

# SFOC

NOVEMBER 2009  
FOCUS = FAIR



## SLOW FOOD AND FAIR

Slow Food USA and Slow Food on Campus chapters seek to inspire a transformation in food policy, production practices and market forces to guarantee equity, sustainability and pleasure. Fair food encompasses good food that is accessible to all, regardless of income, and produced by people who are treated with dignity and are justly compensated for their labor. To make fair and lasting change a reality the integrity of the food we eat must be secured, and good treatment of the people who produce it must be assured.

## BACKGROUND

Student/Farmworker Alliance (SFA) is a national network of students and youth organizing in solidarity with Florida farmworkers to eliminate sweatshop conditions and modern-day slavery in the fields. SFA works in alliance with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), a membership-led organization of mostly Latino, Haitian, and Mayan Indian farmworkers and other low-wage workers based in Southwest Florida.

## DINE WITH DIGNITY

In solidarity with the CIW, SFA is calling on students across the country to demand to *Dine with Dignity* on campus. It is time to force Aramark and Sodexo to work with the CIW and help put an end to Florida's 'harvest of shame'. For more information, check out: [www.sfalliance.org/foodservice.html](http://www.sfalliance.org/foodservice.html)



## BASICS

- SFA organizes with, not for, farmworkers.
- During the four-year Taco Bell boycott, SFA led the Boot the Bell campaign, which successfully eliminated or prevented 25 Taco Bell contracts at colleges, universities and high schools.
- SFA's first major victory came in 2005, when farmworkers from the CIW and their allies scored a decisive victory in the Taco Bell boycott. Taco Bell and its parent company Yum Brands conceded to all of the demands, agreeing to work with the CIW to improve the sub-poverty wages and miserable working conditions in its tomato supply chain.
- In the years since, the CIW has also reached agreements with fast

food restaurants McDonald's, Burger King and Subway, supermarket chain Whole Foods, and Food Service Providers Bon Appétit Management Co. and Compass Group.

- At the September 25th announcement of the Compass agreement, representatives attributed a student-led delegation to its headquarters with bringing tomato picker exploitation to their attention and encouraging dialogue with the CIW.



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TODAY'S CORPORATE FOOD SYSTEM HAS CREATED AND PERPETUATED ABYSMAL CONDITIONS IN THE FIELDS. And farmworkers are not being objectified alone. Just as the workers are seen as no more than tractors to cheaply harvest tomatoes, youth are often viewed as mouths that obediently consume without ever considering the consequences. Since 2001, organizing as part of the SFA, students and youth have demonstrated a powerful voice in communities, on campuses and with corporations to create change for farmworkers in Florida's fields.

AS YOUNG PEOPLE ORGANIZE AROUND SFA'S *DINE WITH DIGNITY* CAMPAIGN, the Campaign for Fair Food and other struggles for social justice across the country, many realize their responsibility to create change. In particular, students are holding their schools accountable for how and with whom they do business. Will you join them?

## FLORIDA FARMWORKER FACTS

- In the winter (November-April), Florida produces more than 90 percent of the tomatoes consumed in the United States, worth \$600 million annually.
- Tomato pickers' wages have been stagnant for over 30 years: the tomato piece rate — 40-50¢ per 32-lb. bucket — hasn't changed since 1978. At that rate, a worker must harvest 2.5 tons of tomatoes in one day just to earn the equivalent of Florida minimum wage.
- Tomato pickers often spend 10 to 14 hour days in grueling conditions without benefits or protections, and are excluded from the National Labor Relations Act, preventing the formation of a union to change these conditions.
- In the most extreme cases, workers are forced against their will through the use or threat of physical violence in situations of modern-day slavery to pick tomatoes. Since 1997, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) has worked together with the FBI and the Department of Justice to identify, investigate and federally prosecute 6 cases of modern-day slavery in the fields, freeing over 1,000 workers. Florida is, in the words of one federal prosecutor, "ground-zero for modern-day slavery."



REAL FOOD  
CHALLENGE

