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Subject: USAgriculture
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Dear Secretary Johanns:

I write to you as a mother, citizen, gardener and supporter of small family farms. I am excited to see the rise of Farmer's Markets and CSA's nationally as well as programs that help low income people raise and consume some of their own food. In general, it has been my experience that smaller farms supplying food locally contribute many benefits to our nation and to our people as individuals. Some of the benefits are: 1) smaller farms depend less and consume fewer fossil fuels, 2) smaller producers also tend to use more sustainable and environmentally sound farming methods, 3) family farms produce much fresher foods with much higher nutritional content, and 4) smaller growers contribute more to local economies than large corporate "farmers".

The programs that encourage small gardens and small farmers are extremely cost effective. They require very little outlay and the benefits are prompt and tangible for consumers and hungry families. Please fully fund every such program within the public schools, city community garden projects, environmental credits for small farmers, local farm-to-school programs and WIC credits at farmers markets for example.

I am discouraged by the dominance of corporate agriculture and the degradation in our soil, water, air, economies and nutrition that corporate agriculture produces. Please curtail and cease all financial aid to large producers. They already wield far too much power over world food production and distribution. Poverty and hunger are much more problematic domestically and globally than they've ever been before. It's not because humans aren't growing enough food to feed the world. The reason is that we're not feeding ourselves from locally grown crops.

Far too many American children are growing up hungry. This is no way to create a strong nation or a peaceful world. Please support all programs that support small, local food production, distribution and consumption.

Respectfully yours,

Jennifer Claire Darling
Beaverton, OR