



## Perils and Pitfalls in Fair Trade Cotton



A Dec. 15 article by Bloomberg News exposed what it portrayed as forced child labor in an organic and fair-trade cotton program in Burkina Faso, which provided raw material for the lingerie line Victoria's Secret. The US Department of Homeland Security is also investigating the matter. However, Fairtrade International (FLO) and the Burkina National Union of Cotton Workers have countered the allegations within the Bloomberg piece. While the jury may be out on the specifics in this case, fair trade has opened the eyes of many to the risks of child labor in various commodities, including cotton.

## Equal Exchange's Campaign for Authentic Fair Trade



Equal Exchange, one of the founding fair trade organizations in the United States, has issued a call to action to ensure that small farmer co-operatives remain at the center of the fair trade movement. Equal Exchange believes that cooperative organization is essential for small farmers to survive and thrive, and the cooperative model is an important vehicle for economic empowerment and social change.

## Fair Trade Shrimp on the Horizon



Fair trade continues to spread beyond coffee and tea. Soon, consumers may be able to find fair trade certified organic/ecologically raised shrimp from Thailand and other countries in Southeast Asia. Certified coops must adhere to IFOAM aquaculture standards and use bioremediation techniques to sustainably recycle waste into nutrients for local farms. Fisher coops have long looked for market access for their product, as the global marketplace is dominated by large-scale farmed fish operations. Fairtrade shrimping offers a clear ecological alternative for consumers looking for ethical shrimp. Fairtrade International is focusing exclusively on shrimp during this pilot phase. IMO Fair for Life has a generic standard that is applicable for all fish and shellfish.

## "Free Trade" Agreements Move Forward

Despite widespread protest from farmers, environmentalists and workers, the Obama Administration pushed through Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with Colombia, Panama and South Korea. The new FTAs expand upon the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which has led to weakened environmental standards, increased poverty in rural communities and watered down labor laws. A cross border alliance of farmers, consumers and fair traders have increasingly called for a renegotiation of NAFTA to ensure that farmers' livelihoods are respected and maintained.

## TEDx Tackles the Plight of Farmworkers



On Friday, October 14, at Mills College in Oakland, TEDxFruitvale: Harvesting Change brought together farmworkers, farmers, activists, artists, students,

professors, filmmakers, and entrepreneurs to celebrate the people upon whom we depend to harvest our food. In three sessions — Meet, Movement, and Money — a diverse cast of speakers provided a 360-degree view of farmworkers today and throughout history; compared labor's progress with other social justice movements; and ended by discussing how businesses could embrace fair labor practices.

## "Fair Trade Says No to GMOs"



Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) are plants or animals where the DNA has been artificially altered by genes from other plants, animals, viruses, or bacteria, in order to produce foreign compounds. This type of genetic alteration is not found in nature. Today, the majority of corn and soy grown in the U.S. is genetically engineered to produce pesticide and/or withstand high doses of weed killer. This corn and soy is found in countless processed foods such as cereals, baby foods, breads, chips, and many other products.

GMOs are prohibited under FLO and IMO's fair trade standards. To push back the spread and negative impact, a number of organizations and companies, including the Domestic Fair Trade Association and the Organic Consumers Association, have banded together to demand labeling of GMO products, including a petition to the US FDA and a citizen ballot initiative in California.

## Contributors in this Issue



### Bob Chase

Bob Chase served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Northeast Brazil with his wife Susan after earning a B.A. in Latin American History from the University of Wisconsin- Madison. Bob has served as the CEO of SERRV since 1989. He has served on the Board of the US Fair Trade Federation and is presently a member of the Board of the World Fair Trade Organization.



### Rudi Dalvai

Rudi Dalvai an Italian born economist started his Fair Trade tenure in 1985 as a founder member of the World Shop in Italy. He was managing director of EZA (Austrian FTO), and helped start EFTA (European Fair Trade association) and IFAT (now WFTO), co-founder of Ctm-Altromercato (first Italian FTO), helped start TransFair Italy, member of the "Coffee Register Committee" of FLO, and past and current President of IFAT (now WFTO).



### Monika Firl

Monika Firl has worked as Cooperative Coffees Producer Relations Manager from Montreal since 2002. Prior to joining Cooperative Coffees, Monika lived in El Salvador and Chiapas (1991 – 2000) working with locally based development projects focused on information and experience exchange around organic production practices and alternative markets with Fair Trade at heart.



### Phil Howard

Phil Howard, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at Michigan State University where he teaches and conducts research on community, food and agriculture.



### Daniel Jaffee

Daniel Jaffee is assistant professor of Sociology at Washington State University, and author of *Brewing Justice: Fair Trade Coffee, Sustainability, and Survival* (University of California Press). His work focuses on the politics of corporate involvement in fair trade certification. He also co-founded the Madison (WI) Fair Trade Action Alliance.



### Megy Karydes

Megy Karydes is founder of World Shoppe, a fair trade wholesale business that works with artisans in South Africa and Kenya to produce fashion-forward jewelry. She also is principal of Karydes Consulting, a marketing communications agency and often writes about fair trade for both consumer and trade publications.