



Colette Cosner  
Executive Director  
Domestic Fair Trade Association  
220 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave South #61  
Seattle, WA 98104

April 30, 2015

Miles Reitner  
CEO and Chairman  
Driscoll Strawberry Associates, Inc.  
345 Westridge Drive  
Watsonville, CA 95076-4169

Dear Mr. Reitner:

We are writing to you with deep concern over the ongoing labor dispute at Sakuma Bros. Farms in Burlington, Washington. We are a group of food retailers and processors, consumer cooperatives, farmer and farmworker associations, unions, and non-profit organizations all deeply invested in bettering our food system. Many of us rely on Driscoll's to provide year-round access to healthy and organic berries and have supported your company for years. However, for the past two years we have voiced concern over the Driscoll's label as it continues to market berries for Sakuma Bros. Farms in the midst of a labor dispute.

Sakuma Bros. Farms employs up to 500 workers during its peak harvest. For many years, the workers at Sakuma Bros. Farms have raised concerns over their housing, treatment and wages. Often, management and workers were able to settle their disputes quickly without an interruption in production. However, issues with management continued to surface and in June 2013, after Sakuma Bros. Farms fired a worker for raising concerns over wages, the farmworkers went on strike. Since then, they have formed a union to represent them in collective bargaining arrangements.

The workers' concerns over their wages have been well founded. In June 2014, U.S. District Court Chief Judge Marsha Pechman approved a settlement of \$850,000 for back pay for workers who were undercompensated between 2010 and 2013. Moreover, in 2013, in a private settlement with the union, they offered \$6,000 in back pay for 30 farmworker youth. While these settlements have responded to claims of wage theft in the past, they do nothing to insure that wage theft does not continue to systematically occur.

Sakuma Bros. Farms has also continually retaliated against the workers for attempting to form a union, an illegal activity and unfair labor practice under both Washington and federal labor law. In the summer of 2013, Sakuma Bros. attempted to scare workers from organizing by placing security inside their labor camps. Skagit County Superior Court Judge John M. Meyer then issued a restraining order that prohibited Sakuma Bros. Farm from intimidating workers. The following year, in May 2014, Sakuma attempted to not rehire workers who had gone on strike the summer before. However, after, Skagit County Superior Court Judge Susan Cook ordered Sakuma to rehire workers, it instead attempted to replace them through the federal H2A guest worker program. Sakuma Bros. Farms was never approved for the program because of the ongoing labor dispute. Finally, in effort to prevent organizers from talking to the workers, Sakuma Bros. Farms attempted to place a ban on any visitors to the labor camp, which was also struck down by the Skagit County Superior Court.

As Sakuma Bros. Farms has demonstrated what little respect it has for its workers through these actions, we feel it is imperative that Driscoll's immediately stop purchasing berries from them. Driscoll's is known for producing consistently healthy and fresh berries. It is for these reasons that many of us purchase Driscoll's enthusiastically. However, when these berries come at the expense of workers' rights, we feel less confident in buying and sourcing from Driscoll's. As recent revelations in San Quintin, Mexico reveal, farm workers in the berry industry are subject to poor working conditions and low wages. As increasing awareness of worker abuse in the Driscoll's supply-chain comes to light, we urge Driscoll's to stand up for workers and immediately end purchases from Sakuma Brothers until this dispute is resolved.

Farmworkers are the lowest paid and most vulnerable workers. We ask that Driscoll's confirm that they will not source from Sakuma Brother's Berry Farm until the labor dispute is ended through a fair contract with the farmworkers through their union, Las Familias Unidas por La Justicia.

Thank you,

**Action Aid USA**, Washington, DC  
**Backbone Campaign**, Vashon Island  
**Brooklyn Food Coalition NYC**, NY  
**Casa Latina Seattle**, WA  
**CATA The Farmworker Support Committee Glassboro**, NJ  
**Centro Campesino Minneapolis**, MN  
**Comite In Solidarity with the People of El Salvador**, Washington DC  
**Clean Clothes Inc.** Ypsilanti, MI  
**Clean Greens Farm and Market Seattle**, WA  
**Community Alliance for Global Justice** Seattle, WA  
**Community-to-Community Development** Bellingham, WA  
**Cooperative Development Institute, Inc.** Massachusetts  
**Domestic Fair Trade Association** Seattle, WA  
**Dr. Bronners Magic Soap** Vista, CA  
**Equal Exchange** Westbridgewater, MA

**Fair World Project** Portland, OR  
**Family Farm Defenders** Madison, WI  
**Farmer Direct Cooperative** Regina, Canada  
**Farmworker Association of Florida** Apopka, FL  
**Food and Water Watch** Washington DC  
**Food Chain Workers Alliance** Los Angeles, CA  
**Food for Maine's Future** Maine  
**Friends of the Earth** Washington DC  
**FEEST** Seattle, WA  
**Grassroots International**, Boston MA  
**Got Green?** Seattle, WA  
**Greenwillow Grains** Brownsville, OR  
**Health Alliance International** Seattle, WA  
**Hilltop Urban Gardens** Tacoma, WA  
**Huertas** Burlington, VT  
**Institute for Food and Development Policy** Oakland, CA  
**Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy** Minneapolis, MN  
**Labor Dem Work Group** Skagit County, WA  
**May 1st Coalition** Seattle, WA  
**National Family Farm Coalition** Washington, DC  
**Oke USA Fairtrade Fruit Company** Boston, MA  
**Olympia Food Co-op** Olympia, WA  
**Organic Consumers Association** Finland, MN  
**Pesticide Action Network North America** Oakland, CA  
**Real Food Challenge Boston College** Boston, MA  
**Real Food Challenge** Boston, MA  
**Rural Advancement Foundation International** Pittsboro, NC  
**Seward Community Co-op** Minneapolis, MN  
**Sustainable Agriculture of Louisville** Louisville, KY  
**Student Labor Action Project WWU** Bellingham, WA  
**UFCW Local 21** Seattle, WA  
**Washington Fair Trade Coalition** Seattle, WA  
**Washington State Labor Council** Seattle, WA  
**Whatcom-Skagit Industrial Workers of the World** Bellingham, WA  
**Why Hunger** New York City, New York