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Fair World Project Launches Second Season of For a Better World Podcast Covering Labor Rights Issues and Ethics Concerns in the U.S. Dairy Industry

For a Better World Podcast Examines Unsafe Working Conditions and “Fair-Washing” in Chobani’s Supply Chain in Season 2: “Unfair Dairy”

PORTLAND, OR – Leading fair trade advocacy organization, Fair World Project, is launching “Unfair Dairy,” the second season of their podcast, For a Better World, which tells the stories of workers, farmers, and advocates working to build a fair world. After years of complaints of labor violations and unsafe working conditions, Fair Trade USA released a new “fair trade dairy” certification in May of 2021 in partnership with yogurt maker Chobani. Due to an inadequate development process without enforcement mechanisms or the input of worker-led organizations, that label has been opposed by the very workers it was supposed to benefit as well as by human and labor rights organizations since it was released. For a Better World Season 2: “Unfair Dairy” explores why and what it even means to have “fair trade dairy.” Through eight episodes of powerful interviews, the ongoing issue of Fair Trade USA and yogurt maker Chobani’s “fair-washing” efforts will be covered along with successful examples of worker-led alternatives, such as the Milk With Dignity program that guides practices in Ben & Jerry’s ice cream supply chain.

“The dairy industry has been hit hard after the last four decades of corporate consolidation and deregulation. Low prices for farmers, terrible conditions for workers, exploitation of animals, and climate-crisis fueling emissions are creating this crisis,” says Dana Geffner, Executive Director of Fair World Project and Host of For a Better World. “Fair Trade USA and Chobani’s ‘Fair Trade Dairy’ label just serves to rebrand the exploitative status quo, not address the root causes. Real solutions need to address unchecked corporate power and are led by the people most impacted.”

The first two episodes, “‘No Blood for Milk’ - Dairy Workers Call on Chobani for Justice” and “Fair Trade Dairy: A False Solution,” feature the voice of Crispin Hernandez, an organizer with Workers Center of Central New York. In it he explains the struggle for human rights working in the dairy industry, the victory of his lawsuit suing the State of New York to win farmworkers the same organizing protections afforded other workers, and his long history calling on Chobani to negotiate with dairy farmworkers. Chobani promotes its partnership with Fair Trade USA alongside its corporate social responsibility initiative, Milk Matters™.

“Chobani’s Milk Matters program and fair trade dairy standard are something Chobani created itself with Fair Trade USA without the voices of workers,” says Hernandez. “We’ve spoken with workers on several of the farms participating in this program and without fail they are all confused about the program—how it works, who’s running it, what their rights and benefits are, and how to get more information. Meanwhile working conditions and housing issues have not changed. We haven’t seen any benefit to workers.”

Earlier this year, Fair World Project also released Label Before Labor: Fair Trade USA’s Dairy Label Fails Workers, a report further detailing the issues, authored by Anna Canning, Campaigns Manager of Fair World Project and Co-host of For a Better World podcast. To view this report, please visit: https://fairworldproject.org/choose-fair/certifier-analysis/fair-trade-usa-fair-trade-dairy-chobani-failings/

“The misleading marketing of Chobani’s ‘fair trade dairy’, and the industry in general, push a pastoral image of red barns, green pastures, and clean black and white cows—but that’s far from reality,” says Canning. “It has been months since they started selling ‘certified’ yogurt, but I keep hearing that workers who Fair Trade USA’s program claims to benefit don’t even know that the industrial dairy farms they work on are participating in it. If workers don’t know what their roles or rights are, the claims of ‘worker wellbeing’ are way overstated.”

For a Better World Season 2: “Unfair Dairy” is out now and streaming across all major podcast listening platforms. Listeners may listen to For a Better World and Fair Trade USA’s Milk Matters podcast. The full show notes, including quotes and sources, are available on fairworldproject.org.

For a Better World is a podcast that highlights the work of fair trade-certified companies, advocates, farmers, and community organizers around the world. The podcast features compelling stories and perspectives from everyday people who are building a fairer world.”
visit: https://fairworldproject.org/podcasts/

To listen to the For a Better World podcast trailer and view the full press kit, please visit:
https://fairworld.info/S2PressKit

Fair World Project believes in paying people for sharing their time, energy, and expertise, especially those who have contributed to the podcast. The show has set up a stipend fund, available to all guests interviewed for the making of For a Better World. To support the stipend fund, donate through Patreon, please visit: https://patreon.com/ForABetterWorldPodcast

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The Fair World Project (FWP) mission is to protect the use of the term “fair trade” in the marketplace, expand markets for authentic fair trade, educate consumers about key issues in trade and agriculture, advocate for policies leading to a just economy, and facilitate collaborative relationships to create true system change. FWP also produces the podcast, For a Better World. For further information, please visit: https://www.fairworldproject.org