

### **Update on Driscoll Boycott**

On March 24, 2015, Fair World Project sent a letter to Driscoll's, signed by nearly 10,000 consumers, expressing concern for farmworkers at Sakuma Brothers farm in Washington.<sup>1</sup> Driscoll's responded by inviting a dialogue on this issue.<sup>2</sup> Driscoll's partners with Sakuma Brothers to grow and market blueberries and blackberries.

Fair World Project accepted this offer for a conversation, and reached out to representatives of the Familias Unidas por la Justicia union from Sakuma Brothers farm and representatives from allied organizations Community to Community Development and Domestic Fair Trade Association, to include these stakeholders in the dialogue.

The meeting was held at Driscoll's headquarters on May 8, 2015 and included an opportunity for farmworkers to tell leadership from Driscoll's about the poor housing conditions, wage theft, discriminatory practices toward union members, and unfavorable pay they have received over the past years and in the 2013 and 2014 growing season in particular.

Driscoll's management was responsive to this message and shared information on their own expectations for partner farms, which include a commitment to freedom of association. Although Driscoll's maintained that it could not insist on a union contract at any partner farm, senior management did say they could insist that freedom of association was respected. Fair World Project confirmed that if the legally recognized union, Familias Unidas por la Justicia, tried again to negotiate in good faith with Sakuma Brothers Farm management and Sakuma would not negotiate that Driscoll's would consider this a violation of freedom of association.

Farmworker representatives were clear that they only want to be paid a fair wage that allows their children a future and they have no interest in Sakuma or Driscoll's suffering financially in the process. They expressed a desire to reach an agreement, call an end to the boycott, and focus attention on a different campaign, for example, educating consumers on the true cost of fair food.

Driscoll's also announced intentions to send a third-party auditor to audit Sakuma Brothers Farm in the 2015 growing season and offered to work with an auditor the farmworker organization is comfortable with.

The number one concern of the farmworkers is ensuring that union members are not discriminated against during hiring for the 2015 growing season, which starts at the end of the month. Fair World Project will continue to closely monitor this situation as it progresses.

We appreciate the commitment of Driscoll's to ensuring freedom of association. As neutral NGO with a large consumer base, Fair World Project can and will pressure and monitor Sakuma Brothers Farms in ways that a business partner cannot. We will continue to collaborate with stakeholders on all sides to ensure a just outcome.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://fairworldproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/driscoll-binder.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.driscolls.com/workerwelfare/sakuma>