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***Fair Trade for a Better World***

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March 17, 2015

Ms. Doreen Ida  
President, Confections and Snacks  
Nestle USA  
800 North Brand Blvd.  
Glendale, CA, 91203

Via Email

Dear Ms. Ida and the Nestle USA Sustainable Sourcing Team:

Congratulations on your recent announcement that you will start removing artificial flavors and colors from popular candy bars such as Baby Ruth and Butterfingers. This is welcomed news for consumers who wish to indulge in treats but wish to avoid the most unhealthy and unsustainable ingredients.

We are writing to ask you to take this announcement to the next step and replace the artificial ingredients not just with their chemical counterparts that US regulations allow to be labeled as “natural,” but with truly healthy and sustainable ingredients that support small-scale farmers and producers. In this way Nestle can have an even greater impact on public health and the global economy.

We are particularly concerned with your use of vanilla. As you know, more than 90% of the vanilla flavoring on the market today is artificial vanillin. However, there is a new vanilla alternative on the market seeking to market itself as natural and sustainable. This is vanilla flavoring produced by synthetic biology (synbio), in which DNA is printed and inserted into an organism like yeast to direct it to turn sugars into a vanilla flavor compound.

Over 200,000 vanilla farmers already are forced to compete with artificial vanillin, which is a cheap alternative to real vanilla. If these farmers are forced to compete also with a vanilla marketed as natural and sustainable, this may be disastrous for farming communities producing this labor-intensive and lucrative crop. Synbio vanilla is not sustainable, but rather relies on untested, unregulated genetic engineering technology and inputs such as sugar. We do not know what the environmental consequences may be when we insert human-engineered DNA into yeast, particularly if there is an escape or leak. There is also uncertainty around the agricultural inputs required to sustain this system as the sugar needed for conversion may come from sugar plantations that have replaced native forests

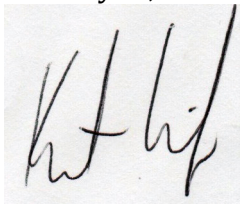
or from genetically modified sugar beets. We are certain that there is a huge risk to small-scale farmers producing real vanilla, as outlined in a case study by the ETC Group\*

As you look at changing your ingredients in these popular products, Nestle has a real opportunity to not only remove the ingredients that consumers are most adverse to, but to include ingredients that can have a real positive impact. Our request is simple.

- First, commit to excluding ingredients, especially vanilla flavoring, produced through synbio techniques. This will go a long way toward protecting markets for the world's vanilla farmers and making a serious statement about keeping the most unhealthy and unsustainable ingredients out of your products.
- Second, commit to working with small-scale vanilla farmers to include real vanilla at a fair price in your products. Vanilla is a labor intensive, but potentially lucrative crop. With the purchasing power of Nestle, you could have a real impact on the lives of farmers who depend on buyers willing to pay a fair price for their products.

We look forward to your response by April 30, 2015.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature appears to be 'Kerstin Lindgren' written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kerstin Lindgren  
Campaign Director  
[Kerstin@fairworldproject.org](mailto:Kerstin@fairworldproject.org)

**Fair World Project** is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote organic and fair trade practices and transparent third-party certification of producers, manufacturers and products, domestically and abroad. Through consumer education and advocacy, FWP supports dedicated fair trade producers and brands, and insists on integrity in use of the term "fair trade" in certification, labeling and marketing. FWP is an independent project of the Organic Consumers Association, which, with a network of more than one million, is the largest organization of organic consumers in the US.: <http://www.fairworldproject.org>.

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\*[http://www.etcgroup.org/sites/www.etcgroup.org/files/Vanilla\\_SynBio\\_case\\_study\\_Oct2013.pdf](http://www.etcgroup.org/sites/www.etcgroup.org/files/Vanilla_SynBio_case_study_Oct2013.pdf)