
Opinion Editorial

Go BANANAS for Fair Trade

By Maddi Burnett

Did you know bananas are considered a staple food and are of equal importance to consumers as milk, eggs, and bread? Just think about how much bananas are used in so many different things, such as a baby's first food, smoothies, baked goods, as a healthy snack, breakfast food, and a sugar substitute. But where are all these bananas coming from? They are coming from Guatemala, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Colombia, and Honduras. Many of the farmers in these countries are not getting paid or treated fairly, and have to compete with bigger companies. Fair trade programs help farmers get better wages, so next time you go to the store, you should buy fair trade bananas instead of conventional bananas.

First, banana farmers do not have worker protections. This means that they work really long hours, and their working environment has health risks. For example, people are dying from exposure to pesticides that the bigger companies are making and the farmers are using. Another health risk is that farmers are working in really hot weather and don't have access to clean drinking water. Also banana growing communities earn inadequate wages. With fair trade, banana workers get paid fairly, work more fair hours, and have safety and human rights.

Secondly, independent banana farmers have to compete with bigger companies. This 'makes wages lesson for the independent banana farmers. Fair Trade International explains that, "These low prices - driven by intense competition between supermarkets often selling below cost - are putting the squeeze on banana farmers and plantation workers." With fair trade, farmers get paid a premium which means they can put it back into their community.

In conclusion you should buy fair trade bananas instead of conventional bananas. You should start buying fair trade bananas and then the businesses that aren't fair trade might start being fair trade. If you buy fair trade bananas you are helping communities around the world because they don't have as many everyday resources like we have.



Maddi Burnett is a fifth grader at Vermont Day School. She enjoys running, skating, and riding horses. She loves to watch hockey and cheer on Brady Shaw!

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