AFL-CIO), Local 3354, USDA-St. Louis (representing Rural Development and Farm Loan employees in Missouri, Oklahoma, and Kansas)
American Grassfed Association
American Raw Milk Producers Pricing Association
Ashtabula-Lake-Geauga County Farmers Union
BioRegional Strategies
Buckeye Quality Beef Association (Ohio)
C.A.S.A. del Llano (TX)
California Dairy Campaign
California Farmers Union
California Food & Justice Coalition
Californians for GE-Free Agriculture
Campaign for Contract Agriculture Reform
Campaign for Family Farms and the Environment
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
Cattle Producers of Louisiana
Cattle Producers of Washington
Center for Celebration of Creation
Center for Food Safety
Center for Rural Affairs
Chemung County Church Women United (NY)
Chemung County Council of Churches (NY)
Chemung County Council of Women, NY
Church Women United of Chemung County NY
Church Women United of New York State
Citizens for Sanity.Com, Inc.
Citizens for Sludge-Free Land
Colorado Independent CattleGrowers Association
Community Alliance for Global Justice
Community Farm Alliance (KY)

Community Food Security Coalition
Consumers Union
Contract Poultry Growers Association of the Virginias
Court St Joseph #139, Corning/Elmira, Catholic Daughters of the Americas, Corning, NY
Crawford Stewardship Project
Cumberland Counties for Peace & Justice
Dakota Resource Council
Dakota Rural Action
Davidson College Office of Sustainability
Ecological Farming Association
Endangered Habitats League
Family Farm Defenders
Farm Aid
Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance
Farm Fresh Choice(Program of Ecology Center)
Farmworker Association of Florida
Fay-Penn Economic Development Council
Federation of Southern Cooperatives
Food & Water Watch
Food Chain Workers Alliance
Food Democracy Now!
Food for Maine's Future
Friends of the Earth U.S.
Gardenshare: Healthy Farms, Healthy Food, Everybody Eats
Georgia Poultry Justice Alliance
Grassroots International
Heartland Center / Office of Peace and Justice for the Diocese of Gary, Indiana and the
Integrity of Creation
Hispanic Organizations Leadership Alliance
Idaho Rural Council
Illinois Stewardship Alliance
Independent Beef Association of North Dakota (I-BAND)
Independent Cattlemen of Nebraska
Independent Cattlemen of Wyoming
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Institute for Nonviolent Economics
Institute for Responsible Technology
International Society for Ecology and Culture (ISEC)
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement
Iowa Farmers Union
Island Grown Initiative
Izaak Walton League
Just Food (NY)
Kansas Cattlemen's Association
Kansas Farmers Union
Kansas Rural Center

Ladies of Charity of Chemung County (NY)
Land Loss Prevention Project
Land Stewardship Project
Main Street Opportunity Lab
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
Michigan Farmers Union
Michigan Land Trustees
Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance
Midwest Environmental Advocates
Midwest Organic Dairy Producers Association
Minnesota Farmers Union
Missionary Society of St. Columban
Mississippi Assoc. of Cooperatives
Mississippi Livestock Markets Association
Missouri Farmers Union
Missouri Rural Crisis Center
National Catholic Rural Life Conference
National Family Farm Coalition
National Farmers Organization
National Farmers Union
National Latino Farmers & Ranchers Trade Association
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
Nebraska Farmers Union
Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society
Nebraska Wildlife Federation
Network for Environmental & Economic Responsibility
New England Farmers Union
New England Small Farm Institute
Non-GMO Project
North Carolina Contract Poultry Growers Association
Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance
Northeast Organic Farming Association - Massachusetts
Northeast Organic Farming Association - NY
Northeast Organic Farming Association, Interstate Council
Northern Plains Resource Council
Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance
Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association
Ohio Environmental Stewardship Alliance
Ohio Farmers Union
Oregon Livestock Producers Association
Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility
Oregon Rural Action
Organic Consumers Association
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Organic Seed Alliance

Organization for Competitive Markets
Partners for the Land & Agricultural Needs of Traditional Peoples
Partnership for Earth Spirituality
Past Regents Club, Catholic Daughters of the Americas, Diocese of Rochester, NY
PCC Natural Markets
Pennsylvania Farmers Union
Pennypack Farm and Education Center (PA)
Pesticide Action Network North America
Pesticide Free Zone
Pew Environment Group
Pomona Grange #1, Chemung County NY
Powder River Basin Resource Council (WY)
Progressive Agriculture (PA)
R-CALF United Stockgrowers of America
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
Rural Advancement Foundation International - USA (RAFI-USA)
Rural Coalition
Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
Slow Food USA
South Dakota Livestock Auction Markets Association
South Dakota Stockgrowers Association
St John the Baptist Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order, Elmira NY
Sustain LA
Sustainable Living Systems
Taos County Economic Development Corporation
Texas Farmers Union
The Cornucopia Institute
The Endocrine Disruption Exchange
The Second Chance Foundation
Tilth Producers of Washington
Trappe Landing Farm & Native Sanctuary
Veteran Grange #1118, Chemung County NY
Virginia Association for Biological Farming
Washington Biotechnology Action Council
Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC)
WhyHunger
Women, Food and Agriculture Network
Women's Environmental Institute

cc. Christine Varney, Asst. Attorney-General
cc. Dudley Butler, Administrator, Grain Inspectors, Packers and Stockyards
Administration