

Timeline of CIW's and Campaign for Fair Food's Engagement of Ahold

Summary:

Ahold has refused to join the Fair Food Program, the groundbreaking collaboration among farmworkers, Florida tomato growers, and now twelve of the world's largest retailers, that has won the praise of human rights observers from the United Nations to the White House for its unique success in eliminating longstanding farm labor abuses, including poverty wages, sexual harassment and in extreme instances, modern slavery, while simultaneously addressing their root causes in US agriculture.

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers and its allies have engaged Ahold since 2007 through letters, dialogue, peaceful mass actions, and by posing questions during Ahold's Annual General Meeting. CIW representatives met with Ahold executives in the Netherlands in 2010. Their meeting was cordial and positive, and resulted in a promise to arrange a meeting with US executives to continue the dialogue. At the brief meeting with US executives in New York that followed, however, the CIW was informed that Ahold was not going to join the Fair Food Program.

Ahold continues to promote as sufficient its own "standards of engagement," standards that notoriously failed to detect even one of the seven cases of forced labor that emanated from Florida's fields over the past decade and a half. Ahold's standards set a low bar of "obeying applicable laws," are devoid of clear measures for monitoring and enforcement, lack both transparency and independent oversight and ultimately have simply proven to be ineffective.

- 2005-2007** ***Yum! Brands (Taco Bell, March 5, 2005, all remaining brands May 18, 2007) and McDonald's (April 9, 2007) sign Fair Food agreements with the Coalition of Immokalee Works.***
- 2007** Alliance for Fair Food letter to John Rishton, CEO, Ahold USA, July 20, 2007. No response from Ahold.
- Coalition of Immokalee Workers' letter to John Rishton, CEO Ahold USA, August 22, 2007. No response from Ahold.
- 2008** ***Burger King signs Fair Food agreement with CIW, May 23, 2008***
- Whole Foods Market signs Fair Food agreement with CIW, September 10, 2008***

Alliance for Fair Food letter to John Rishton, CEO, Ahold USA, November 21, 2008. No response from Ahold.

Subway signs a Fair Food agreement with CIW, December 2, 2008

2009

Alliance for Fair Food Letter to John Rishton, CEO, Ahold (in Netherlands), January 12, 2009

CIW letter to John Rishton, CEO, Ahold (in Netherlands), February 11, 2009

Harriett Henteges, Vice President Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability, of Ahold responds saying that ensuring fair wages and human rights is the responsibility of the federal government, Florida state government and farm employers. She says all suppliers of Ahold are required to sign Ahold's Standards of Engagement. May 4, 2009.

Bon Appetit signs Fair Food agreement with CIW, April 29, 2009

CIW speaks at anti-slavery conference at the Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe, about their model of investigation, worker empowerment and prevention (elevating wages and conditions in the fields through the Fair Food agreements) May 4, 2009

Compass Group signs a Fair Food agreement with CIW, September 25, 2009

Alliance for Fair Food letter to John Rishton, CEO Ahold USA, November 30, 2009

2010

Aramark signs a Fair Food agreement with CIW, April 1, 2010

John Rishton, CEO of Ahold, signs Ahold onto the UN Global Compact (page, 8, Ahold Corporate Responsibility Report 2010)

CIW delegation meets with Ahold executives in Amsterdam, May 13, 2010. Then Ahold-USA met with CIW to inform them that they had no intention of signing a Fair Food agreement.

US State Department names CIW's anti-slavery coordinator the first-ever US-based Trafficking in Persons Hero when it releases the annual Trafficking in Persons Report, June 14, 2010.

Open Letter to Ahold by Dutch allies, calling on Ahold to sign a Fair Food agreement with the CIW, particularly in light of the CIW winning the anti-slavery award from US State Department and concerns that Ahold continued purchasing from a grower upon whose fields forced labor was found. http://ciw-online.org/blog/2010/06/ahold_open_letter/ June 30, 2010

National Economic and Social Rights Initiative Open Letter to Ahold, September 9, 2010. http://ciw-online.org/blog/2010/09/nesri_ahold_statement/

Sodexo signs a Fair Food agreement with CIW, August 24, 2010

Florida Tomato Growers Exchange signs a Fair Food agreement with CIW; Fair Food Program established, November 16, 2010;

Ahold releases a statement publicly praising the agreement between the FTGE and CIW, but doesn't commit to the Fair Food Program's benchmark standards or the penny-per-pound premium saying it will continue to pay "a fair market price for its tomatoes."

