

Walmart at the Crossroads

The Environmental and Labor Impact of Its Food Supply Chain

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



June 4, 2015
Food Chain Workers Alliance
Edited by Erika A. Inwald





The Food Chain Workers Alliance is a coalition of worker-based organizations whose members plant, harvest, process, pack, transport, prepare, serve, and sell food, organizing to improve wages and working conditions for all workers along the food chain. The Alliance works together to build a more sustainable food system that respects workers' rights, based on the principles of social, environmental and racial justice, in which everyone has access to healthy and affordable food.

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Table of Contents

I. Introduction	1
II. Walmart’s Labor and Environmental Standards and Local Food Purchase Goals	3
III. Overview of Walmart’s Record on Labor and the Environment	5
IV. Summary of Industry Reports	7
1. Mushrooms	7
2. Blueberries	8
3. Bananas	8
4. Packaged Salad Industry	9
5. Bread and Baked Goods	9
6. Eggs	10
7. Dairy	11
8. Chicken	12
9. Seafood	13
10. Warehouse and Food Distribution	14
V. The Impact of Walmart’s Local Food Purchasing Policies on Farmers	15
VI. Conclusion and Recommendations	16
VII. Endnotes	20



I. Introduction

This report assesses the labor conditions of workers and farmers in Walmart's food supply chain as well as the company's environmental impact worldwide. Walmart is the world's largest retailer and one of the most highly valued publicly traded companies. Foodstuffs currently account for over half of Walmart sales, representing roughly 25% of all groceries sold in the United States.¹ **Walmart's**



Photo by David Bacon

influence on suppliers and distributors in the food chain gives it incredible power in the global food system. While Walmart and its suppliers have routinely violated its code of ethics, recently the company has demonstrated some willingness to improve its supply chain standards and wages for 600,000 of its employees. **So far Walmart's commitments to improving standards appear to be mostly a public relations stunt and haven't translated to improvements in conditions**

for most of its food supply chain. Walmart now has an opportunity to wield its power to the benefit of workers, farmers, communities, and the environment.

Walmart claims to incorporate a "supply-chain management" philosophy, and this strategy gives the retailer an inordinate amount of control over its suppliers.² Its "Responsible Sourcing" code of ethics requires suppliers to abide by standards that include a number of basic thresholds, most of which are already required by federal, state, and/or municipal laws. These standards consist of labor protections, such as hours of work, pay, and health and safety, as well as environmental policies, such as complying with local and international laws and regulations and reducing pollutants and waste. Walmart also set a goal of purchasing \$1 billion worth of "local" food from area farmers by 2015 with specific percentage targets for certain countries, including the United States.

Walmart's supply chain strategy leads it to source disproportionately from places with lax local environmental and labor regulations. The price limitations imposed by Walmart create incentives to cut corners rather than establish high standards to keep Walmart's business. Walmart is also well known for

pressuring its suppliers to cut prices³ – “Walmart squeezing its suppliers is nothing new,” according to *Fortune*.⁴ **This report underscores how Walmart has chosen extraordinary profits over genuine enforcement of suppliers’ compliance with the code of ethics and over its own goals for environmental sustainability and local food purchases.**

This account includes a detailed performance analysis of some of Walmart’s key suppliers, vis-à-vis its responsible sourcing code of ethics. The data that informs this report was collected during the summer of 2014 through the spring of 2015 by the Food Chain Workers Alliance. The Food Chain Workers Alliance analyzed products sold in a total of 17 Walmart stores throughout the United States as well as products listed for sale on the company website. Field research was collected on the following popular food items and sectors:

- **Produce**
 - Mushrooms
 - Blueberries
 - Bananas
- **Packaged and Processed Food**
 - Packaged Lettuce
 - Bread
- **Animal Products**
 - Chicken
 - Seafood
 - Eggs
 - Dairy

Researchers also studied the **food distribution and warehouse industry** and **Walmart’s impact on local farmers.**

Research conducted for this report focused on 22 corporations and found numerous cases in which these suppliers have failed to uphold Walmart’s compliance standards and Walmart has neglected to enforce its own standards and goals. **The myriad violations Walmart and its suppliers have committed include illegal dumping of hazardous waste, improper protection of workers from pesticide exposure, violations of workers’ freedom of association, and, in some cases, slave and forced labor, both in the United States and abroad.** Walmart has slowly been moving in the right direction to improve its practices on these issues, as evident by the company’s recent decision to raise the minimum wage of 500,000 of its direct U.S. store employees to \$9 per hour, to start the minimum wage for over 100,000 department managers at \$13 per hour, and to sign on to the Coalition of Immokalee Workers’ Fair Food Program.^{5,6,7} Walmart, nevertheless, has a long way to go before becoming a leader in upholding ethical corporate practices.



