



The Milk With Dignity Program

Vermont dairy farmworkers are securing the human right to work with dignity through a new, creative Worker-Driven Social Responsibility (WSR) program!

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The New York Times

Farm Labor Groups Make Progress on Wages and Working Conditions

By STEVEN GREENHOUSE JULY 3, 2015



Caleb Kenna for The New York Times

Vermont farmworker Victor Diaz (pictured left in the NY Times on July 3, 2015) had his wages stolen and lived in an overcrowded camper with a leaky roof. Then he joined Migrant Justice to help lead a campaign winning an historic commitment from Ben & Jerry's to source its milk in compliance with the human rights of farmworkers through the Milk with Dignity Program.

BURLINGTON, Vt. — It was an unlikely place for a labor protest: 120 migrant workers, students and clergy members were shouting outside the flagship store of Ben & Jerry's, which displayed a "Peace, Love and Ice Cream" sign on its facade.

They were demanding that Ben & Jerry's — which prides itself on its

Approximately 850 dairy farms and thousands of farmworkers sustain Vermont's iconic landscapes and produce its iconic dairy products.

Know Your Dairy Worker

Migrant Justice's survey of 180 VT farmworkers:

- ✓ Work 60-80 hrs per week
- ✓ 40% have no day off
- ✓ 40% make less than VT Min wage
- ✓ 27% have never had a raise
- ✓ 26% have no paystubs
- ✓ 29% work 7+ hours without a break
- ✓ 16% have less than 8 hours off to sleep
- ✓ 20% have first wages illegally withheld
- ✓ 16% live in overcrowded housing
- ✓ 15% have insufficient heat
- ✓ 12% don't get paid on time
- ✓ 9% are without clean drinking water

- ✓ Nationwide, farmworker fatalities increased by 22%, up to 180, from 2014 to 2015
- ✓ 61 workplace fatalities on N.Y. dairies from 2006 to 14 (about 7 per year)

Know Your Dairy Farmer

Increasing consolidation and globalization in the food industry allows powerful retail brands to leverage their volume purchasing power and benefit from low prices. This creates downward pressure on farmers' incomes and, ultimately, on farmworkers' wages and working conditions.

Farmworkers and Consumers Organizing for a Fair & Sustainable Dairy Industry

Migrant Justice's Milk with Dignity Program is a farmworker-driven initiative that builds alliances with consumers to call on corporations that purchase milk to bring their considerable resources to the table to help forge a new sustainable solution to the above challenges by committing to:

- ✓ Source milk in compliance with fundamental human rights of workers
- ✓ Pay premiums to participating farmers providing economic relief for farms



Get involved:

migrantjustice.net

info@migrantjustice.net

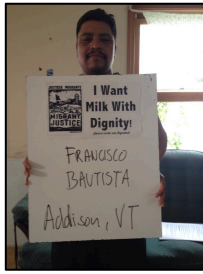
Migrant Justice & the Milk with Dignity Program

Migrant Justice builds the voice, capacity, and power of the farmworker community and engages community partners to organize for economic justice and human rights. We gather in monthly assemblies to share food, discuss and analyze community problems, and

envision collective solutions. **Migrant Justice members have prioritized building a movement to secure the human rights to:**

- Dignified work and quality housing;
- Freedom of movement and access to transportation;
- Equal treatment and freedom from discrimination;
- Access to quality healthcare.

Migrant Justice has made significant progress on these priorities by winning access to driver's licenses (2013) and changing statewide racial profiling policies (2014-16).



In 2014, Vermont farmworker leaders prioritized the goal of **securing the human right to work with dignity** in the dairy industry. They surveyed over 180 dairy workers and created a community definition of dignified work and quality housing. The results informed the design of the **Milk with Dignity Code of Conduct**, one of five essential elements of the new Milk with Dignity Program:

1. **Farmworker-Authored Code of Conduct:** Farmworkers' definition of work with dignity
2. **Farmworker Education:** Workers know their rights and learn how to enforce them
3. **Third Party Monitoring Body:** Monitors, enforces and audits compliance with Code of Conduct
4. **Economic relief:** Participating corporations pay a premium directly to participating farmers
5. **Legally-binding Agreements:** Participating Corporations sign a legally binding agreement

The Milk with Dignity Program is a Worker-Driven Social Responsibility Program (WSR), which differs from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives by ensuring workers truly define and design the solutions to their problems. The Program then partners with farmers to ensure constant feedback and improvement of these solutions' implementation. This creates a participatory model where workers, farmers, consumers and retail corporations align values, work together, and build a fair food system.