

Dear Publix Manager,

As a Publix customer and supporter of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' (CIW) groundbreaking Fair Food Program, **I am writing to urge Publix to work with the CIW and with the Florida tomato industry to help end forced labor, poverty wages and other human rights abuses historically faced by Florida farmworkers who harvest your tomatoes.**

For decades, Florida's farmworkers faced poverty wages and daily violations of their basic rights in order to harvest the food on our plates:

- **Stagnant, sub-poverty wages:** Florida tomato harvesters are still paid by the piece. The prevailing piece rate today is 50 cents for every 32-lbs of tomatoes a worker picks, a rate that has remained virtually unchanged since 1980. As a result of that stagnation, a worker today must pick nearly 2.5 tons of tomatoes to earn minimum wage in a typical 10-hour workday – twice the amount a worker had to pick to earn minimum wage thirty years ago. Most farmworkers today earn less than \$12,000 a year.
- **Denial of fundamental labor rights:** Florida farmworkers have no right to overtime pay, no benefits and no right to organize in order to improve these conditions.
- **Modern-day slavery:** In the most extreme cases, workers have been forced to labor against their will through the use or threat of physical violence.



The good news is that a new day has dawned in the fields. The Fair Food Program, a historic partnership among farmworkers, tomato growers, and eleven leading food corporations is building a new tomato industry that advances the human rights and dignity of farmworkers while strengthening the sustainability of the entire industry.

By committing to the Fair Food Program, corporations are demanding more humane labor standards from their Florida tomato suppliers, paying a small premium to improve workers' pay and purchasing exclusively from growers who meet the Program's higher standards.

It is imperative that Publix seize the opportunity to be part of the solution to Florida's longstanding history of farmworker exploitation. At the table is a proven model, backed by the expertise of the CIW and the tomato industry itself, and a tremendous opportunity for Publix – Florida's quintessential company – to be a leader in advancing the principles of Fair Food throughout Florida's agricultural fields and communities.

Publix founder George Jenkins used to say, “Don't let making a profit get in the way of doing the right thing.” More recently, Publix CEO Ed Crenshaw declared, “Social responsibility is the life blood of our company.”

As a Publix customer, I look forward to your company doing the right thing and implementing genuine social responsibility by working with the CIW and with Florida's tomato growers through the Fair Food Program to ensure human rights and humane wages for Florida farmworkers who harvest the tomatoes sold in your stores.

For more information, please contact the CIW at 239-657-8311 or workers@ciw-online.org.

Thank you,