

# FOOD EMPOWERMENT PROJECT



*Because your food choices can change the world*

## Informed Choices. Food Justice.

Food Empowerment Project, a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit, seeks to create a more just and sustainable world by recognizing the power of one's food choices. We encourage healthy food choices that reflect a more compassionate society by spotlighting the abuse of animals on farms, the depletion of natural resources, unfair working conditions for produce workers, and the unavailability of healthy foods in low-income areas.

For frequent updates on our work, you can follow us online at *Twitter.com/FoodIsPower*, Like us on Facebook, and read our blog at *http://appetiteforjustice.blogspot.com*.



The following pages explore many of the issues we work on. You'll find more details on our websites:

► [foodispower.org](http://foodispower.org), [veganmexicanfood.com](http://veganmexicanfood.com)

## Access to Healthy Foods



The United States may pride itself as one of the most prosperous nations, but many communities of color and low-income communities across the country have little or no healthy food options. Consumers in these neighborhoods frequently rely on unhealthy fast-food restaurants or choose from among the paltry foods at liquor stores and “convenience” markets to feed their families. Others make lengthy trips to higher-income communities—often using public transportation—where full-feature grocery stores are more abundant.

This is a form of environmental racism, in which environmental decisions, actions, and policies result in racial discrimination.

For more information on this issue, please read our study at:

► [foodispower.org/scc\\_study.htm](https://foodispower.org/scc_study.htm)





## Veganism

As a vegan organization, Food Empowerment Project believes in the power of ethical eating.

Opting for vegan foods (which are free of any ingredients derived from animals) helps alleviate the torment of farmed animals. In this country alone, 10 billion land animals are killed every year. That includes cows used in the dairy industry and hens exploited for their eggs, all of whom end up slaughtered for low-grade products, like hamburger and soup, or are simply killed. In addition, countless marine creatures become “seafood” after being cruelly confined in the artificial environment of industrial-scale fish farms or pulled from the oceans with hooked lines or massive nets, then dumped on fishing vessels to suffocate.

Eating a vegan diet is also kinder to the environment, which suffers the consequences of factory farming,





including millions of tons of manure that are spilled into waterways and fragile ecosystems.

Veganism is filled with nutritious, satisfying meals. And it's easy to veganize popular dishes, such as Mexican food. Enchiladas, fajitas, tamales, and other south-of-the-border favorites are made even more delicious—and cruelty-free—using vegan ingredients. Visit [veganmexicanfood.com](http://veganmexicanfood.com) for some simple recipes.

Vegetables, grains, fruits, nuts, legumes, and alternatives to “meat,” dairy, and eggs are free of cholesterol and have also been shown to reduce and even prevent certain dietary diseases, including type 2 diabetes and obesity.

For more on these issues, please visit:

► [foodispower.org](http://foodispower.org)





## Farm Workers

Most consumers do not consider the people behind their food: the men, women, and sometimes even children who toil long hours to plant, cultivate, harvest, pick, and pack our fruits and vegetables. Comprised primarily of migrant and seasonal laborers, these workers endure health risks, low pay, and blatant exploitation.

The physically demanding work—constant bending, picking up, and other repetitive motions in often extreme heat and amid fields of toxic agricultural chemicals—leads to illnesses, injuries, or even death, and most farm workers have no medical benefits. And because it is perfectly legal for a child to work on farms alongside a parent, it is not uncommon to find children as young as 5 working long days in hazardous conditions.





Many agricultural laborers live in sub-standard housing in which structural defects, faulty gas and electrical service, unsanitary septic systems, and crowded conditions make dwellings unsafe for habitation.

Although they perform a vital function—getting food from the fields to our forks—farm workers have very few legal protections, making them especially vulnerable in one of the most dangerous occupations in the country. They rely on consumers to buy produce from sources that treat them with respect and pay them a fair wage.

For more on this issue, please visit:

► [foodispower.org/produce\\_workers.htm](http://foodispower.org/produce_workers.htm)

Apple Picking, Cover, pg 6, 7  
© Scott Robertson and the  
Coalition of Immokalee Workers



## Environmental Racism

No one wants to live near industrial pollution, yet some neighborhoods—especially low-income communities and communities of color—are disproportionately plagued by facilities that fill their air, land, and water with contaminants. When this environmental injustice affects communities of color, it is known as environmental racism.

