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**National Farmers Union**

In cooperation with  
**Cooper Institute**

# Domestic Fair Trade for Food Products



Farmer Direct is a cooperative of 70 organic farmers located in the Canadian Prairies. It is guided by seven co-operative principles and supports the family farm, organic farming practice, and the "fairDeal."

The fairDeal is a set of standards for developing and putting into practice sustainable systems and promoting Fair Trade practices.

Farmer Direct believes in developing standards with a strong foundation: full participation of everyone who is involved in the food system, shared values and democratic processes. For Farmer Direct, the process of developing the fairDeal standards and certification system was an opportunity for cooperation.



For more information:  
[www.farmerdirect.coop](http://www.farmerdirect.coop)

## What is Domestic Fair Trade?

Domestic Fair Trade for Food Products is a system of trade that aims to create fair and just opportunities for farmers, eaters (consumers) and retailers. Domestic Fair Trade:

- ▶ *Ensures farmers and fishers a dignified livelihood*
- ▶ *Provides people with safe, healthy food*
- ▶ *Requires a livable income for the whole population*
- ▶ *Protects the natural environment*
- ▶ *Encourages communities to cooperate & support local services*

## Why Domestic Fair Trade?

Domestic Fair Trade for Food Products proposes new ways of understanding and being part of the food system. It creates a new level of trust in the community about the origin and safety of food, supports local farmers and fishers and protects their industries. Domestic Fair Trade also builds long-term relationships based on trust and confidence between producers and eaters (consumers).



## Domestic Fair Trade for Food Products

## Values Associated with Domestic Fair Trade



Red Tomato connects farmers and consumers through marketing, trade, and education. Red Tomato believes in a family farm, locally-based, ecological, Fair Trade system for food. This organization has been at the forefront of Domestic Fair Trade as a movement.

Red Tomato works with farmers to ensure a dignity price - “the bottom line of what [farmers] need to keep farming and supporting their families.”

“People typically think about Fair Trade in terms of the farm or farm workers... food is usually passing through a number of other points before it gets to consumers. There are a number of Fair Trade issues at every point along the way.”

Red Tomato notes the importance of thinking carefully about how Domestic Fair Trade standards and processes make transactions or situations fair for farmers and farm workers who are producing food.

*For more information:  
[www.redtomato.org](http://www.redtomato.org)*

The **VALUES** of Domestic Fair Trade reflect the values of the people who are involved in creating a just system for trading food.

In Prince Edward Island in 2008, Cooper Institute held community workshops to introduce the idea of Domestic Fair Trade for Food Products and to identify the values that are connected with Domestic Fair Trade. The following are some of the values that emerged:

- Protection of the health of the soil and water and encouragement of sustainable practices
- Healthy and equitable relationships among all people - equal opportunity and access to resources among producers and eaters
- Food sovereignty which includes emphasis on local food, but not excluding global exchanges
- Food that is affordable and appropriate for our diverse communities
- Recovery of de-developed rural and coastal communities, based on agri-culture rather than agri-business
- Recognition of the connections between all sectors
- A vision for the future which includes effective steps to get there
- Jobs with fair wages for people in the community
- The right to good quality food



## Impact on Community

## Domestic Fair Trade for Food Products

A system of Domestic Fair Trade in food can have a powerful impact on communities. Some examples were discussed in the Domestic Fair Trade workshops held in P.E.I. in 2008:

### *Building community around the food system*

As people become more engaged in the food system and more concerned about where their food comes from, relationships between farmers, fishers and eaters (consumers) become more clear and more direct, and greater trust is involved.

### *Supporting communities by sharing services*

As community members develop closer relationships with local food producers, people become more aware of the benefits of supporting local services. Local food producers can also become more conscious of sharing and supporting services in the community.

### *Learning from our neighbours in the Global South*

Communities, such as the Windward Islands of the Caribbean, have had positive experiences of Fair Trade. North American Domestic Fair Trade groups can learn from the experiences of our neighbours from the Global South.

### *Advocating for a livable income for all people*

One aspect of the impact that Domestic Fair Trade can have on communities is the opportunity to advocate for and support livable incomes for farmers, fishers, and labourers.



### *Domestic Fair Trade Association*

#### *For Health, Justice and Sustainability*

The Domestic Fair Trade Association was started in 2005. Its mission is to promote and protect the principles of Domestic Fair Trade through education, marketing, advocacy and endorsements.

The organization would like to see communities based on cooperation, mutual support, family farming and shared power. It also aims to support and reinforce farmer-led initiatives.

The Domestic Fair Trade Association believes in principles of Domestic Fair Trade as a set of values that can bring various groups together to work for a just and sustainable economic system in which everybody can take part.



*For more information:*  
[www.dftassociation.com](http://www.dftassociation.com)

## Next Steps

## Domestic Fair Trade for Food Products

### Project Description

*Community Engagement in Developing Prospects for a System of Domestic Fair Trade for Food Products [A PEI PILOT]* is a project of the National Farmers Union, with Cooper Institute. Its main goal is to get people with a wide range of interests in the food system, from producers to eaters, involved in a discussion about Domestic Fair Trade. The project is a chance to look at Domestic Fair Trade for food as a way to open new marketing opportunities.

In the first phase of the project, Cooper Institute carried out research into Domestic Fair Trade projects and groups in North America, and organized two community workshops.

### Next Steps

The next steps for this project are to organize a training program for community leaders who will develop a deeper understanding of Domestic Fair Trade. These leaders will learn skills that will help them to get more people involved in making a plan that will eventually lead to a Domestic Fair Trade system.

Also planned for 2009 are public meetings in which guest speakers, farmers from the Windward Islands in the Caribbean, will share their experiences in setting up a Fair Trade system in their community.

### Research Report

The full *Domestic Fair Trade in Food Products* research report is available through Cooper Institute.



*PEI ADAPT Council*



*Social Economy  
and Sustainability  
Research Network*



*National Farmers Union*



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