



## **Fair World Project Statement on Nestlé USA's Synbio Commitment**

Fair World Project sent two letters in the spring of 2015 asking Nestlé USA to clarify their position on synbio after Nestlé USA's announcement\* that they would eliminate artificial colors and flavors from many popular candy bars.†

Our concern is that artificial ingredients, especially vanilla, may be replaced by ingredients such as synbio vanilla (produced through extreme genetic engineering) and labeled as natural. Instead we advocated for working with real farmers and purchasing vanilla on fair trade terms.

In response, Nestlé USA representatives assured us that Nestlé USA “does not intend to use synbio vanilla as part of Nestlé USA's confectionery commitment to use no artificial flavors, nor FDA-certified colors, in our chocolate brands by the end of 2015.”

We were also directed to Nestlé USA's sustainable sourcing plan, a version of which is available on its website.‡

This is fantastic news and this commitment should be an example to other brands that have yet to make such a commitment. Crops such as vanilla are important to farmers' livelihoods and synbio processes provide a direct threat to farmers.

However, the commitment from Nestlé fell short in several significant ways.

- Fair World Project confirmed with the Fairtrade Africa Network that there are fair trade vanilla farmers eager to expand their market access, yet Nestlé USA did not commit to buying vanilla on fair trade terms from these farmers.
- Nestlé USA did not confirm that their commitment to avoid synbio extends beyond vanilla to ingredients such as synbio cocoa butter replacement or synbio citrus flavors.
- Nestlé USA did not confirm that their commitment to avoid synbio extends beyond confectionery products to other product lines such as their dairy products.

Fair World Project applauds the initial commitment of Nestlé USA to work with vanilla farmers and will hold this commitment up as an example to other brands. However, as Nestlé USA refines its sustainability plans, we hope that they will partner with fair trade farmers and commit to sourcing all ingredients for all products from real farmers not synbio labs.

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\* <http://www.nestleusa.com/media/pressreleases/nestlé-usa-commits-to-removing-artificial-flavors-and-fda-certified-colors-from-all-nestlé-chocolate-candy-by-the-end-of-20>

† The letters can be found on our website: <http://fairworldproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/FWP-letter-to-Nestle.pdf> and <http://fairworldproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/FWP-follow-up-request-to-Nestle.pdf>.

‡ <http://www.nestle.com/csv/rural-development-responsible-sourcing/responsible-sourcing/vanilla>