



# **MAINE AFL-CIO**

**A Union of Unions Fighting for Maine Workers**

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Mike Vail, President  
Hannaford Supermarkets  
145 Pleasant Hill Road  
Scarborough, ME 04074

June 8, 2023

Dear Mr. Vail,

The Maine AFL-CIO is a federation of labor unions including approximately 200 labor organizations comprised of and representing approximately 40,000 workers in a wide variety of sectors and industries across the state of Maine. We write to express support for the Milk with Dignity campaign that aims to improve the lives of farmers and farm workers who supply some of the dairy products Hannaford customers depend on and to urge you to join the program.

Milk with Dignity has documented that Hannaford's dairy supply chain includes farms where workers are suffering from severe human rights abuses. This includes situations where immigrant farmworkers labor long hours in dangerous conditions for low pay and live in substandard housing

- Abuses are endemic to the industry: for example, a 2020 study of immigrant dairy workers in Vermont shows high rates of workplace injuries and illnesses and a severe lack of safety equipment and training, and Milk with Dignity hears about similar conditions and issues in Maine.
- Corporations at the top of supply chains have a responsibility to ensure that their suppliers treat workers fairly.

### **Power/Impact of Milk with Dignity: How does it work? What are the impacts?**

- Migrant Justice created Milk with Dignity to provide a solution to the systemic problems plaguing the dairy industry.
- The program invites corporations to take responsibility for ensuring human rights in their supply chains by joining this worker-led solution.
- Milk with Dignity creates worker-defined standards for labor and housing, paid for by dairy companies and monitored by an independent third-party that responds to complaints and audits farms.

- Unlike many corporate initiatives or certification labels, Milk with Dignity is worker-led and is enforced through legally-binding contracts and strong market consequences for farms that don't comply.
- Milk with Dignity benefits companies by certifying that dairy products are sourced free from human rights abuses; it benefits farmers by providing a premium during a time of economic challenge, and it benefits workers by improving conditions and securing respect and dignity on the farm.

**Sample improvements under the program include:**

- Paid sick days and vacations
- Increased wages and bonuses to raise farmworker income
- Repairs to worker housing and the construction of new housing
- Access to personal protective equipment for safer handling of chemicals and other hazardous materials
- Training and policies protecting workers from violence and sexual harassment
- A guaranteed day of rest every week
- New policies and practices ensuring access to medical treatment for workplace injuries

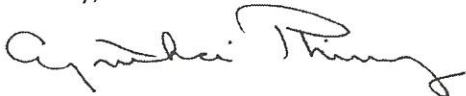
**Values: Why does your group support Milk with Dignity? How does it align with your values?**

- Farmworkers deserve to live and work in dignity
- Consumers expect that the products they buy are free from human rights abuses
- Companies should take responsibility for the rights and well-being of workers in their supply chains

**Conclusion: What are we asking Mike Vail to do?**

Farmworkers and union members are united in calling for Milk With Dignity. We respectfully request that you respond to this letter to inform us of your position and whether or not you intend to join the Milk with Dignity Program. Our 200 affiliated organizations across the state of Maine eagerly await your response.

Sincerely,



Cynthia Phinney, President