



Letter from the Director

It is hard to imagine a time before Monsanto meant anything to me, but, like for many of you, there was that time. A cartel of just six huge chemical companies (Monsanto, Dow, Dupont, Bayer, BASF, Syngenta) now dominates the agricultural seed and chemical input markets. (See: <http://www.panna.org/issues/pesticides-profit/chemical-cartel>). Monsanto has come to symbolize for many of us the antithesis of fair trade. While their mission is to sell more chemicals and to control a larger and larger share of the agriculture sector, the mission of fair trade is to give farmers control of agriculture, through values like democratic organization and capacity building, and to farm sustainably, minimizing the use of inappropriate technology including chemicals that pollute our land, water, food and bodies.

More recently, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) have taken center stage. GMOs touch on many of the principles of fair trade and the values of those advocating for a more just economy. Most GMOs are bred to be herbicide-resistant, meaning farmers buy and spray more and more weed killer on our food crops. The increased use of herbicide has harmful effects on the environment, as well as on farmers and workers who are directly engaged in applying the chemicals. In exchange, farmers must give up their rights to the traditional practice of saving seeds for next year's crop, as the GMO technology is patented and must be bought year after year. Consumers are denied a basic level of transparency, as foods containing GMO ingredients are not labeled in the United States, despite widespread support for such labeling. Though there is mounting evidence that GMOs may have negative health effects on those who consume them, many of us are just as concerned about the farmers who are compelled to give up long-held agricultural traditions in exchange for expensive, input-intensive technology, as well as the farmworkers who often bear the brunt of increased chemical exposure.

The feature articles in this issue focus on GMOs and social justice, covering, for example, the incredible power Monsanto has over our food supply and political system, how GMOs affect all of us as consumers and producers, and the fight for transparency in food labeling.

The issues go deep and the first step is increased understanding, which leads to engaged action and advocacy. I feel confident that, as we begin to articulate and address these problems and win fights for basic transparency in labeling, we will also begin to see the way towards a food and agricultural system that works for consumers, farmers and workers – one that is not just at the service of Monsanto and friends.

To a day when all trade is fair,

Dana Geffner

Dana Geffner
Executive Director

Distribute Fair World Project's For A Better World

"For a Better World" is a free semi-annual publication that features articles from a variety of perspectives, including farmers, farm workers, consumers and committed fair trade brands. FWP helps consumers decipher fair trade certification schemes and is an excellent educational resource. Distribute "For a Better World" for free at your business or organization. Order now by visiting our website at: www.fairworldproject.org

Letter to the Editor

Tell Us What You Think. We would like to hear your thoughts.

Send letters to: **Fair World Project - PO Box 42322, Portland, OR 97242** or email comments to editor@fairworldproject.org. Include your full name, address, daytime phone and email. The editorial team may shorten and edit correspondence for clarity.

Mission:

Fair World Project (FWP) promotes organic and fair trade practices and transparent third-party certification of producers, manufacturers and products, both here 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.

Why FWP Exists:

- ▶ Conscious consumers armed with informed purchasing power can create positive change and promote economic justice, sustainable development and meaningful exchange between global South and North
- ▶ The Organic movement, with the advent of federal regulations, has lost sight of the social criteria of fair prices, wages and working conditions.
- ▶ Family farmers and farmworkers in the developing world are often impoverished by unfair volatile prices, wages and working conditions.
- ▶ North American and European family farmers and farmworkers face similar challenges, and thus we need to bring fair trade criteria home with "Domestic Fair Trade."
- ▶ Existing certifiers and membership organizations vary in their criteria and philosophy for the qualification of products and brands for designation as "fair trade." FWP will work to keep the term "fair trade" from being abused and diluted.
- ▶ FWP cuts through politics in the world of fair trade in order to catalyze the rapid expansion of the universe of fair trade products, in particular promoting certification to rigorous standards that give consideration to the local context of a project.

The Fair Trade Movement:

The fair trade movement that FWP is part of shares a vision of a world in which justice and sustainable development are at the heart of trade structures and practices, both at home and abroad, so that everyone through their work can maintain a decent and dignified livelihood.

For more information on Fair World Project please visit www.fairworldproject.org

Fair World Project

PO Box 42322
Portland, OR 97242
800-631-9980
info@fairworldproject.org

Dana Geffner

Executive Director

Kerstin Lindgren

Campaign Director

Cover Illustration by:

John Klossner and inspired by Food Democracy Now's "I Stand With Farmers" image seen on page 8

Sue Kastensen

Project and Creative Advisor

Fair Trade Timeline

Contributed by the Fair Trade Resource Network (www.ftrn.org)

1946



Edna Ruth Byler imports needlecrafts from low-income women in Puerto Rico, and displaced people in Europe, laying the groundwork for Ten Thousand Villages, North America's first fair trade organization

1948



Church of the Brethren establishes SERRV, North America's second fair trade organization, to import wooden clocks from German refugees of WWII

1968

United Nations Conference on Aid and Development (UNCTAD) embraces "Trade not Aid" concept, bringing fair trade into development policy

1969

Oxfam and other European humanitarian organizations open the first World Shop in the Netherlands to sell crafts, build awareness and campaign for trade reform

1972



Ten Thousand Villages opens their store, the first fair trade retail outlet in North America

1986



Equal Exchange is established as the first fair trade cooperative in North America, importing coffee from Nicaragua as a way to make a political statement with a high-quality, household item

1988



Farmers and activists launch the first fair trade certification system, Max Havelaar, in the Netherlands to offer third-party recognition and a label for fair trade products

1989



International Fair Trade Association (IFAT), now WFTO, is established by trade pioneers as the global fair trade network

1994

