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Fair Trade for a Better World

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Driscoll's Berry Boycott and Labor Dispute Intensifies

Nearly 10,000 Consumers Tell Driscoll's: Don't Do Business with Sakuma Brothers Farm until they Negotiate Fairly with Farmworkers

PORTLAND, OR – Farmworkers at Sakuma Brothers Berry Farm in Burlington, Washington have been locked in a years-long struggle for a fair contract and dignified working conditions. Today, leading fair trade advocacy organization Fair World Project organized and sent a letter signed by nearly 10,000 consumers to Driscoll's, the biggest buyer of Sakuma Brothers berries, asking it to suspend purchases from the farm until this dispute is resolved, and pledging to not purchase any berries under the Driscoll's brand until that time. To view the letter, go to: bit.ly/FairWorldDriscolls

"Farmworkers are exempt from many of the labor laws that safeguard other workers. To ask them to do some of the most difficult and dangerous work for poverty wages without laws or a binding contract to protect them is unconscionable," said Kerstin Lindgren, Campaign Director for Fair World Project.

Organized as Familias Unidas por la Justicia, workers called for a boycott of the very products that provide their livelihood. Fair World Project is joining Familias Unidas por la Justicia in pressuring Driscoll's to use the power and influence of its brand to ensure a fair contract for farmworkers at Sakuma is in place before the upcoming harvest season.

"The labor of skilled farm workers at Sakuma Berry Farms is helping to make the agricultural corporation Driscoll's profitable, now Driscoll's can do its part by demanding Sakuma management sit down and negotiate with us," said Ramon Torres, President of Familias Unidas por la Justicia.

Local boycotts of Sakuma's own branded berries have had such success that farmworkers are reporting packaging fresh berries increasingly for Driscoll's, the national brand that was already one of Sakuma's largest buyers, instead of under the now tainted Sakuma Brothers name. Driscoll's has stated a commitment to community and sustainability, but has continued to buy from Sakuma despite farmworkers' protest of low wages—including wage theft and unfair piece rate agreements—poor housing, and poor working conditions including verbally abusive supervisors.

"When farmworkers stand up for their rights and livelihoods, consumers will stand up with them. Fresh berries are both delicious and healthy, but consumers do not value fresh berries more than the lives of those who pick them," said Dana Geffner, Executive Director of Fair World Project.

Fair World Project is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote organic and fair trade practices and transparent third-party certification of producers, manufacturers and products, domestically and abroad. Through consumer education and advocacy, FWP supports dedicated fair trade producers and brands, and insists on integrity in use of the term "fair trade" in certification, labeling and marketing. FWP publishes a bi-annual publication entitled *For a Better World*. For more information, visit:

<http://www.fairworldproject.org>.