

End Modern-Day Slavery in the Fields

Send postcards to Grocery Chains: Kroger, Publix and Ahold

Through the PC(USA) Campaign for Fair Food, the church has been working in partnership with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, a community-based organization comprised of and led by farmworkers in southwest Florida, to address poverty wages and human rights abuses, including modern-day slavery, in the tomato fields of Florida.

Tomato pickers toil long days for 45 cents per 32-lb bucket of tomatoes, with no right to overtime pay, no health insurance, no sick leave, no paid vacation, and no right to organize to improve these conditions. In the most extreme cases, workers are held against their will and forced to work in modern-day slavery rings. **The CIW has worked with the US Department of Justice and FBI to investigate and successfully prosecute 7 cases of slavery in recent years, freeing more than 1,000 slaves.**



The PC(USA) has been instrumental in helping the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, in reaching groundbreaking agreements with Yum! Brands (Taco Bell, KFC, Pizza Hut and others), McDonald's, Burger King, Subway, Whole Foods Market and Bon Appétit foodservice to

1. pay a penny per pound increase to farmworkers harvesting for suppliers of these companies and
2. work with the CIW to develop a human-rights based code of conduct to address abuses in the fields, which includes a zero tolerance policy for modern-day slavery.

Now we turn to the grocery industry to ask three prominent chains, Kroger, Ahold, and Publix, to do just what these other food giants have already done – forge similar agreements with the CIW to advance human rights for farmworkers. While you may not recognize the name Ahold, you will recognize its subsidiaries Stop 'n Shop and Giant; the same with Kroger, which owns Dillons and many, many other chains. The CEOs of these grocery companies are the decision-makers on these sorts of matters for their local chains.

How You Can Help

1. Send Postcards

You can help by sending postcards to the CEO of the corporation whose grocery store is in your neighborhood. We have found that companies are very alert to what their consumer base communicates to them. Your witness matters. **To order postcards** contact the Rev. Noelle Damico at noelle.damico@pcusa.org or call 631-751-7076.



Generally, Kroger and its brands cover the West, Mid-West, and South. Ahold, and its subsidiaries cover the Northeast. And Publix predominates in Florida and throughout the Southeast. (You are, of course, welcome to send postcards to all three companies!)

Kroger is based in Cincinnati but has 2,479 stores in 31 states under the following brands: Kroger, Ralph's, King Soopers, Food 4 Less, Fry's, Dillons, City Market, Fred Meyer, Smith's, Foods Co., Hilander, Jay C, Pay Less, Owen's, Scott's, Gerbes, QFC.

Ahold is based in The Netherlands, their US office is in Quincy, MA. They own 704 stores in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic under the following brands: Stop & Shop, Giant Foods, and Martin's.

Publix is based in Lakeland, FL and owns stores throughout Florida and the Southeast.

2. Meet with Local Grocery Store Managers

Take a small delegation of members from your church to meet with the manager of your local Kroger, Publix or Ahold –owned grocery store. Explain that you are from a local Presbyterian congregation and that you care about how the food that you purchase is produced. You are concerned about the poverty wages and, in extreme instances, the slavery conditions faced by farmworkers harvesting tomatoes in Florida and want that grocery store to work with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers to address this exploitation as other food buyers have already done.

The PC(USA) was a signatory, along with many other institutions of faith and conscience, to letters in November 2007 and November 2008 to major grocery, restaurant and foodservice corporations including Kroger, Ahold and Publix, urging them to work with the CIW. You can download a copy of the letter to bring with you to the manager at <http://allianceforfairfood.org/2008affletter.html> . Or if you prefer, you can download a company-specific letter to the manager that you can sign yourself at <http://www.pcusa.org/fairfood/action.htm> .

Learn more about the PC(USA) Campaign for Fair Food at www.pcusa.org/fairfood Learn more about human trafficking and modern-day slavery at www.pcusa.org/humantrafficking .

