**Fyffes comments on Honduran melon farm accusations**

The report is part of a sustained campaign against Fyffes.

We are perplexed about the timing of this publication from Fair World Project and strongly refute the accusations in it about how we treat our workers. Approximately 6,000 of our 7,000 workers in Honduras are members of two legally recognized unions and they are covered by legally-binding collective bargaining agreements (CBAs). These CBAs were submitted to and endorsed by the Honduran Ministry of Labour in May 2019. The agreements were finalized last year and apply for three years.

**STAS negotiations**

The STAS Union that is extensively being mentioned in the report, was denied legal recognition in 2018. Honduran law only allows for one union per operation. Despite this, we have begun discussions with STAS about finding a solution so they can legally represent their workers and negotiate a parallel agreement. Last season as well as this season, Fyffes hired all the STAS-affiliated workers on the lists provided to Fyffes that were free and fit to work. A total of 44 were hired. At the beginning of the current melon season (October – December 2019), Fyffes gave its workers additional training by an independent NGO called FUNDAHRSE on ‘freedom of association’.

**COVID-19 precautions**

We completely refute the accusations regarding worker health and safety. Our focus is on putting the health and safety of our employees first. We provide all the necessary protective equipment required to keep our employees safe. Since the onset of Covid-19 globally, the company hired additional medical staff to implement a prevention plan for its Honduran employees. While the nature of field work is already at a social distance, we are providing employees in the fields with masks. In the packhouse, we have implemented social distancing, additional personal protective equipment and disinfection. On the buses that take our people to work, we have reduced the number of workers on the bus by one third, we disinfect the bus between trips, and we provide workers travelling with masks and hand sanitizer. We are working hard to educate workers about the benefits and importance of social distancing. We are also doing temperature testing.

**Melon consumption changes**

While the company is trying to protect its employees during these unprecedented times, it is also trying to keep the business running to keep people in jobs. This is very important as there is little or no social safety net in Honduras. At the same time, the impact of COVID-19 has significant impact on Fyffes’ business. All of Fyffes/SOL melons are exported to the US. COVID-19 has caused very real consumption changes in the US market as there is a very large melon component to the foodservice segment. This side of the business has practically evaporated in an extremely short space of time. In collaboration with food charities, Fyffes has donated excellent quality surplus melons to the local community as well as to foodbanks in the US.

The season is now finished, a bit earlier than usual. There is no more harvesting but some packing continues.