

Fair Trade USA Farm Workers Standard

Vision, Objectives and Summary

Final Version 1.0 – August 2012

Fair Trade USA developed the Farm Workers (FW) Standard to serve farm workers that do not own land, but work on larger farms. The objective of the standard is to increase empowerment, including leadership and organization of farm workers employed on the farm, economic development, and to ensure fair working conditions and environmentally responsible production methods.

The need for a Fair Trade standard for Farm Workers

While Fair Trade USA will always recognize FLO-CERT certification, we are also expanding the scope of Fair Trade USA standards available in order to deliver more impact for more people. To do this, Fair Trade USA is taking rigorous FLO standards that already exist for farm workers in tea, bananas and flowers, and is applying them to farm workers in coffee.

Summary of Fair Trade USA Farm Worker Standard

The Fair Trade USA FW Standard follows the development model of Fair Trade certification, expecting progress in the areas of empowerment, economic development, social development and environmental stewardship over time. Fair Trade USA encourages interested parties to download and read the full draft FW standard on the Fair Trade USA website.

To develop the FW Standard, Fair Trade USA reviewed several standards and their compliance criteria, including those published by Rainforest Alliance, FLO and SA 8000. Additionally, this standard follows the International Labor Organization (ILO) conventions, and requires compliance with national law as a baseline.

Empowerment

Inclusive participation and transparency

Through the process of electing a Fair Trade Committee, developing a Fair Trade Plan and making choices on how to spend the Fair Trade Community Development Premium, this standard aims to enhance the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and transform them into desired actions and outcomes. After training on Fair Trade and its concepts, the workers democratically-elect representatives to a Fair Trade Committee, whose composition represents that of the workforce on the farm. The Fair Trade Committee establishes a communication line between management and workers. Specifically, workers are able to partner with farm management to increase empowerment of all workers.

All decisions made by the Committee are made democratically and transparently.

Definition of development goals, Fair Trade premium ownership and Collective assets

The Fair Trade committee works closely with workers to decide what community projects they want to spend premium money on, and then create Fair Trade Plans based on the budget. Workers are empowered to determine how to spend community development premiums in a way that best meet the needs of their communities. Through these actions, our vision is that workers are able to build individual and collective assets and improve their effectiveness and participation on the farms for which they work.

Farmer Training

Fair Trade USA believes that ongoing education of workers is key to empowerment. Eight different elements of this standard are associated with training, capacity building and worker rights awareness.

Economic Development

Pre-Determined Premiums

Fair Trade USA standards require pre-determined community development premiums for every sale.

Wages

Farms are required to comply with national and local laws, sector regulations and industry averages at a minimum, with a focus on continuous improvement in wages.

Social Responsibility

Conditions of employment

Farms are required to comply with national and local laws, and establish health and safety measures to avoid work-related injuries. Workers are guaranteed access to healthcare.

Freedom of Association

The FW standards require that all workers have the right to unionize. Workers receive training on their options and have a right to choose how they would like to be represented. There is continuous dialogue between management, workers and their representatives.

Temporary and Migrant Labor

Fair Trade USA's intention is that the farm be able to hire the workers they need to run an efficient operation without rotating contracts to avoid legal obligations.

The farm moves away from subcontracting after one year of Fair Trade sales.

The farm carries out a needs assessment for the community where migrant workers come from and the Fair Trade Committee discusses and evaluates the possibility of Fair Trade Premium projects in these communities.

Environmental Stewardship

Farms operate in accordance with best practices for environmental sustainability including:

- eliminating the most toxic chemicals
- implementing preventive measures to avoid pest development and alternatives to pesticide application
- undertaking practices to prevent soil erosion and increase soil fertility
- safely disposing of waste and limiting waste where possible
- maintaining buffer zones for protected areas, recording energy consumption
- implementing procedures to use water sources efficiently
- working with local projects or has a biodiversity plan

Conclusions

Fair Trade USA is committed to partnering with workers and farm management on their journey within Fair Trade certification. Our hope is that the FW Standard provides a gradual approach to worker empowerment while bringing immediate benefits of economic development, social responsibility and environmental stewardship to the farm and its workers. We welcome all feedback on how to improve our Farm Worker standard and program. Please contact us at standards@fairtradeusa.org.