

Dear Trader Joe's Manager in the D.C. Metro Area,

As we celebrate Thanksgiving - a holiday made possible by the hard work of men and women in America's agricultural fields - I urge Trader Joe's to respect the dignity of farmworkers by joining the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' (CIW) Fair Food Program.

Florida tomato pickers have long faced severe poverty (earning just 50 cents per 32-lb bucket of tomatoes they pick) and abuses such as wage theft, sexual harassment, and - in the most extreme cases - modern-day slavery.

The good news is that there is a solution underway. The CIW is working with nine major retail food companies (including McDonald's, Subway, and Whole Foods) and the Florida tomato industry to implement the Fair Food Program. These retailers have committed to pay a small premium - similar to that paid for certified Fair Trade products - for the tomatoes they purchase to improve farmworker wages. They are also working with the CIW to implement and enforce a code of conduct, which includes a voice for farmworkers to report abuses without fear of retaliation and zero tolerance for forced labor.



The statement released by Trader Joe's late last month was and continues to be nothing more than a public relations ploy. It lacks real commitment, transparency, verification and farmworker participation.

Trader Joe's claims that it is currently paying a premium of 3 cents per pound for an undisclosed percentage of its Florida tomato purchases. As far as we are concerned, Trader Joe's could claim to be paying a premium of 3 *dollars* per pound, but outside an agreement with the CIW, there is no way to verify - or trust - this assertion. And while Trader Joe's says it is buying tomatoes only from growers who abide by the CIW's Fair Food Code of Conduct, it refuses to talk to the CIW to learn who these growers are. Does trader Joe's expect to learn this from the growers themselves? What grower would self-report that it is no longer complying with the Code?

I expect better from Trader Joe's: Nothing less than real corporate responsibility.

This Thanksgiving, as we give thanks for the food that nourishes us, I urge Trader Joe's to end the public relations excuses and join the CIW's Fair Food program.

For more information, please visit www.ciw-online.org.

Sincerely,