II. Walmart's Labor and Environmental Standards and Local Food Purchase Goals

Walmart has a long list of labor and environmental standards that it claims to hold its suppliers to. Some of these include*:

Labor:

- Compliance with local and national laws pertaining to labor, immigration, health and safety, and the environment
- No slave, child, indentured labor or human trafficking may be permitted
- Working hours should comply with the law and workers should be provided rest days
- Hiring decisions should be based upon individuals' capabilities in doing the work, and should verify that workers are of legal age and have authorization to work
- Worker compensation should be the equivalent to or higher than legal standards, and compensation should include wages, overtime pay, and benefits
- Suppliers must allow workers to exercise their right to join unions and bargain collectively
- The working environment should protect the health and safety of workers, and suppliers must take any steps necessary to prevent workplace hazards and accidents
- Any housing facilities provided to workers must be safe, clean, and sanitary
- Suppliers must abstain from any involvement in corrupt practices with public officials or individuals involved in the private sector



Photo by Forrest Woodward



* The full list of labor and environmental standards can be found in Chapter II of the full report.

Environment:

- Supplier manufacturing facilities should comply with all the laws of the jurisdiction in which it operates, specifically including environmental laws pertaining to waste disposal, air emissions, discharges, toxic substances and hazardous waste
- Suppliers should be leaders in the implementation of measures for reducing air and water pollutants, energy and water usage, and waste
- Suppliers should have an awareness of significant environmental aspects and impacts, both positive and negative
- Deliver hazardous waste for offsite treatment and disposal only to contractors licensed or permitted by appropriate competent authority (if any), which should be verified regularly
- Handle, store, and transport hazardous waste in a safe and environmentally (secondary containment) sound manner to control any risks of environmental contamination
- Obtain and maintain appropriate permits for wastewater/effluents treatment and discharge, as required by law
- Take necessary corrective actions in the event discharge limits are exceeded
- Obtain and maintain appropriate permits for air emissions as required by law
- Strictly comply with any applicable air emissions limits as required by law
- Take immediate corrective actions in the event emission limits are exceeded
- Obtain and maintain appropriate permits for water use / extraction as required by law
- Strictly comply with any applicable air emissions limits as required by law

Local Food:

Walmart has also established goals for itself in terms of food purchases from local farmers:

- Wal-Mart pledged in 2008 to buy more local fruits and vegetables.
- In 2010, it announced it would sell \$1 billion worth of local food in the following five years from small and medium farms in emerging markets and double sales of local produce in the United States.



III. Overview of Walmart's Record on Labor and the Environment

Labor

Walmart uses “its size to extract lower prices from suppliers” as a means of gaining a greater share of the consumer dollar and decreasing its costs. Demanding such low prices means that Walmart is almost forcing suppliers to pay their workers unfair wages and is compelling farmers to accept an unsustainable price for their products.

Walmart and its suppliers have a history of violating labor standards and encouraging practices that are harmful to workers.^{8,9,10,11} Workers in Walmart's stores and in its food supply chain endure a slew of labor problems, including gender and racial discrimination, unfair treatment of immigrants, low pay, unsafe working conditions, a lack of agency in the workplace, and, in some cases, slavery.

Unfortunately, Walmart's inability to hold itself and its suppliers accountable to its code of conduct has allowed for numerous cases of discrimination in the workplace. Female Walmart employees have sued the company for pay and promotion discrimination that favored male workers.¹² People of color have encountered racial discrimination while working at the companies that supply food for Walmart, and immigrant or non-English speaking workers are also at risk for discrimination and unfair treatment by the companies in Walmart's supply chain.^{13,14} Although Walmart claims to coordinate inspections with suppliers, somehow mistreatment of workers goes unnoticed.¹⁵



Photo by U. Roberto Romano

Environment

Walmart has not prioritized holding its suppliers and itself accountable to sustainable environmental practices. **As of April 2015, renewable energy accounted for only 16% of**



