



NFU President Roger Johnson commends plans for joint USDA/DOJ anti-trust workshops

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Washington, Jan. 4 – With the first of a series of USDA/Justice Department public workshops on anti-competitive practices affecting agriculture set for March 12th in Ankeny, Iowa, National Farmers Union (NFU) President Roger Johnson welcomed the initiative. In comments delivered to USDA and Justice, Johnson commended their efforts “to determine the impacts of market concentration on independent producers.”

Johnson stated that “NFU greatly appreciates the concern USDA and DOJ have shown over issues regarding current market competition, concentration, vertical integration, captive supply, captive transportation and the impacts on producers and consumers. . . NFU believes it is vital to the nation’s producers to address these concerns, and directs USDA and DOJ to establish a constant dialogue concerning market control and antitrust concerns in the agriculture industry. NFU hopes that USDA and the DOJ understand the difficulties and risks producers face by openly addressing their situations. NFU works hard to represent our members who are unable to speak openly and bring forth their concerns for discussion.”

NFU points out that the five scheduled workshops are “intended to provide agricultural producers the opportunity to describe the negative impacts of the increasingly concentrated and dysfunctional agricultural markets.” It charges that “Decreased agency oversight has contributed to industry wide consolidation and vertical integration.”

Hopeful that the Justice Department’s Antitrust Division will increase its antitrust and regulatory enforcement activities, Johnson said that “Anti-competitive actions within the agricultural marketplace stifle the ability of independent farmers and ranchers to receive a fair price for their commodities.”

For more information on the joint USDA/DOJ workshops, including workshop dates and locations, go to: www.agri-pulse.com/uploaded/20091201H2.pdf.

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