



PEW COMMISSION ON
INDUSTRIAL FARM
ANIMAL PRODUCTION

March 7, 2008

Thomas O. Barnett, Assistant Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Assistant Attorney General Barnett:

The Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production (PCIFAP) would like to share its concern over JBS S.A.'s plan to purchase two more large American cattle feeding and processing companies. According to Reuter's, JBS's agreement to buy National Beef Packing Co. and Smithfield Beef Group, a unit of Smithfield Inc., would make JBS S.A. the largest beef packer in the United States. Reuter's cited unnamed industry sources as saying if the deal is approved, Brazil based JBS will control 32% of the U.S. market.

During PCIFAP's two and a half year examination of industrial farm animal production, Commissioners have found that consolidation within the animal agriculture industry has forced family farmers out of business and has led to larger and more concentrated food animal production operations that threaten public health and the environment. Concentration of the production of food animals has drastically changed the rural landscape and has led to increased risks for the health and viability of rural communities.

While animal production is increasing nationwide, the number of actual farms producing animals is shrinking at an alarming rate. If this purchase is approved, many family farm operations will only have one or two options for selling their livestock, which raises grave questions about the ability of sustainable family farms to continue to do business in this country.

PCIFAP's goal is to bring the problems surrounding industrial farm animal production and possible solutions to the attention of policy makers, stakeholders and the American public. It will release its final report and consensus recommendations on April 29, 2008.

Sincerely,

Robert P. Martin
Executive Director
Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production