Among the industries that engage in environmental racism is animal agribusiness, which operates massive factories, each housing thousands of animals raised for food. These factory farms not only exploit animals, but they generate vast amounts of waste. Neighbors routinely suffer respiratory and gastrointestinal disorders and must endure a never-ending infestation of flies.

Related to these operations are slaughterhouses, which, along with factory farms, are frequently located in communities where the land is cheaper.

For more on this issue, please visit:

► [foodispower.org/environmental\\_racism.htm](https://foodispower.org/environmental_racism.htm)





## Union Busting & Privatization

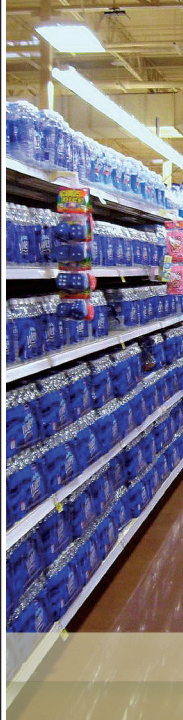


Some of the world's largest food and beverage companies—including Coca-Cola, Nestlé, PepsiCo, and Tyson Foods—are notoriously anti-union and continue to undermine workers' rights. Labor leaders and organizers have been attacked, kidnapped, and killed in developing countries such as Colombia and Guatemala.

Meanwhile, although most of us think of water as a natural resource that should be free to all, these same corporations regard water as a commodity. The privatization of water is now a \$400 billion global industry, with multinational companies bottling public water and selling it at exorbitant prices or taking control of public reservoirs and water utility systems. Privatizing water services often results in low-income residents being unable to afford drinkable water.

For more on these issues, please visit:

► [foodispower.org/water\\_usage.htm](https://foodispower.org/water_usage.htm)



## Chocolate Slavery

Chocolate is one of the world's most popular treats, but the exploitation of workers, some as young as 7, on West African cocoa farms is anything but sweet. Numerous investigations report that laborers are forced to work plantations in Côte d'Ivoire (the Ivory Coast)—which exports nearly half the world's cocoa—and Ghana, laboring without pay and routinely beaten, sometimes even killed. Children wield dangerous machetes to hack open cocoa pods, often injuring themselves with the sharp blades.

The plantations of West Africa supply cocoa to such confectionary giants as Hershey's, Mars, and Nestlé, revealing the industry's direct connection to slavery, child labor, and human trafficking. Food Empowerment Project recommends that consumers not buy *any* chocolate sourced from the Ivory Coast or Ghana. Please check our website for the most up-to-date list of companies selling vegan chocolates that we feel comfortable recommending: [foodispower.org/chocolatelist.htm](http://foodispower.org/chocolatelist.htm)

For more on this issue, please visit:

► [foodispower.org/slavery\\_chocolate.htm](http://foodispower.org/slavery_chocolate.htm)



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## Ten Things You Can Do

1. Go vegan - For the animals, the environment, humanity, and your health.
2. Shop with care - Don't support corporations that violate human and animal rights.
3. Choose organic - Strive to buy organic whenever possible.
4. Ethical chocolate - Before buying, check our chocolate list at [foodispower.org/chocolatelist.htm](http://foodispower.org/chocolatelist.htm)
5. Speak up - Fill out comment cards, send email comments, or speak to store managers about available food options.
6. Bring your own - Use reusable bags, silverware, and non-plastic bags when you shop and eat out.
7. Buy local - Support the farmers' market in your community.
8. Sign up for our e-alerts - Subscribe at [foodispower.org/alert\\_signup.htm](http://foodispower.org/alert_signup.htm)
9. Spread the word - Share what you learn with others! Give this brochure to a friend.
10. Think outside the bottle - Avoid buying water in plastic bottles.



P.O. Box 7071  
San José, CA 95150-7071  
(530) 848-4021  
info@foodispower.org  
foodispower.org  
veganmexicanfood.com

You can support our work by making a tax-deductible donation at:

► [foodispower.org/donate.htm](http://foodispower.org/donate.htm)



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