



## **Agriculture and Antitrust Enforcement Issues in Our 21st Century Economy**

### ***Workshop Information***

The U.S. Department of Justice, Antitrust Division and the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) (USDA) will hold a series of joint public workshops to explore competition issues affecting the agricultural sector in the 21st century and the appropriate role for antitrust and regulatory enforcement in that industry. The first workshop will be held in early 2010.

This page provides information on:

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Related information:

- [Crisis on the Farm: The State of Cooperation and Prospects for Sustainability in the Northeast](#) - Statement of Assistant Attorney General Christine A. Varney Before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, Field Hearing in St. Albans, Vermont (09/19/2009)
- [Toward a Competition Policy Agenda for Agriculture Markets](#) - Prepared Remarks of Deputy Assistant Attorney General Philip J. Weiser for the Organization of Competitive Markets, 11th Annual Conference, St. Louis, Missouri (08/17/2009)

For more information, contact Mark B. Tobey, Special Counsel for State Relations and Agriculture ([agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov](mailto:agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov) or 202-532-4763).

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### **Overview of the Workshops**

These are the first joint Department of Justice/USDA workshops ever to be held to discuss competition and regulatory issues in the agriculture industry. The goals of the workshops are to promote dialogue among interested parties and foster learning with respect to the appropriate legal and economic analyses of these issues as well as to listen to and learn from parties with real-world experience in the agricultural sector.

The workshops will address the dynamics of competition in agriculture markets, including buyer power (monopsony) and vertical integration. They will examine legal





doctrines and jurisprudence, as well as current economic learning, and will provide an opportunity for farmers, ranchers, consumer groups, processors, agribusiness, and other interested parties to provide examples of potentially anticompetitive conduct and to discuss any concerns about the application of the antitrust laws to the agricultural sectors. The workshops will be transcribed and placed on the public record along with submissions and written comments received.

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### **Issues for Consideration**

Topics that will be covered during the workshops include the following:

- Application of antitrust laws to monopsony and vertical integration in the agricultural sector, including the scope, functionality, and limits of current or potential rules
  - Impact of agriculture concentration on food costs
  - The effect of agricultural regulatory statutes or other applicable laws and programs on competition
  - Issues relating to patents and intellectual property affecting agricultural marketing or production
  - Market practices such as:
    - Price spreads
    - Forward contracts
    - Packer ownership of livestock before slaughter
    - Market transparency
    - Increasing retailer concentration
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### **Dates, Locations, and Topics**

March 12, 2009 - Ankeny, Iowa

#### **Issues of Concern to Farmers**

Introduction to the workshops series with a focus on the issues facing crop farmers.

Discussion topics may include seed technology, vertical integration, market transparency and buyer power.

May 21, 2010 - Normal, Alabama

#### **Poultry Industry**

Discussion topics may include production contracts in the poultry industry, concentration and buyer power.

June 7, 2010 - Madison, Wisconsin

#### **Dairy Industry**





Discussion topics may include concentration, marketplace transparency and vertical integration in the dairy industry.

August 26, 2010 - Fort Collins, Colorado

### **Livestock Industry**

This workshop will focus on beef, hog and other animal sectors. Topics may include enforcement of the Packers and Stockyards Act and concentration.

December 8, 2010 - Washington, D.C.

### **Margins**

This workshop will look at the discrepancies between the prices received by farmers and the prices paid by consumers. As a concluding event, discussions from previous workshops will be incorporated into the analysis of agriculture markets nationally.

[Physical addresses of workshops.](#)

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### **Press Releases**

- [Justice Department and USDA Set Dates for Workshops to Explore Competition and Regulatory Issues in The Agriculture Industry](#) - Workshops to be Held in Alabama, Colorado, Iowa, Washington, D.C. and Wisconsin (11/13/2009)
  - [Justice Department and USDA to Hold Public Workshops to Explore Competition Issues in the Agriculture Industry](#) - Workshops Will Promote Open Dialogue on Legal and Economic Issues in the Agriculture Industry (08/05/2009)
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### **Federal Register Notices**

Agriculture and Antitrust Enforcement Issues in Our 21st Century Economy [74 FR 43725 (08/27/2009)]

([HTML](#), [PDF](#))

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### **Submitting Comments**

Any interested person may submit written comments responsive to any of the topics addressed in the Federal Register Notice and the workshops.





**Format of submissions:** Written comments should be submitted to the Department of Justice in **both hardcopy and electronic form**. Respondents are encouraged to provide comments as soon as possible, but no later than **December 31, 2009**.

**Hardcopy submissions:** Use the following caption on each submission: “Comments Regarding Agriculture and Antitrust Enforcement Issues in Our 21st Century Economy”

Mail or deliver two (2) copies of each submission to:

Legal Policy Section  
Antitrust Division  
U.S. Department of Justice  
450 5th Street, NW, Suite 11700  
Washington, DC 20001

The Antitrust Division requests that, where possible, the paper copies of each comment be sent by courier or overnight service.

**Electronic submissions:** To make written submissions to the Antitrust Division in electronic form, send an e-mail with the attached submission to [agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov](mailto:agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov) and include “Comment” in the subject line.

Electronic submissions must include the original source file (Word, WordPerfect, PowerPoint, Excel, etc.). Submissions in PDF only format will not be accepted.

Note: The size of an e-mail to the Antitrust Division, including all attachments, cannot exceed 10 MB. Accordingly, electronic documents that are voluminous should be submitted to the Antitrust Division using appropriate media (such as CDs) to the address listed under “Hardcopy submissions.” The Antitrust Division recommends that persons submitting such electronic documents use a courier delivery service, rather than mail, to avoid possible damage to electronic media in screening.

**Privacy and confidentiality:** Written submissions and the identity of the submitter may be disclosed, reproduced, and distributed by publication and/or posting on the Department of Justice Web site, at the discretion of the Department of Justice. Information that is submitted in connection with this workshop cannot be maintained as confidential by the Department of Justice. Written submissions should not include any information that the submitting person seeks to preserve as confidential.

**Contact for submissions:** For more information on making submissions, contact the Antitrust Division by e-mail at [agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov](mailto:agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov).