Walmart's total energy consumption in the U.S.¹⁶ Kohl's and Starbucks both score better than Walmart in terms of percentage of energy consumption derived from renewable sources.¹⁷ In fact, Walmart ranks 33rd in the list of top industrial polluters, just after Chevron.¹⁸

In the Walmart environmental code of conduct for its suppliers, the company emphasizes compliance with laws pertaining to disposal of hazardous and air emissions. **Walmart, however, has**



Photo by Eurico Zimbres [CC BY-SA 2.5 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5>)], via Wikimedia Commons

itself been cited repeatedly for violations of the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act.^{19,20}

In terms of its supply chain, Walmart announced in 2010 that it would cut 20 million metric tons (MMTs) of greenhouse gas emissions out of its supply chain by the end of 2015.²¹ As of March 2015, though, Walmart was at 38 percent goal completion with just 7 months left in the plan.²² Walmart's demand for

extremely low prices also means suppliers may struggle to test new strategies that would reduce emissions for fear of losing their contract with Walmart.²³ Although Walmart has an environmental code of conduct in place, the company violates its own regulations and has not held its suppliers accountable to these environmental standards.

IV. Summary of Industry Reports

Along with the environmental and labor standards put forth by Walmart for their suppliers, in 2010, the company introduced a set of Global Sustainable Agriculture Goals. In this report, the company pledged to support local economies, help small and mid-sized farms expand their businesses, and reduce the environmental impact of farming within a five-year timeline.²⁴ Research on four different food sectors have found that Walmart is not keeping its suppliers accountable to the labor, environmental, and sustainable agriculture standards that it put forth and is actually involved in practices contrary to its sustainability goals.

1. *Mushrooms*

Mushrooms have become an increasingly important specialty crop over the last few years. Walmart sources its mushrooms primarily from two companies: Monterey Mushrooms, Inc. and Giorgio Foods, Inc. The two companies cooperate with one another in the production process. They share trucks and personnel and members of both companies sit on each other's boards and committees. This close relationship between Monterey Mushrooms and Giorgio Foods suggests that there is an unfair marketplace for small and mid-size mushroom farms.

Larger companies contract out production to a number of smaller farms around the country. Switching from controlling production to being basically a contract worker can be detrimental to farmers and negatively impact the labor and environmental standards of farms. Walmart's continued preference for Monterey Mushrooms and Giorgio Foods as their primary mushroom suppliers demonstrates that the company is not upholding its pledge.

Both companies have been cited for violations of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA),^{25,26} while five Monterey Mushroom facilities have reports of environmental violations in the Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) database within the last three years.²⁷



2. Blueberries

Blueberries are becoming increasingly popular in the United States. In the fresh berry sector of the U.S. agricultural industry, Naturipe Farms, California Giant, and SunnyRidge Farms are all leading growers or shippers. Although Walmart might source its blueberries from a variety of suppliers, our industry report focuses on two of Walmart’s main blueberry suppliers, Naturipe Farms, LLC and SunnyRidge Farms.

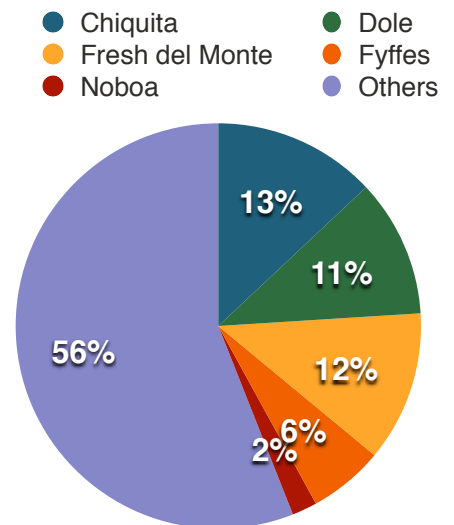
The grower partners of Naturipe Farms and the parent companies of SunnyRidge Farms, Dole Berry and Dole Food, have been cited for labor violations.^{28,29,30} A 2009 International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF) report, in fact, found that Dole Food is responsible for violating workers’ rights globally and denying them “the internationally recognized right to freedom of association.”³¹

