

Behind the Canned Tomatoes

LABOUR EXPLOITATION IN THE PRODUCTION OF CANNED TOMATOES

SOLD IN DANISH SUPERMARKETS

Report results:

- Italy has the biggest export of canned tomatoes worldwide, with an annual export at 10,7 billion kroner¹.
- Two thirds of the canned tomatoes imported to Denmark are Italian², and that is an annual import of canned tomatoes for about 130 million kroner³. The majority of the tomatoes are grown in Italy's heel, Puglia (30%) and the surrounding regions (35%)⁴.
- 20% of the Italian tomatoes are picked by hand⁵, especially in the South of Italy. Manual labour is necessary for harvesting San Marzano, DOC and cherry-tomatoes, or when the soil is unfit for mechanical harvest. Furthermore, rain in the harvest season makes mechanical harvest difficult, if not impossible, and hence the percentage for manual harvest is much higher.
- On average a tomato picker earns € 3 (22 kr.) per hour in a 10-12 hours workday. An agricultural worker with a legal contract earns on average € 8,2 per hour⁶.
- The real number of illegal immigrants living and working in Italy is unknown. However, it has been estimated that 400.000 immigrant are picking vegetables in Italy without a contract or work permit. That means every third employee in the Italian agriculture works illegally⁷. This places the workers in a situation where they are vulnerable to the gangmasters, *i Caporali*⁸, whom the workers have to pay in order to get a job, food, housing, transport, and protection.

¹ Calculations from Trademap.org, product code 2002, tomatoes - prepared or preserved, 2013.

² Calculations from Trademap.org, product code 2002, tomatoes - prepared or preserved. Percentage of Danish import from Italien (21006 tons i 2013) in relation to Danish import from the world (33083 tons in 2013).

³ Eurostat

⁴ Email communication with Viviana de Dilectis, ANICAV 26/09/2014.

⁵ IEH 2013: 'Follow-up on an Agreement in the Italian Tomato Processing Sector: Report from visit by IEN Oct. 16-18, 2013', URL: <http://etiskhandel.no/Artikler/10666.html>

⁶ Calculations based on data from ISTAT, annual salary (2013) divided with the number of working hours, incl. paid holidays.

⁷ Istat: 36% undeclared work in agricultural sector in 2012

⁸ Working Lives 2011, 'Responses to Forced Labour in the EU, Country Report of Italy', URL: <http://workinglives.org/fms/MRSite/Research/wlri/Italy%20European%20Responses%20to%20Forced%20Labour.pdf>

- Employment of undocumented immigrants or employment of immigrants without a contract is use of - and in many cases exploitation of - an illegal workforce. A workforce which supplies to Danish companies, and therefore Danish consumers.
- DanWatch has investigated 13 *brands* of canned tomatoes, sold in Danish supermarkets owned by Dansk Supermarked, Coop Danmark, Dagrofa and LIDL. Only one of these 13 *brands*, Bioitalia, takes the full responsibility for the labour conditions throughout their supply chain⁹.
- Four of the companies behind canned tomatoes in Denmark do not take any responsibility for the tomato pickers' working conditions. The supplier has the full responsibility for any labour right issues in the supply chain. The four companies own the *brands* Irma Hverdag, Coop x-tra, La Campagna, Monte Rey, First Price, Grøn Balance, and Smagens Køkken.
- Four companies in the DanWatch investigation inform that their supplier's preservation factory has an international certification for health, safety, and social responsibility. The factories, that elaborate tomatoes for La Doria, Dansk Supermarked, Coop and SuperGros, hold already or are getting a SA8000 certification - however, the standard is not concerned with the tomato pickers work conditions.
- Agrigenus and Mutti are the only two of the companies in this survey, who can guarantee that their tomatoes are not handpicked by illegally employed seasonal workers. Agrigenus does not hire seasonal workers, and Mutti only hires students for the harvest in Northern Italy if mechanical harvest is impossible. Seven of the companies in the survey cannot guarantee, that their subcontractor do not exploit migrant workers.

⁹ The supply chain is the route of a tomato from the field to the supermarket.

Answers from the Danish supermarkets

This report has been sent to the supermarket corporations Dansk Supermarked, Coop Danmark, Dagrofa and LIDL, and they have been asked about their responsibility toward the consumer in relation to the findings. Questions and answers are listed in appendix 2.

Dansk Supermarked

Dansk Supermarked, which owns the retail chains Netto, Fakta, Bilka, and Føtex, trusts their suppliers. The corporation informs DanWatch that they have not been aware of any prior criticism of working conditions, including the use of illegal workers from their suppliers of canned tomatoes. Dansk Supermarked consider the supplier, and not Danish Supermarket, to be the main responsible for the ensuring proper working condition throughout the supply chain.

"We are doing everything possible to ensure that our suppliers comply with our trade agreement, but we also have to recognize that it is difficult to control the entire value chain," - Mads Hvitved Grand, press officer at Dansk Supermarked.

Dagrofa

Dagrofa owns the retail chain Kiwi and 1/3 of the Superbest shops in Denmark. Dagrofa disagrees with the report findings, and they state: *"We believe that our suppliers are doing everything possible to follow up (on their certifications, ed.), including unannounced audits in the fields and ensuring that it complies with the requirements for their suppliers (of fresh tomatoes, ed.) in relation to the tomato pickers,"* - Markela Dedopoulos Director for Communication at Dagrofa.

She adds that Dagrofa's suppliers agree to take the full responsibility for tomato pickers' working conditions, when they sign a contract with Dagrofa.

Coop

Coop Danmark is currently in the process of mapping their entire supply chain down to farm level in order to address the problems concerning illegal hiring of migrant workers in Italy.

"Generally speaking, Coop Denmark is convinced the staying away is not a solution to the issue. Our investments, therefore, have to contribute to better conditions in the supply chain." - Ulla Riber, Head of CSR for Coop Denmark.

Coop Danmark emphasizes that their suppliers have the responsibility of ensuring proper working condition, and the suppliers agree to such by signing the trade contract.

LIDL still had to answer to DanWatch's questions as this report came to an end.

DanWatch is a watchdog that monitors corporate social responsibility in Danish and multinational companies. We are a non-profit media and research centre, and a member of The Association of the Danish Specialized Press.

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