

Food Justice Certification on Farms



All farmworkers have the right to safe working conditions, just treatment, & fair compensation.

All farmers have the right to fair, equitable, transparent agreements & pricing.

Food Justice Certification sets high standards for ethical labor and trade practices on farms and in food businesses in the US. An important part of it being high bar is that it was developed and is governed by farmers and farmworkers themselves. The requirements for getting Food Justice Certified guarantee just working conditions for agricultural, food, and fiber system workers from field to retail; establish fair pricing and trade terms for farmers; and are rooted in supporting local food systems and communities and all eaters having control to shape their food choices.

How do farmers and workers benefit from Food Justice Certification?

- Food Justice Certification enables family and community farmers to demonstrate to their customers their values and commitment to justice in farming, differentiating them in the marketplace from other farms and industrialized agriculture and the status quo.
- It provides farm customers with 3rd party verification that the farm's practices align with the social justice standards developed by farmworkers and farmers together, countering the many unjust practices farmworkers face in agriculture.
- Becoming Food Justice Certified connects you, as a farmer, to a community of farmers, farmworkers, food justice advocates and ethical buyers who are working to transform the food system into one based on empowerment, fairness, and justice; where family and community farms that treat their workers with dignity can make a dignified living for the farm families and thrive; where customers support the farm families, who are stewarding the earth and feeding the community; where customers support dignified lives for farm families and farm practices that align with their own social justice values.
- Food Justice Certified farmers report lower worker turnover and better morale, which saves on training staff and supports teamwork. [View this news clip](#) about one of the certified farms and what one of their workers has to say.
- Farmers report improved efficiency and organization of the farm business as a result of getting certified.
- The certification standards promote a team-oriented, collaborative farm culture.

What else does the Food Justice Certification program do?

- Provides an alternative model of growing, processing, & distributing food, that is not rooted in exploitation;
- Aligns with international principles of social justice (IFOAM & ILO);
- Commits to truth in labeling & transparent policies;
- Ensures environmental stewardship through certified naturally grown, organic, biodynamic, & agro-ecological farming and this protects workers from being exposed to toxic chemicals, which they felt needed to be a basic requirement for any social justice claim in the marketplace;
- Empowers workers & farmers, addressing root causes of food insecurity by advocating for more decision-making power & honoring the agency of those who work to feed us all;
- Works to reverse the current trend that those who work in the food system are more likely to be food insecure by ensuring living wages, fair pricing, and human rights for farmworkers, farmers, & food system workers.



Eaters Increasingly Want their Food Grown, Processed, and Sold Using Ethical Practices

63% of respondents would pay more for food produced with better worker welfare practices. 10% of them would reportedly pay 25% more for this (FoodPrint.org; 2018).

Millennials demonstrate an even stronger ethical purchasing preference (81%) for brands that make public declarations of corporate citizenship (Nielsen Global Corporate Sustainability Report, Forbes; 2015).

Across the country, urban and rural community farming initiatives are popping up to empower communities, so they have control over what food is available to them, how it is grown, and who benefits. This is a direct result of the toxic relationships that the industrialized food system has with the people who work in it, the people who eat the food it produces, and the earth.



Change is happening because workers, farmers, eaters, and communities want it and are working for it.

Farmworker and Farmer Leaders Stand Behind Food Justice Certification

“As an organization Community to Community believes there is only one certification scheme that adequately addresses farmworker concerns because farmworkers were involved in developing the standards from the very beginning and continue to be at the table regarding all decisions...We only support the Agricultural Justice Project....[AJP] has the gold standard that we should all be striving for. As FUJ [Familias Unidas por la Justicia] leaders say ‘fair wages and treatment is about more than just making money, it’s about changing a system built on our exploitation.’” -Rosalinda Guillen, Executive Director of Community to Community Farmworker Organization, WA

“Soul Fire Farm proudly sought the Agricultural Justice Project's Food Justice Certification, recognizing that to date, it is the only farm certification that commits to an unequivocal focus on the rights of food system and food chain workers, centers farm worker-led organizations, and was developed primarily by farmworkers and farmers in a participatory stakeholder process. As collaborators in a movement that honors the people whose labor has built the food system in this country, we pursued FJC in recognition of the striking significance of a certification that amplifies farmworkers’ voices while supporting their lives and livelihoods. In a food system founded on stolen land and labor that continues to perpetuate structural racism and injustice, we value FJC's insistence on fair pricing and fair labor practices that challenge food apartheid and the devaluing of the people who steward the land.” - Soul Fire Farm Team



“If we are worried about insects and the environment, for God’s sake, what about the people?!”

- Jim Cochran, Owner/Farmer of Food Justice Certified Swanton Berry Farm (CA).