3. Bananas

Due to direct purchasing by large chains, such as Walmart, and shifts in supply chain practices at the global level, banana workers currently face barriers to collective bargaining and safe working conditions.³² Chiquita, Fresh Del Monte, and Dole are three major banana suppliers to Walmart that have, in particular, demonstrated harmful labor and environmental practices.^{33,34,35,36,37,38,39} A 2012 report revealed that Dole Food faced a lawsuit for misleading customers about its efforts at

sustainability. The company was also accused of sourcing bananas from a Guatemalan plantation that implemented a dam system that drained thousands of acres of wetlands and caused subsequent flooding. This incident resulted in huge economic losses for the local residents and in the destruction of workers’ livelihood.⁴⁰

Figure 1: Market Share of the Largest Banana Companies



Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



Photo courtesy of International Labor Rights Forum

4. *Packaged Salad Industry*

Packaged salad is a relatively new product in the processed foods industry. The top five packaged salad producers by U.S. domestic market share are Fresh Express (owned by Chiquita), Dole, Taylor Farms, Ready Pac, and Earthbound Farm. In addition to selling the brand-name products of these companies, Walmart is likely purchasing its Marketside salad greens from them as well. Recalls of Walmart's packaged lettuce from a few of these companies further demonstrate that these five businesses are indeed producers for some of Walmart's store brands.^{41,42,43,44}



Photo courtesy of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters

Some of these businesses, however, have violated Walmart's labor and environmental codes of conduct. Two of the five largest packaged lettuce producers, Taylor Farms and Ready Pac, have had the most significant issues with labor. Taylor Farms accrued \$80,000 in OSHA penalties from 2008 to 2013 and is currently undergoing a wage theft class action lawsuit.⁴⁵ According to workers at Taylor Farms' two facilities in Tracy, California, union

supporters are encountering retaliation from the company. Ready Pac and its subsidiary Tanimura & Antle (T&A) salad grower have been cited for several OSHA violations in the past several years.^{46,47}

5. *Bread and Baked Goods*

The bread industry encompasses the production and sale of fresh and frozen bread, cakes, muffins, croissants, and other baked goods. This sector annually contributes 706,870 jobs and \$38.5 billion in taxes and has a "direct economic impact" of \$102 billion annually on the U.S. economy.^{48,49} The number of key players in the bread industry has shrunk from eight to three in the past decade, which means this sector can now be considered a consolidated market.⁵⁰ The two largest bread

companies in the United States are Grupo Bimbo followed by Flowers Foods and both are major suppliers to Walmart.

Flowers Foods, in particular, has a relatively substantial record of labor violations. Since 2010, at least 12 unfair labor practices have been filed against Flowers Foods for actions including interference with worker organizing, discriminating against workers because of union activity, and failure to bargain in good faith.⁵¹ From 2009 to 2014, OSHA cited Flowers for 64 violations in multiple states and issued initial fines in the amount of \$154,150 – these health and safety incidents included amputations of workers’ body parts.⁵² Lastly, on September 11, 2012, three direct store delivery workers from Flowers Baking Company of Jamestown in North Carolina (a subsidiary of Flowers Foods) filed a federal class action lawsuit against Flowers for their misclassification as independent contractors.⁵³



A Flowers Bakery store
 Photo by Michael Rivera (Own work) [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons

6. Eggs

Figure 2: Largest Egg Industry Companies

Egg Industry Company	Number of Egg-Laying Chickens
Cal-Maine Foods	33 million
Rose Acre Farms	22 million
Moark, LLC	13 million
Daybreak Foods	13 million
Rembrandt Foods	13 million

Source: “Economic Data,” U.S. Poultry and Egg Association

While in the past the egg sector was composed of many small producers, today's operations are highly centralized and more specialized. The companies with more than 1 million birds represent almost 87 percent of total egg production.⁵⁴ Five main companies now dominate the egg production industry. These businesses are Cal-Maine Foods, Rose Acre Farms, Moark, LLC, Daybreak Foods, and Rembrandt Foods. Field investigators from the FCWA confirmed that these companies are, in fact, the biggest suppliers of eggs to Walmart.

