



Osceola Organic Farm

Certified Organic Produce...Locally grown and harvested since 1993

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Testimony of Kevin O'Dare
USDA Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement Hearing
Jacksonville, FL
September 30 – October 1, 2009

My names is Kevin O'Dare and I own a ten acre farm. We have owned our farm since 1993 and it has been certified organic since 1996. We specialize in field greens that we sell locally at our farm stand, in restaurants and at the farmer's market. I have also been an International Organic Inspector since 1996 and have inspected over 500 farms and processing facilities throughout Florida and the Caribbean. I am the chairman of the IRC Agriculture Advisory Board and a committee member of The Farm Service Agency, a branch of the USDA.

I came here to let me feelings be known and give my professional opinion about the proposed Marketing Agreement No. 970. I have read the proposal and feel it is ineffective: marketing and food safety are not related at all. Problems begin when marketing gets involved with food safety, increasing the potential for sales/marketing managers to overrule quality control managers, resulting in the release of unsafe products into the marketplace.

The small organic farmer is already inspected yearly by organic inspectors whose duties are also to report and document food safety violations. I have inspected almost every organic farm in Florida over the last fifteen years and have found that the people who own and operate small farms are more conscience about food quality and food safety. Most of them personally know their customers, which simplifies traceability and increases accountability. Also, most do their own deliveries, avoiding many critical control points that affect food safety.

The proposed Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement should be abandoned because it duplicates existing food safety protocols, wasting time and money. The costs are disproportionate for small farmers, with the results being, not advances in food safety, but another marketing tool for big business.

Sincerely,
Kevin O'Dare

EX.SS