

JANUARY 18, 2018

National Day of Fasting and Witness

Resource Guide

Compiled by the
ALLIANCE FOR FAIR FOOD



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In December 1997, six farmworkers in Immokalee, FL made the decision to stop eating until the growers who owned the farms on which they toiled would hear their concerns. Low wages, verbal and physical violence, sexual abuse, and even forced labor plagued Florida tomato fields, and the workers who picked in those fields demanded better conditions. The Coalition of Immokalee Workers' members' hunger strike lasted 30 days, and only ended when former President Jimmy Carter and Bishop John Nevins of the Catholic Diocese of Venice intervened to call for a dialogue with growers, on the condition that the workers would break their fast. On January 18, 1998, at a Catholic mass with over 800 people in attendance, they did.

Today, the fight for justice in the agricultural industry continues. Incredible progress has been made since 1998 through the CIW's Presidential Medal-winning Fair Food Program, a groundbreaking partnership among farmworkers, Florida tomato growers, and major food retailers that has transformed the tomato industry in seven states along the East Coast. But outside of the protections of the Program, wages are still stagnant and hundreds of thousands of workers are still vulnerable to human rights abuses.

We, as allied faith leaders, have made a commitment to carry on this struggle to eradicate forced labor, gender-based violence, wage theft, and other such violations in the fields through our alliance with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers for the establishment and expansion of the Fair Food Program. We commit ourselves to standing with our nation's farmworkers in their mission to bring the powers of the food industry into partnership with them.

We witness, especially, the ongoing refusal of Wendy's, the last major fast food holdout, and their stubborn denial to do what is right in the eyes of their consumers and their global community. Instead of joining an initiative called "the best workplace monitoring program" in the U.S. in the *New York Times* and ensuring that workers' voices and personhood are respected in their supply chain, Wendy's has unconscionably chosen to shift purchases away from participating Fair Food Program farms in Florida to Mexican fields rife with endemic and unchecked abuse.

On January 18, 2018, we will fast and demonstrate outside of Wendy's franchises across the country in solidarity and protest. We will call upon the leadership of Wendy's to join their peers and listen to their consumers, and to finally sit at the table of justice with their workers. This mobilization is meant to be equal parts contemplative and motivating, equal parts private and public. As you fast, you are invited to consider the following active and spiritual resources. May they embolden and enrich your faithful engagement of this action.

Thank you for your participation and blessings to you as we join ourselves together in the common cause of dignity and righteousness.

Guide to Fasting

The following is a guide to help you prepare to fast.

Let's be honest – fasting is not meant to be a pleasant experience, at least at first. If it were, it wouldn't carry the moral weight and power that it does. Fasting is an act of sacrifice, one that we are undergoing because of our belief in bringing about a better world for farmworkers and for all people. Fasting, however, can be and has been an act of sacrifice that is safe, contemplative, tremendously powerful, community-building, life-altering, and positive.

Before fasting, it is important to consider how it will affect your body. The human body is an amazing machine. We take it for granted. It is capable of much more than many of us give it credit for. It can climb mountains, run marathons and, yes, it can function without food for long periods of time. The body is designed to fast. We do it every night. The January 18 National Day of Fasting and Witness will be a relatively short – and very feasible – stretch to go without food.

Even so, keep in mind a few important health tips. We're not experts; but we have found these to be effective at maximizing comfort and safety as you fast:



- + Taper off your consumption of salt, meats, caffeine, sugar, dairy, and fried foods in the days leading up to the fast.
- + Eat smaller meals for a couple days beforehand.
- + Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and any drugs not prescribed by a doctor during the fast.
- + Drink lots of water!
- + When it is time to break the fast, do so slowly by introducing juices and bland soups in small portions, then work your way up to richer foods.

Please consult a doctor if you have any medical conditions that could impact your ability to fast, such as diabetes or heart problems. You're also encouraged to do your own research ahead of the fast.

Dear Wendy's Manager,

As a Wendy's customer and supporter of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' (CIW) groundbreaking Fair Food Program, **I am writing to inform you that I am joining the CIW and consumers of conscience in boycotting Wendy's until the world's third largest hamburger chain joins the award-winning Fair Food Program.**

Wendy's has the opportunity to join the CIW's Fair Food Program (FFP), an historic partnership among farmworkers, Florida tomato growers, and 14 multibillion-dollar food retailers, among them McDonald's, Subway, and Burger King. Participating retailers commit to 1) buy their Florida tomatoes exclusively from farms where workers' fundamental human rights are upheld according to the Fair Food Code of Conduct and 2) pay a small Fair Food premium on their tomatoes which is passed down through the supply chain and paid out directly to workers by the growers. **The FFP guarantees rights never before seen for Florida farmworkers, such as rights to shade and rest breaks from their grueling work, and zero tolerance for sexual harassment and modern slavery. Since 2011, participating buyers have paid more than \$26 million through the FFP, constituting the first real pay increase for workers in over 30 years.**



Rather than participate in what has been called the "best workplace monitoring program in the U.S.," Wendy's has run from responsibility and abandoned Florida tomato growers who are doing the right thing, instead removing its tomato purchases from Florida altogether. Not to support human rights in your supply chain is one thing. To abandon your suppliers because they do is a shameless and unacceptable abdication of responsibility in the 21st century.

