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*From the Agricultural Justice Project Management Committee*

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**for all who labor in the food system**

## **Food Justice Label Launches Nationwide: Bringing Fairness to the Food system**

Fair prices to farmers that cover their costs of production, the protection of children from hazardous farm work, and living wages plus respectful treatment for all food system workers are the core guarantees of the new **Food Justice Certified** label. After a dozen years in development, the **Agricultural Justice Project** is launching this program across North America.

The Farmer Direct Coop, a marketing cooperative of 70 grain farms in Saskatchewan, is the first group of farmers to earn the Food Justice label. Hoch Orchards, Featherstone Farm, the Bluff Country Coop, and the Midwest Organic Services Association in the Upper Mid-West have also met the high bar for AJP certification as part of its pilot project over the past three years.

In announcing the official launch of this domestic fair trade program, Michael Sligh, of the Agricultural Justice Project Management Committee, declared, “Just as the certified organic label took years and input from thousands of individuals to become the gold standard for how to grow and produce our food, the creation of **Food Justice Certified** has involved a broad base of committed individuals and groups from all sectors of the food system. The process has been transparent and rigorous and aims to set a high bar for integrity and fair relations among the people who grow, process and sell our food. A truly digestible food product is one in which farmers, farm workers and those who sell the fruits of this labor all work collaboratively.”

The Food Justice label is available both to farms and other food businesses from seed to table. It can be used as an additional claim along with certified organic or as a stand-alone label for advanced integrated pest management farms. In New York State over the

next year, farms will be piloting a pledge version for small-scale direct market farms with limited hired labor.

Currently, Qualify Certification Services ([qcsinfo.org](http://qcsinfo.org)) and Midwest Organic Services Association ([mosa.org](http://mosa.org)) offer Food Justice Certification. This label is distinguished by a verification process that includes the participation of farm worker organizations. CATA/Farmworker Support Committee ([catafarmworkers.org](http://catafarmworkers.org)), Centro Campesino ([centrocampesino.net](http://centrocampesino.net)), and the Agriculture Workers Alliance in Canada ([awa-ata.ca](http://awa-ata.ca)) have been through trainings to provide the worker inspection component of this certification. The Farmworkers Association of Florida ([floridafarmworkers.org](http://floridafarmworkers.org)) is scheduled for a training early in 2011. The Agricultural Justice Project will be training additional certifiers and farm worker organizations to ensure that the verification process is available all over North America.

For information and questions about the standards, trainings and technical assistance contact Sally Lee at the Rural Advancement Foundation International. Email: [agjusticeproject@gmail.com](mailto:agjusticeproject@gmail.com) 919-623-9516.

The **Food Justice Certified** label rewards honest and open relationships throughout the food chain. Its third party verified seal certifies that the highest standards of equity and fairness have been met on farms, in food manufacturing and in stores. The standards cover:

- \* Farmers and all food system workers' rights to freedom of association
- \* Fair wages and benefits for workers
- \* Fair and equitable contracts for farmers and buyers
- \* Fair pricing for farmers
- \* Clear conflict resolution policies for farmers, workers and buyers
- \* The rights of indigenous peoples
- \* Workplace health and safety and decent farmworker housing
- \* High quality training for farm interns and apprentices
- \* The rights and protection of children on farms
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- \* The rights and protection of children on farms
- \* The elimination of the use of toxic materials

To read the full standards, go to [www.agriculturaljusticeproject.org](http://www.agriculturaljusticeproject.org).

The founders of the Agricultural Justice Project who also serve on the AJP Management Committee include Elizabeth Henderson from Peacework Farm and the Northeast Organic Farming Association, Marty Mesh from Florida Organic Growers and Quality Certification Services, Michael Sligh from the Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA, and Richard Mandelbaum from CATA/Farmworker Support Committee. The AJP Advisory Council guides the Management Committee; it includes

farmers and farmer advocates, farmworkers and farmworker advocates, food co-op managers, organic certifiers, and other food system business representatives.