



Food Justice Certification for Brand Holders

The **Food Justice Certification** standards guarantee *just* working and living conditions for all agricultural and food and fiber system workers and *just* financial returns, equity, and fair pricing and contracts for farmers, their families, and other food businesses. AJP holds the **Gold Standard** for domestic fair trade certification.

In 1999, disappointed that the proposed U.S. National Organic Program's standards did not address the people involved in organic agriculture, Michael Sligh of the Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI-USA), Richard Mandelbaum of *Comité de Apoyo a los Trabajadores Agrícolas*/Farmworker Support Committee (CATA), Marty Mesh of Florida Organic Growers (FOG), and Elizabeth Henderson of Peacework Organic Farm and the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) began a stakeholder process to develop standards for the fair and *just* treatment of the people involved in organic and sustainable agriculture.

The Agricultural Justice Project standards for fair trade and social justice in the food and fiber system are based on the Declaration of Human Rights, the conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the experience of stakeholders including: farmers, farmworkers, farm labor organizations, organic farming associations, manufacturers, retailers and other participants in the food and fiber system in North America.

*Food Justice Certification is a label based on high-bar social justice standards allowing participation by every link in the food & fiber chain from **farm to table**.*

Principles: *All workers have the right to safe working conditions, just treatment, and fair compensation and all farmers and buyers have the right to fair, equitable, transparent agreements and pricing.*

What does the Food Justice Certification address?

- Rigorous environmental requirements for biodiversity, soil health, and animal welfare through Organic management practices on farms
- Third-Party certification
- Highest standards for fair and ethical labor and trade practices
- IFOAM and ILO principles of social justice
- Truth in labeling and transparent policies
- Governance by food system stakeholders

Demand for Ethical Purchasing is on the Rise:

*“Consumers care a lot about how their food is produced...When purchasing food, they want to support local farmers...And **most** are even willing to pay more for food to ensure that it was produced in fair working conditions” (31% look for fair trade food labeling) (Consumer Reports 2014).*

Brand Holder Labeling: Ingredients sourced from Food Justice Certified farms (claim based on % thresholds) and brand holder is Food Justice Certified as an employer and a buyer/trader and satisfies non-split operation policies).



Truth in labeling is insured by worker organizations interviewing employees about conditions at the workplace during inspections.



Spotlight: Brand Holder & Employee Standards

Responsibilities to Employees, Interns and Apprentices

- Clear multi-step conflict resolution process with no retaliation
- Termination only for just cause
- Right to freedom of association and collective bargaining
- Transparency of written work contract specifics
- Legitimate learning contracts (for interns and apprentices)
- No discrimination in hiring or compensation or any other capacity
- Preference for direct hiring (rather than through contractor)
 - Protections for minors under the age of 18
 - Safe and adequate housing (when provided)
 - Health and safety protections, including access to adequate medical care and a “right to know” clause regarding use of potential hazardous materials
 - At least one day of rest per week
 - Living wage for all employees (interns and apprentices are exempt and will have agreed upon fair stipend)
- Regular and timely payments and written pay stubs and standard deductions
- Sick, maternity or paternity, and family medical emergency leave (paid or unpaid)
- Worker’s compensation and unemployment
- Adequate trainings on their rights under the law and in the standards, as well as health and safety



Responsibilities to Suppliers

- Freedom of association and collective bargaining
- Clear multi-step conflict resolution process
- Fair, transparent, and equitable negotiating process for contracts/agreements
- Long term relationships with suppliers
- Negotiate fair and transparent pricing for suppliers
- Timely payments and profit sharing
- Prohibition of termination of contracts/agreements without just cause
- Encouraged purchase of local and regional supplier products and services to build more just and sustainable community relations



Farmer Direct, a farmer cooperative in Canada, was certified in 2010. Their fair trade grains are found in food co-ops and grocery stores nationwide.