Through a new corporate code of conduct for its suppliers, which took effect in January 2016, Wendy's is championing the failed practice of Corporate-led Social Responsibility. In response to increasing pressure from consumers to join the Fair Food Program, the code is a perfect example of the failed, widely-discredited corporate-controlled approach to social responsibility. From its vague "expectations" for ethical behavior from its suppliers to its toothless approach to consequences for suppliers who fail to meet those expectations, Wendy's latest corporate response simply doesn't measure up to the Fair Food Program.



By refusing to participate, Wendy's has opted to profit from farmworker abuse and poverty and is continuing to provide a market for less reputable growers, while deriving a very real cost advantage over its competitors. Of the big five fast-food companies, only Wendy's is not participating in the Fair Food Program. McDonald's, Yum! Brands, Subway, and Burger King all pay a penny more per pound for their tomatoes to help alleviate farmworker poverty. They also buy Florida tomatoes only from growers who agree to protect their workers' human rights by complying with the Fair Food Code of Conduct.

Countless farmworkers and consumers have called on Wendy's for the past three years to join the Fair Food Program, and thousands more will join them in a boycott as they learn that your company has thus far turned its back on true social responsibility.

I look forward to the day when Wendy's joins farmworkers and consumers in the movement for fundamental, verifiable human rights for the people who do the backbreaking and underpaid work to put food on all our tables, and profits in Wendy's pockets. Until then, you will not receive any of my business.

For more information, please contact the CIW at 239-657-8311 or workers@ciw-online.org.

Sincerely,



Join thousands of farmworkers, students, people of faith and consumers of conscience in refusing to patronize Wendy's until the world's third largest hamburger chain joins the Fair Food Program.

WHY WENDY'S?

Rather than participate in what was called the "best workplace-monitoring program" in the U.S. in the *New York Times*, Wendy's ran from responsibility and abandoned the Florida tomato industry altogether.

In response to increasing pressure from consumers to join the Fair Food Program, **Wendy's released a new code of conduct for its suppliers, a perfect example of the failed, widely-discredited approach to corporate social responsibility** that is completely void of effective enforcement mechanisms to protect farmworkers' human rights

For over three years, farmworkers and consumers have been demanding that Wendy's join its major competitors - Taco Bell, McDonald's, Subway and Burger King - in participating in the Fair Food Program. Yet, **Wendy's has instead consciously and shamefully opted to profit from farmworker poverty and abuse**, continuing to cling to the low-bar standards of the past when presented with an acclaimed and proven alternative.

[BIT.LY/BOYCOTT-WENDYS](https://bit.ly/boycott-wendys)

HOW TO TAKE ACTION

HARNESS THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA



Tag your tweets and posts with these hashtags and handles:

#BoycottWendys, #FairFoodNation
@Wendys, @CIW, @FairFoodProgram

Here are two sample tweets for you to post:

I pledge to boycott @Wendys until the final fast food holdout joins @FairFoodProgram! bit.ly/boycott-wendys #BoycottWendys

.@Wendys, your empty standards don't measure up to @FairFoodProgram! I won't buy until you sign! bit.ly/boycott-wendys #BoycottWendys

ORGANIZE IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY



Support the Wendy's general boycott by joining a local Fair Food Group! Contact us at organize@allianceforfairfood.org to connect with one in your area or start your own.

COALITION OF IMMOKALEE WORKERS

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) is a farmworker-led human rights organization recognized internationally for its achievements in social responsibility, human trafficking, and gender-based violence at work. The CIW's Fair Food Program has eliminated modern-day slavery and sexual violence, improved farmworker wages for the first time in decades, and guaranteed basic protections for workers. In 2015, the Program expanded beyond the Florida tomato industry to include seven states and three crops.

www.ciw-online.org

ALLIANCE FOR FAIR FOOD

The Alliance for Fair Food (AFF) works in partnership with the CIW, building a vibrant, diverse national network that takes action in pursuit of fair wages and working conditions for farmworkers through the national Campaign for Fair Food.

www.allianceforfairfood.org

STUDENT/FARMWORKER ALLIANCE

The Student/Farmworker Alliance (SFA), is a national network of students and young people organizing alongside farmworkers to uproot exploitation in the fields and build a food system based in justice, respect and dignity for farmworkers.

www.sfalliance.org