This report focused on Cal-Maine Foods, Rose Acre Farms, and Moark, LLC. All three have been cited for OSHA violations in the past few years.^{55,56,57} Additionally, on June 5, 2013, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission reported that Cal-Maine Foods, Inc. violated federal law by “subjecting an African-American employee to racial and sexual harassment and retaliation.”⁵⁸

Cal-Maine Foods, Rose Acre Farms, and Moark, LLC have also been accused of environmental pollution and the former two of inhumane treatment of chickens.^{59,60} For example, Cal-Maine Foods was cited numerous times in November 2008 for spilling chicken manure and parts into rivers and streams, including an Ohio incident that killed 49,000 fish in the Stillwater River.⁶¹ In March 2012, a Rose Acre facility in North Carolina was accused of causing airborne emissions under federal clean-water laws,⁶² and in November 2005, the *Kansas City Star* reported that all three of the Moark facilities in southwest Missouri had continually violated state environmental laws.⁶³

7. Dairy



Joel Greeno, president of Family Farm Defenders (Photo courtesy of National Family Farm Coalition)

The dairy industry consists of retail sales of milk, cheese, soy products, spreadable fats, and yogurt. The trend towards mass production in the dairy industry means “farms with more than 500 milking cows now account for 63 percent of the milk supply in the United States,⁶⁴ up 39 percent from a decade ago.”⁶⁵ Small farmers especially have a difficult time surviving the fluctuating prices of milk. In May 2015, Joel Greeno, president of Family Farm Defenders, wrote in an article, “The exodus of dairy farmers

continues unabated as the price paid to dairy farmers drops – to about \$15 a hundredweight or \$1.50 a



gallon, a record low. Dairy farmers are now being paid 40 percent less for their milk than a year ago.”⁶⁶

Four of Walmart’s main dairy suppliers – Nestlé S.A., Dean Foods, Schreiber Foods, and Land O’ Lakes – in particular, have been involved in many cases of farmer and worker mistreatment, as well as in lawsuits related to environmental damage.⁶⁷

8. *Chicken*

The poultry industry consists of fresh, frozen, and processed chicken and turkey, as well as other birds. This sector includes over 300 companies earning combined annual revenue of \$52 billion. The 50 largest companies, the largest of those supplying Walmart, hold more than 90 percent of the wealth.⁶⁸ In 2012, the four largest companies processed 57.1 percent of all broilers (as chickens for consumption are called) in the U.S.⁶⁹

The top poultry brands sold at Walmart include Tyson, Pilgrim’s Pride, Perdue, and Foster Farm. This report focuses on the first three. Although some of the workers at Tyson and Pilgrim’s Pride have a union, and therefore benefit from higher wages and better working conditions, the majority of workers at these two companies, and all of the Perdue workers, do not have a union. All three companies have been cited for major labor violations. Tyson, in particular, was fined \$7.2 million for OSHA violations from 2007 to 2012, including 11 worker fatalities.⁷⁰

All three companies have also been cited for harmful environmental practices and inhumane treatment of animals.⁷¹ For example, in 2013, Tyson reached a settlement with the United States Environmental Protection Agency to pay a \$3.95 million penalty “to address threats of accidental chemical releases after anhydrous ammonia was released” at its facilities in four states, “resulting in multiple injuries, property damage, and one fatality.”⁷² Perdue has been criticized for contributing to pollution in Chesapeake Bay.^{73,74}

Besides labor and environmental violations, a significant problem in the poultry industry is the existence of an abusive contract system for chicken growers. Contract-farming is a system in which “integrators,” such as Tyson and Perdue, hire independent growers to raise chickens for them. Growers

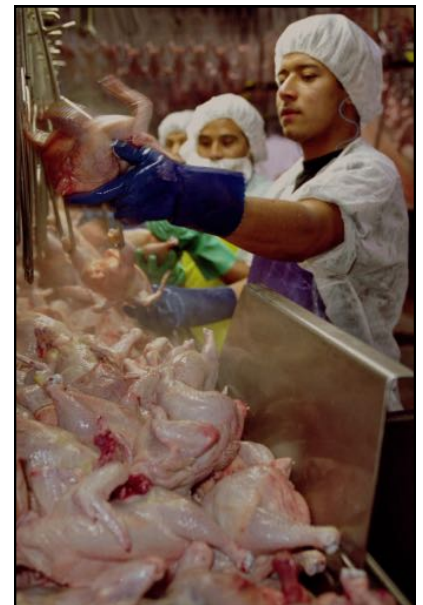


Photo by Earl Dotter

borrow between \$500,000 and \$2 million to pay for the chicken “houses” that are required by many of the integrators.⁷⁵ Large chicken companies often mislead growers about how much they are going to earn and about the true costs of production.⁷⁶

