



TACO BELL: Benefitting from Sweatshops

* **Sub-poverty wages:** For more than 20 years, Florida tomato growers have paid virtually the same picking piece rate -- 40-50 cents per 32-lb bucket. Farmworkers earn a median annual income of \$7,500. The latest US Department of Labor report strongly condemned conditions in US fields, finding: "Low wages, sub-poverty annual earnings, significant periods of un- and under-employment... all add up to a labor force in significant distress" (USDOL Report to Congress, 1/01).

* **Sub-human conditions:** No overtime pay, sick leave, health insurance, holiday pay or any kind of pension, workers housed in shacks and overcrowded trailers, toiling for long hours in sweltering fields, denied even the right to organize without fear of retaliation.

These conditions have allowed Taco Bell to secure a steady supply of artificially cheap tomatoes, tomatoes bought at a price that does not reflect the true cost of their production. That has allowed Taco Bell to control its costs, beef up its bottom line, and plow its profits into expansion, marketing, and aggressive lobbying. For example, Taco Bell's latest marketing campaign, launched last year, cost more than \$220 million, money made available in part through sweatshop wages paid to workers in their supplier chain.



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