2011

800+ people march and rally in Copley Square, Boston, MA calling on Ahold to join the Fair Food Program, February 27, 2011.

Ahold releases its 2010 social responsibility report on March 2, 2011, which includes a statement that Ahold cut off purchases from Florida growers in response to being notified of slavery (U.S. v. Navarrete) in its supply chain by the CIW. This "cut off" of purchasing was during the off-season when tomatoes were not being produced. Ahold sent its own team of representatives to investigate and found growers to be compliant with Ahold's Standards of Engagement so resumed purchases in December of 2010, those same Standards that had not detected past cases of forced labor.

At Ahold's Annual General Meeting, on April 20, 2011, CIW and Allies from allies from FNV Bondegenoten, flyer Ahold shareholders as they arrive at the general meeting. Inside the

AGM, Lucas Benitez questions why Ahold won't support the highest ethical standards in its tomato supply chain. (http://ciw-online.org/blog/2011/04/ahold_shareholder_report/) Ahold claims during the meeting that it is in dialogue with CIW, but no representatives have spoken with CIW for over 5 months.

CIW's response to Ahold's claims, April 22, 2011 http://ciw-online.org/blog/2011/04/ciw_response_to_ahold/

Thanksgiving letter to Dick Boer, CEO of Koninklijke Ahold N.V, by National Religious Leaders in the US urges Ahold to join the Fair Food Program to help bring about a "harvest of human rights" that is "abundant" and "just." November 2011.

Harriet Hentges, VP Corporate Responsibility, Ahold USA, responds to Interfaith Action of Immokalee Florida who sent the national religious leaders' letter. Ms. Hentges says that Ahold's suppliers have demonstrated a commitment to Ahold's Standards of Engagement so it is "no surprise that they have entered into an agreement to adopt the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' Fair Food Code." She says Ahold will not participate in the penny-per-pound payments mischaracterizing them as involving the company in wage negotiations. On issue of forced labor she repeats what company said previously. December 20, 2011.

2012

Trader Joe's joins the Fair Food Program, February 9, 2012

At Ahold Annual General Meeting April 2012, Marijke Bijl urges Ahold to join the Fair Food Program, listing many of the companies, including Trader Joe's, participating in the program and contradicting Ahold's claim to be in dialogue with CIW. Ahold again responds by pointing to their own standards of engagement and saying they'll pay a "fair market price" (not the penny per pound premium). Majike challenges them that the penny is put in the price for tomatoes, so it is a fair market price that respects workers. They do not respond to her challenge but move on.

CIW engages in the Northeast Tour, which includes a delegation to Ahold Headquarters in Carlisle, PA (April 13, 2012) [<http://www.ciw-online.org/2012%20NE%20Tour%20updates/carlisle.html>]. The tour also includes an action of consumers outside Stop and Shop HQ in Quincy, MA and an action outside Giant HQ in Landover, MD.

Chipotle joins the Fair Food Program, October 4, 2012

2013

Ahold releases statement about CIW and why their own Standards of Engagement are sufficient, April 11 2013, <http://ciw-online.org/blog/2013/04/the-three-lies-ceos-tell-themselves-about-social-responsibility-that-only-they-believe-brought-to-you-by-royal-ahold/>

At Ahold's Annual General Meeting the Chairman of the Board of Ahold cuts off Lucas Benitez of CIW as he was posing a question about Ahold's refusal to join the Fair Food Program. Following the meeting Lucas spoke briefly with CEO Dick Boer. No further response from Ahold.

White House recognizes Fair Food Program which is singled out as "one of the most successful and innovative programs" in the world today in the fight to uncover — and prevent — modern-day slavery in a report by the President's Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. April 15, 2013.

*In May 2013, a delegation from the **United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights** visits Immokalee and, praises the FFP in its initial report on its first visit to the U.S.*

*Fair Food Program representatives present at the **UN's annual Business and Human Rights Forum in Geneva** to on the Fair Food Program's uniquely successful model.*

2014

Wal-Mart joins the Fair Food Program, January 16, 2014.
Chairperson of the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights attends the signing ceremony and says the Fair Food Program is a "global model" that is inspiring us all.

Letter from Human Rights organizations sent to James McCann, Ahold USA, April 9, 2014.