9. Seafood

An estimated 10-12 percent of the world’s population depends on fisheries and aquaculture for their livelihoods,⁷⁷ and in 2010, seafood accounted for almost 17 percent of global consumption of animal proteins.⁷⁸ Growing consumption has led to over-harvesting of fish stocks⁷⁹ and an increasing reliance on forced labor. The United States State Department has found that 51 countries have forced labor on fishing vessels in their waters.⁸⁰



Dorms for shrimp workers in Thailand
(Photo courtesy of International Labor Rights Forum)

Walmart has become one of the fastest growing seafood retailers in the United States.⁸¹ Walmart receives much of its seafood from various suppliers in Asia where wages are dramatically lower and fishery management is less developed. Numerous non-governmental organizations, media organizations, and even U.S. government officials have reported that “human trafficking, forced and child labour and human rights abuses are widespread in Asia and Africa’s marine fisheries.”⁸² Walmart has appeared in investigations of slavery and forced labor in the shrimp harvesting and

processing industries in Thailand by the Associated Press and the *Guardian*.^{83,84} These gross exploitative conditions have also occurred in Walmart’s U.S. supply chain. Workers were forced to work 16-24 hours per day and at times were locked into C.J.’s Seafood processing plant in Louisiana.⁸⁵

Besides troubling labor conditions, Walmart’s seafood supply chain also includes environmental problems. Walmart is the largest importer of farm-raised shrimp in the U.S.⁸⁶ Farm-raised shrimp and seafood raises many environmental concerns, including contamination of the oceans and the destruction of natural ecosystems.



10. Warehouse and Food Distribution

Since Walmart has a global supply chain, the company requires a variety of transportation methods to ensure goods arrive properly at its stores worldwide. Walmart's products move through numerous distribution networks via logistics contractors and warehouses located in various regions around the globe. Walmart's labor strategy is to outsource warehouse management and product distribution to third-party logistics companies that often use temporary staffing agencies to hire warehouse employees.

Schneider Logistics and United Natural Foods, Inc. (UNFI)* are two examples of Walmart warehouse and distribution contractors that have been found in violation of the most basic labor standards. In May 2014, more than 1,800 people who worked at three Schneider facilities in Mira Loma from 2001 to 2013 won a \$21 million settlement against Walmart and Schneider Logistics to compensate for unpaid wages, interest and penalties.⁸⁷ The National Labor Relations Board, the federal agency charged with enforcing labor laws in the U.S., has issued a number of complaints against UNFI for violating workers' rights to the freedom of association and collectively bargain, and UNFI has also been cited for environmental concerns.^{88,89,90,91}



Photo courtesy of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters



* UNFI is a distributor for Walmart's Neighborhood Market stores.

V. The Impact of Walmart's Local Food Purchasing Policies on Farmers

In order to help farmers, Walmart pledged in 2008 to buy more local fruits and vegetables.⁹² In 2010, Walmart announced it would sell \$1 billion worth of local food in the following five years from small and medium-sized farms in emerging markets, as well as double sales of local produce in the United States.

Many question, however, whether Walmart's commitment to sustainability benefits farmers or whether this case is simply another example of corporate greenwashing.^{93,94,95} For example, some farmers sell directly to a Walmart store through produce managers, while others sell to category managers responsible for a single fruit or vegetable that is then sold throughout the state. The implication for farmers is that they receive inconsistent prices for their produce depending on whom they work with, and in some instances, when the person they work with leaves the company, their replacement is no longer interested in buying from a farmer or a cooperative.⁹⁶ There have also been a number of recorded instances displaying Walmart's lack of loyalty to its suppliers, such as dumping them when they want to cut costs or refusing to fulfill its obligations to buy from a supplier if a distribution center has already met its quota.⁹⁷



Photo by Cpl. Nicole A. LaVine [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

VI. Conclusion and Recommendations

Research on 11 different food-related industries in Walmart's supply chain, as well as on the corporation's impact on local farmers, demonstrate that Walmart can do much to improve its



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operations and conditions for workers, farmers, and the environment in its food supply chain. Although Walmart says it holds its suppliers accountable to strict labor and environmental standards, including banning a supplier if standards are not met, our analysis indicates that Walmart is not fulfilling this promise as the companies in this report continue to supply food to Walmart despite having committed violations of Walmart's code of conduct.

Given the findings discussed in this report, we suggest improvements in the following areas, in addition

to calling on Walmart to actually enforce its existing labor and environmental standards and fulfill its goals for local food purchases.

