

Dear McDonald's Manager,

As you may know, McDonald's Corporation has been presented with the opportunity to foster real social responsibility in their tomato supply chain by working with an award-winning human rights farmworker organization, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW).



Today, there is a human rights crisis in the Florida tomato fields -- the same fields that supply McDonald's with tomatoes for their salads and sandwiches. Tomato pickers earn about 45 cents per 32-lb bucket of tomatoes, a rate that has not risen since 1978, and work from dawn to dusk without the right to overtime pay. At the current piece rate, workers have to pick 2 tons of tomatoes to earn \$50 in a day.

Even worse, modern-day slavery rings, in which workers are held against their will and forced to work through violence or threats of violence, have been found in the fields. The CIW has assisted the Department of Justice in uncovering, investigating, and successfully prosecuting 5 such cases since 1997. *In fact, according to a recent front page story in Florida, one convicted slaver who spent 33 months in federal prison was recently found working again for Ag-Mart, a company that supplies McDonald's with grape tomatoes.*

McDonald's high-volume, low-cost purchasing practices have made it possible for McDonald's to extract extremely low tomato prices from its suppliers, but these cheap tomatoes come at a high cost: farmworker poverty and exploitation.

Taco Bell has already agreed to do its part to help relieve farmworker poverty. After a four-year national boycott, Taco Bell joined with the CIW in a partnership for social responsibility, paying a fairer price for its tomatoes so that the workers could earn a fairer wage, and working with the CIW to address the human rights violations in its supply chain.

As a consumer, I was disappointed to learn that McDonald's has so far refused to take these simple steps for fairness. Instead, McDonald's has chosen to deflect responsibility for the crisis in the fields onto its suppliers, completely ignore the need for economic relief, and avoid working with the CIW, whose members live these conditions and have a track record of successfully addressing abuses in the fields.

This is a golden opportunity to show leadership in the industry. Please contact McDonald's Corporate Headquarters and let them know that you and your customers want them to:

- ◆ Pay a penny more per pound for the tomatoes that McDonald's purchases and ensure that this increase is passed along to tomato pickers in the form of increased wages,
- ◆ Work with the CIW to implement an enforceable code of conduct to ensure fair and safe working conditions for farmworkers in McDonald's tomato supply chain

Thank you