



By Carl Collen

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Driscoll's grows Fairtrade programme

Expansion allows Driscoll's to include more independent growers, expand retail distribution and increase sales



Image: Fair Trade USA

Driscoll's Fairtrade programme has increased berry acreage by nearly 14 per cent, with the goal of being 100 per cent Fairtrade certified by the end of 2019.

According to the berry giant, this means an additional 1,000 workers can positively benefit from the Fairtrade programme, demonstrating Driscoll's commitment to its workforce and the communities in which they work and live.

This expansion builds on the success of its multi-year Fair Trade USA partnership, which has contributed nearly US\$1m in Community Development Funds through the sale of Fairtrade certified organic berries grown in Baja California, Mexico.

Driscoll's said the programme expansion would allow it to include more of its independent growers, expand retail distribution and increase sales of Fairtrade certified berries. As a result, more workers in Baja California would benefit from the programme and receive

additional funds for community development.

"With more than 6,500 workers employed by Fairtrade certified farms, our goal is to amplify the positive impact they can have in their local communities," said Soren Bjorn, president, Driscoll's of the Americas. "Expanding our Fairtrade programme to the entire region means more opportunities for farm workers and their families to participate in and benefit from community-led improvement projects. It also introduces more opportunities for our consumers to make a difference with each purchase."

Fairtrade certified farms uphold strict environmental and social standards, values that "greatly align" with Driscoll's commitment to worker welfare and its comprehensive global labour standards.

Each time a consumer buys berries carrying the Fairtrade certified seal, the farmworkers and the communities growing the berries earn additional money that goes into a Community Development Fund.

Fairtrade Committees, made up of local farmworkers elected to represent their communities, organise projects that benefit the community where Driscoll's berries are grown and the farm workers live and work, based on community needs and input.

Funds generated from the sales of Fairtrade certified berries have supported a number of community projects in local Baja California communities. Each project is selected through a needs assessment and voted on by all the workers included in the scope of the Fair Trade certificate, including a dedicated committee.

"We are thrilled to see Driscoll's commitment to expand its Fairtrade programme in Baja," said Nathalie Marin-Gest, senior director, produce & floral at Fair Trade USA. "In addition to increasing the impact that Fairtrade will have on workers in this region, it empowers consumers in the United States to choose berries that align with their values - those that were grown under strict social, economic and environmental standards."

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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