

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.**

Publix has the opportunity and the responsibility to be part of the new day that has dawned in the fields through the CIW's Fair Food Program (FFP), an historic partnership among farmworkers, Florida tomato growers, and 14 multibillion-dollar food retailers, among them Walmart, Ahold USA (Stop & Shop and Giant), and The Fresh Market. Participating retailers commit to 1) buy their tomatoes exclusively from farms where workers' fundamental human rights are upheld according to the Fair Food Code of Conduct and 2) pay a small Fair Food premium on their tomatoes which is passed down through the supply chain and paid out to workers by the growers.



The FFP was called “one of the great human rights success stories of our day” in *The Washington Post*, “the best workplace monitoring program in the US” on the front page of the *New York Times*, and was featured on *CBS Sunday Morning* in a short viewed by millions. The CIW was awarded the 2015 Presidential Medal for Extraordinary Efforts Combatting Modern-Day Slavery for the Fair Food Program’s success in transforming the Florida fields from what was once called “ground zero for modern-day slavery” by a US attorney to the “best working environment in American agriculture” by the *New York Times*. In summer 2015, the FFP began to expand to states beyond Florida up the East Coast, and in 2016 began to operate in the Florida strawberry industry. You can learn more about the FFP at www.fairfoodprogram.org.

Despite these tremendous and widely celebrated gains, **for more than seven years, your company has steadfastly turned its back on farmworkers and their allies — your customers — and denied its responsibility to the people who make Publix’s profits possible**, shielding itself with one simple phrase: “Put it in the price.” According to Publix’s public relations department, your company is not opposed to paying a fairer price for its Florida tomatoes, it just doesn’t like the way the Fair Food Program implements the premium that goes to increase farmworkers’ wages. Publix says that if the penny-per-pound were put in the price of the tomatoes it buys, it would be happy to pay. But, that is precisely how the Fair Food Program works. The Fair Food Premium is put into the price charged to Walmart, for example, by its suppliers, who then back out the premium and pass it on to their workers as a line item bonus on their weekly paychecks, a process tracked and audited by the Fair Food Standards Council, the independent organization that oversees the auditing and monitoring of the FFP.



Fourteen other major retailers and the vast majority of the \$650 million Florida tomato industry have already committed to the FFP. These grocery stores and restaurants will now be able to display the Fair Food label (left) indicating to their customers that they have made a commitment to respect the dignity of farmworkers in their supply chain.

When will I be able to find the Fair Food label at Publix?

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.*”

Countless farmworkers and consumers have already called on Publix to live up to these values, and more will continue to join them as they learn that your company has thus far turned its back on *true* social responsibility.

I look forward to the day when Publix joins farmworkers and consumers in the movement for fundamental, verifiable human right for the people who do the backbreaking and underpaid work to put food on all our tables, and profits in Publix’s coffers.

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

Sincerely,