Recommendations for Walmart – Supply Chain:

1. Improve supply chain transparency. Suppliers should be required to identify the names and addresses of all factories, farms, fishing vessels, or other entities that contribute to the product being purchased before a supplier contract is awarded. Walmart should make this information public to allow workers' organizations to identify goods in Walmart's supply chain.
2. Create an independent, third party monitoring entity that includes workers, workers' organizations, and environmental justice organizations in governance, oversight, and on-the-ground monitoring and whose role and function is separate and distinct from the Walmart Corporation. This monitoring entity would:
 - a. Verify supplier compliance with Walmart's labor and environmental standards



- b. Recommend supplier contract amendments and cancellations to Walmart
- c. Conduct random, unannounced inspections and interview workers about whether workplace conditions are safe for them to speak openly
- d. Make findings public
- e. Provide a confidential mechanism for worker grievances, separate from any a grievance mechanism that the supplier establishes, that includes whistleblower protection and restitution for workers whose rights are violated



Blueberry workers (Photo courtesy of CATA - the Farmworker Support Committee)

- 3. Ensure that the farmers, ranchers, and fishers included in its supply chain receive long-term contracts and are paid a fair price for what they raise or harvest that reflects their cost of production and includes labor at a fair wage
- 4. Require that suppliers pay at least \$15 per hour to their employees in the U.S. and comparable living wages in other countries, provide paid sick days and other benefits, and respect workers' right to freedom of association and collective bargaining.
- 5. Prevent labor contracting abuse by requiring that any costs incurred for recruiting workers be borne by the employer, not the workers. Ensure that all workers have access to a contract that clearly outlines conditions of employment in a language they can understand, with regular pay stubs that itemize and explain any deductions.
- 6. Establish a complaint-driven investigation and remediation process that allows any person or organization to flag when a contractor or subcontractor is failing to comply with the terms of the supplier contract.
- 7. Ensure that exploited workers have access to appropriate remedies and support services and are not left in situations that expose them to further exploitation.

8. Mandate that antibiotics can only be used for sick animals. Add standards for the humane treatment of animals that also require improvements in the conditions of how animals are raised* because these conditions currently encourage the routine use of antibiotics. These improved conditions should include an enriched environment, more space, better sanitation, more natural lighting, and an end to practices that selectively breed animals for extreme levels of production.
9. Prioritize purchasing food from farmers, ranchers, and fishers who use sustainable agriculture and aquaculture practices, such as organic, biodynamic, non-toxic bio-intensive integrated pest management, farm diversification, and small-scale farming/fishing.

Recommendations for Walmart – Its Own Operations:

Labor:

1. Respect the rights of Walmart workers to organize and speak out. End illegal retaliation.
2. Instate a \$15 per hour minimum wage at its U.S. facilities and comparable living wages at its other stores around the world.
3. Revise scheduling practices to offer full-time status to any associate who wants a full-time position and who has worked at Walmart for over one year.
4. Establish a 40-hour minimum for associates with full-time status.



Photo by Food Chain Workers Alliance

Environment:

1. Make a real investment in renewable energy.
2. Stop paving fields and forests for new stores.
3. Make a rapid and significant reduction in the use of coal as an energy source.



* Although Walmart announced in May of 2015 that it would ask its suppliers to adopt animal welfare standards and ask them to limit the use of antibiotics for sick animals, the guidelines are voluntary and do not include everything in our recommendations.

Recommendations for Policy Makers:

Government oversight and enforcement should be modernized to end the downward pressure on labor and environmental standards in the global supply chain. The President or Congress should create a Blue Ribbon Commission of experts representing all stakeholders in the food supply chain to:

- a. Investigate the extent to which large supermarket chains, like Walmart, are abusing their buyer power in food supply chains, identify such abuses, and make policy recommendations to curtail any abuses identified.
- b. Create a Suppliers' Bill of Rights, that:
 - i. Identifies and prohibits specific unfair practices that constitute buyer power abuse by large supermarkets against suppliers;
 - ii. Allows suppliers to file confidential complaints against perceived buyer power abuses; and
 - iii. Creates an independent adjudicator, with subpoena power, to receive, investigate, and prosecute complaints filed by suppliers.
- c. Consider other antitrust and regulatory reforms to curtail buyer power abuse, including but not limited to, recommendations on how to bolster antitrust regimes at an international level to curtail buyer power abuses in global food supply chains.



VII. Endnotes

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