

2018 Michigan Good Food Summit

Breakout Session #4: Fair Food from Fair Labor: National and Regional Tools to Reduce Exploitation

10:45 am

Speakers: Teresa Hendricks-Pitsch, Migrant Legal Aid; Nely Rodriguez, Coalition of Immokalee Workers

Nely Rodriguez – Southeast of Florida From the Fields to Produce Aisle

1. Fair Food Program – Raise awareness of horrendous working conditions
 - a. Especially today with how everyone should be more sustainable. Needs to include the workers voice, experts in the fields.
2. How do the tomatoes arrive to the stores? How do we know workers are treated fairly
 - a. Make sure food is sourced from responsible harvesters.
3. Farm workers in U.S. agriculture labor abuse – Slavery (modern), rape in fields, sexual violence.
4. Coalitions started in 1990s – getting people together, workers together, see what conditions people had. No water, shade, etc. Met with growers (the people in power).
5. Farm workers being held captive. U-Haul trucks, fed, bathed and slept. Saw this in many farming communities. When cases came out, growers acted like they didn't know. Judge's prosecuted growers for slavery.
6. Labor abuse – forced labor, violence, sexual assault, threat of violence, display of weapons, wage theft, discrimination, verbal abuse, retaliation for exercising rights and/or making complaints, 35 cents for 30 pound bucket of produce.
7. The problems – new standards or laws alone cannot solve deeply entrenched issues.
8. The Fair Food Program – market consequences. Worker to worker education enforce working for one another.
 - a. 14 corporations signed on to an agreement.
 - b. Growers will have consequences from corporations if they do not meet requirements.
 - c. BK, Walmart, Taco Bell, etc.
 - d. Video clip – [CNN Freedom project](#)
9. Amacale, FL – 5:30 am, board old buses to fields. Boss promised better job, stopped by another worker. Agriculture workers are most abused. The Boss owns the farm. Almost every farm in FL is a member of Fair food Program. Education to workers how to fight and how they should be treated. Growers would call police. Worker lead education, worker to worker education. 24 hour helpline.
10. Worker created Code of Conduct
 - a. Sexual Harassment – zero tolerance
 - b. Forced Labor – zero tolerance

- c. Wages – Over \$26 million in bonuses have been paid.
 - d. Benefits of FFP – Buyers, transparency and elimination of supply chain risks.
 - e. Growers – becoming a major employer of choice, reducing turnover, preventing risks in proving managements systems.
 - f. Benefits of FFP for workers – Can Copee/Nuevo Estandar
 - g. Regulations of FFP – Paid for overfilled buckets
 - h. Elimination of systematic wage theft (bucket standard, time clocks)
 - i. 2,100 complaints resolved
11. Establishing FFP in multiple states – NJ, MD, VT, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL, TX (onions and watermelon).
 - a. VT – used FFP model in dairy industry
 12. Recognition – named best most responsible initiative.
 13. Fighting against Wendy’s – Moved sourcing from FL to Mexico to avoid adhering to the FFP.
 14. LA Times investigation – Women sexual violence, child labor, wage theft.

Session 4 – Verifiable Human Rights Protection

Teresa Hendricks – Migrant Legal Aid

Part 2

1. There are 45 hand harvested crops in Michigan.
 - a. Market value is \$11.2 billion.
2. Sample population challenges
 - a. Transiency, language isolation, immigration, level of education
3. 45 years ago – formed legal aid specialized help to migrants.
 - a. Work breakdown
 - i. 41% Wages
 - ii. 20% Income
 - iii. 8% Housing
 - iv. 3% Family
4. Michigan issues
 - a. Wage theft
 - b. Crew leader not providing good hours
 - c. Injuries not reported
 - d. Field sanitation
 - e. Housing – Bed bugs, cold/hot, no air circulation, bug infestation, domestic violence from crew leaders or farmer owners.
 - f. Labor trafficking – targeted, held captive, starved, robbed, beaten, threatened with guns
5. Has helped with
 - a. Recovering workers stolen wages

- b. Child labor – establishing production standards, only beginning and end of seasons.
 - c. Meijer, Walmart and Kroger dropped growers when there were children in grower's blueberry fields.
- 6. Fair Food Project and Migrant Legal Aid
 - a. Providing real time remedies.
- 7. Retailers taking pledge to use only reputable growers.
 - a. Communicated to grower with courtesy alert. Grower was dropped and buyer contacted legal aid to be in compliance.
- 8. Armed guards at the farm – wouldn't let the workers leave.
 - a. Courtesy alert – called and made several legal decisions, guard was gone, and Legal aid could access the camp and help the workers.
- 9. Spartan Nash and Meijer have made the Fair Food Pledge
 - a. Food to Market without exploitation.
 - b. Spartan Nash has 150 stores.
 - c. Meijer has 120 stores in Michigan, need to expand this to all states.
- 10. Can now provide real time monitoring for immediate intervention.
- 11. Have recovered \$3 Million in lost wages in the last 3 years.