

STUDENT/FARMWORKER ALLIANCE

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George Chavel
Group Chief Operating Officer
Sodexo
9801 Washingtonian Boulevard
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878

Dear Mr. Chavel,

As we mark one year since the launch of the Student/Farmworker Alliance's Dine with Dignity campaign – a year in which industry leaders Aramark, Bon Appétit, and Compass Group all agreed to partner with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) – we write today to yet again urge Sodexo to help end forced labor, poverty wages and other human rights abuses faced by farmworkers harvesting tomatoes for the U.S. food industry.

There can be no doubt today that you are aware of the well-documented human rights crisis in Florida's fields, and the conditions faced by the farmworkers who harvest your company's tomatoes are as urgent as they are appalling. In December 2008, two Immokalee-based farm labor employers were each sentenced to twelve years in federal prison each for enslaving nearly a dozen tomato harvesters. Under these employers' watch, workers were held against their will, beaten, chained, locked in box trucks for the night and forced to work harvesting tomatoes. U.S. Attorney Doug Molloy called it one of Florida's "biggest, ugliest slavery cases ever." In all, seven such farm labor operations – involving over one thousand workers in total – have been prosecuted for servitude in Florida since 1997, and the CIW has assisted the FBI and the U.S. Department of Justice in successfully investigating and prosecuting six of these.

Today, the opportunity exists for Sodexo to support social responsibility in the Florida tomato industry. On September 25, 2009, the CIW, Compass Group North America and East Coast Growers and Packers announced an agreement to improve tomato harvesters' wages and working conditions. Six months later, Aramark became the third major food service provider, and eighth food corporation overall, to agree to work with the CIW, joining Bon Appétit Management Company, Compass Group, Yum Brands, McDonald's, Burger King, Subway and Whole Foods Market in working directly with the CIW to directly improve wages and working conditions in the fields.

In addition, three Florida tomato growers – including East Coast, the state's third largest producer – are implementing the CIW's Fair Food agreements. The news of farmworkers, growers and retail food corporations cooperating to produce a fairer tomato prompted U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders, a longtime observer of the campaign, to note, "Today marks the beginning of the end of the harvest of shame that has existed for far too long in Florida's tomato fields."

As an ever-growing number of corporations stand up to implement true social responsibility in their tomato supply chains, Sodexo appears content to sit idly by. And nearly one year after launching the Dine with Dignity campaign, students across the country have one question to pose to Sodexo, which now stands completely isolated amongst its peers: "What's taking so long?"

Rest assured: we will only be satisfied when Sodexo works with the CIW to implement a code of conduct that includes worker participation. Until then, we will continue to educate our peers and take action on our campuses, where Bon Appétit, Chartwell's and now Aramark have distinguished themselves as responsible alternatives to your company.

It is imperative that Sodexo seize the opportunity to be a part of the solution to Florida's longstanding shame of farmworker exploitation. At the table is a proven model, the expertise of the CIW and a tremendous opportunity to join other major food service providers and food retailers in advancing the principles of Fair Food. We urge you come to a working agreement with the CIW as soon as possible.

Sincerely,