

U.S. farmworkers demand Publix, Kroger, Wendy's stop enabling labor abuses

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Tampa, March 21 (RHC)-- In the U.S. state of Florida, hundreds of farmworkers and their supporters led a five-day, 50-mile march demanding humane working conditions and better protections. Workers are calling on food retailers to join the Fair Food Program, an initiative launched by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers in 2011 to improve conditions for farmworkers and end modern-day slavery.

The march began outside a labor camp in the agricultural community of Pahokee, where hundreds of farmworkers were forced into brutal working and living conditions under threats of violence, deportation and insurmountable debts. The owner of the labor camp was sentenced to nearly a decade in prison in 2022 for leading a federal racketeering and forced labor conspiracy across at least five states.

Gerardo Reyes Chaves, a member of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, which organized the action, told reporters: "We've come here to demand that Publix and Kroger supermarkets, which are directly connected to the situation of modern slavery in Pahokee — they bought watermelons from there, and Wendy's, too — for them to join the Fair Food Program and put an end to the extreme labor abuses in this country."

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