

Q & A : Jubilee asks about Hannaford's response to Milk with Dignity:
combined response from Migrant Justice (MJ) and Sylvia Knight (SK)

Q. Why hasn't Hannaford's CEO agreed to join Milk with Dignity? What excuses do they have for not joining? Is it a complete stonewall from Hannaford or do they acknowledge in any useful way?

A. Hannaford's has not responded directly to Migrant Justice. They have made public statements after mass call-in actions. Our last call-in action (Feb.13) generated over 200 calls to the Hannaford President's office in just one day. **This pressure forced the company to issue a public statement in response**, making commitments to clean up their supply chain and ensure fair treatment for workers. Until now, however, **these commitments have not been backed up by action**, and Hannaford has yet to take any steps to stamp out abuses on the farms producing their store-brand milk. (MJ)

Several reasons may be possible: that Hannaford's CEO is fearful of customer resistance; that the CEO is reluctant to share any decision-making power or profits with workers who are a marginalized minority. All the more reason why we need to speak up to say that slavery and racism in our food system are unacceptable! (SK)

Q. Why did we select Hannaford's rather than Market 32 or Shaws?

A. With nearly 200 stores, Hannaford is one of the largest supermarket chains in the Northeast and an important buyer of dairy products in the region. Hannaford's brand milk is processed and bottled at plants around the Northeast at plants operated by H.P. Hood, including at a facility in Barre, VT. These plants source from farms where workers are suffering severe human rights abuses, working in dangerous conditions for below minimum wage.

Hannaford is owned by Ahold Delhaize, a Dutch multinational corporation with *\$75 billion* in global sales, mostly from U.S. supermarket chains like Hannaford. Through its Responsible Retailing Program, Ahold has committed to sourcing practices that respect human rights, and several supermarket brands owned by Ahold Delhaize have joined the *Fair Food Program* (developed by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers of Florida), committing to source their tomatoes in accordance with workers' human rights. We invite Hannaford to join Ben & Jerry's in taking responsibility for the human rights of the workers behind their dairy products. (MJ)

So we are calling on Hannaford and Ahold Delhaize to extend the same principles of human rights to dairy workers in their supply chain. (SK)

Q. Is there anything additional that we could be doing to support the people involved and the organization itself?

A. The farmworkers of Migrant Justice are in solidarity with each other and want farms to join MWD so that their living and working conditions can be truly improved under this program. Joining our voices with theirs, being in solidarity with them in calling on Hannaford's to join MWD is the best thing we can do to support them. Use the materials that Migrant Justice provides on their web-pages. Use Hannaford's facebook page to send messages to their CEO. Our neighbors are asking for our support in these ways. We can find creative ways to reach out and widen the field of support. (SK)

Q. Has Milk With Dignity found that their contract with Ben and Jerry's is accomplishing all of the goals that MWD had as they entered into it w/B&J?

A. Read their testimonials. The workers whose farms have joined want their friends' farms to join. The biggest need is to spread the program. Visit <https://migrantjustice.net/milk-with-dignity-campaign> (SK)

Q. Are federal and state basic health and safety rules enforced at dairy farms as experienced by Migrant Justice?

A. VT Occupational Safety & Health Administration (VOSHA) is not required to inspect any farm with fewer than 11 employees. Most of the farms have 10 or fewer immigrant farmworkers, and have not been inspected. State or Federal standards are not enforced at these farms. Struggling with state and federal bureaucracies has not been a productive or possible avenue of change. (SK)

Q. Is direct action with a retailer like Hannaford's, Shaws, or their parent corporations, going to work for dairy in the same way that it has for Immokalee vegetable workers? Or is there a need to focus on state and/or federal regulators as a way to apply pressure to the dairy industry to get the kind of worker protections and benefits that MWD is hoping (rightfully) to achieve?

A. See answer above. Milk with Dignity and the Standards Council work creatively with the company structures they encounter. Established farm organizations are generally supportive of farmers regardless of their treatment of employees. State regulators are over-worked and have no authority to change most of the conditions on the farms. Most importantly, they cannot change the power imbalance between worker and boss. Workers have no voice in their fate in the regulatory realm. If they speak up about a problem they can be summarily fired. This structure perpetuates systemic racism and white supremacy.

The Mwd Program is a movement to change the balance of power between workers, bosses and owner-corporations. It is a business design that gives workers voice in their own conditions through a contract that requires compliance with a Worker-Driven Code of Conduct. This enables communication between workers and boss to solve problems, provides freedom from fear of retaliation, more stability on the farm, and premiums from the owner-corporation to farms that comply with the Program to help the farmer meet agreements worked out in meetings with workers and the Milk with Dignity Standards Council. (SK)

I see this question for us as white folk: can we recognize the truth of racism and white supremacy in our food industry, and truly support this movement to change the power dynamic and economic inequity between immigrant workers, farmowners and corporations? (SK)

Q. Some 15 + dairy farms in VT have stopped producing milk. Cows from those farms have been sold or gone to slaughter. What happens to the farmworkers who are now unemployed? Is MJ seeing these layoffs? What kind of assistance might these displaced workers need?

A. In the current dairy economy farms are very likely to stop doing that work. VAAFM has not done enough to help farmers transition to other forms of agriculture. Finding different farms that need workers, or other types of work e.g. construction, may be something people can help with. Migrant Justice is primarily focused on human rights of undocumented Latino workers in a climate where black and brown people are still very vulnerable. But finding other jobs is not the focus of Mwd. (SK)

Q. Are there farm-owners in addition to Mr. Maxwell in Derby who can attest to the positive outcomes of joining Mwd?

A. To be determined--