

Sowing the Seeds of Justice:

The Fair Trade Rice Campaign



“Since we’ve changed to organic production through the Fair Trade network, we’ve started to be happier as a family. Debt caused a lot of stress. If the kids wanted to go to school further, then we would have to borrow more money. But by selling Fair Trade, we have more money left and can pay for things like sending our children to school. [Now] we can talk and find understanding within our own family, that’s happiness.”

- Wattanasak Sitsungneng, Thai Fair Trade rice farmer

The Global Rice Trade Marginalizes Small-Scale Farmers

- Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) like the WTO and the proposed Thai-U.S. FTA threaten the livelihoods of small-scale farmers throughout the world by extending corporate patents of seeds and pressuring other countries to accept Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs).
- U.S. companies are attempting to usurp the market for Thai Jasmine rice and Indian Basmati rice through deceptive labeling practices, commercial production of lower quality U.S. varieties, GMO research, and patenting new strains of the world’s most popular rice varieties.
- Small-scale rice farmers from India and Thailand are forced to compete with large-scale commercial farms in the U.S. that receive a total of U.S. \$1.3 billion in subsidies per year that allow them to sell rice below the costs of production.

Fair Trade Rice is a Viable Alternative for Producers and Consumers

- With Fair Trade rice farmers receive a living wage, are guaranteed fair treatment, manage their own cooperative rice mills minimizing the role of corruptive middlemen, and improve the environment by switching to organic farming techniques. It enables farmer to get out of debt, and pay for things like health care and education for their families.
- With Fair Trade rice the consumer wins too. All Fair Trade rice varieties are high quality, nutritious products that are grown sustainably in the rice fields of Thailand and India.
- Between 2002-2003, Fair Trade sales across the world grew by 42%. Much of this growth is attributed to people asking their stores to stock Fair Trade goods. In short, consumers are a crucial part of expanding the Fair Trade alternative.

Bring Fair Trade Rice to Your Community!

- Get your university, religious group, or local community to purchase Fair Trade rice.
- Go to your local food cooperatives and grocers and ask them to carry Fair Trade rice.
- Campaign for trade justice

For more information or to get involved, contact ENGAGE at fairtraderice@engagetheworld.org.

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