

October 15, 2018

Equitable Food Initiative
*A Multi-Stakeholder Approach to
Raising Wages and Labor Standards
in Mexico's Export Agriculture*



Can farmworkers provide industry and consumers with more assurance?

- Responsible Labor Practices
- Food Safety
- Safe Pest Management
- Continuity of Supply



Multi-Stakeholder Approach

EFI defined by stakeholder input: skill-building and certification

- ▣ **Rigorous Standards:** wage bonus, working conditions, pest management, food safety
- ▣ **Leadership Training:** conflict resolution, continuous improvement problem-solving, content of EFI Standards
- ▣ **Third Party Certification:** external audits → use of label
- ▣ **Worker Verification:** ongoing support to Leadership Teams and continuous assurance process



Training on labor-management collaboration: EFI's “secret sauce”



SHARED VALUE: Return to Retailers

- ☑ Transparency, worker verification of labor and food safety compliance → *Supply Chain Assurance*
- ☑ “Trusted Supplier” network → *Continuity of Supply*
- ☑ Consumer Outreach → *Joint Promotion*



Costco CEO
Craig Jelinek
(3rd from left)
listens as
Margarito, a
Mexican
worker,
explains EFI's
problem-
solving
methodology

SHARED VALUE: Return to Growers

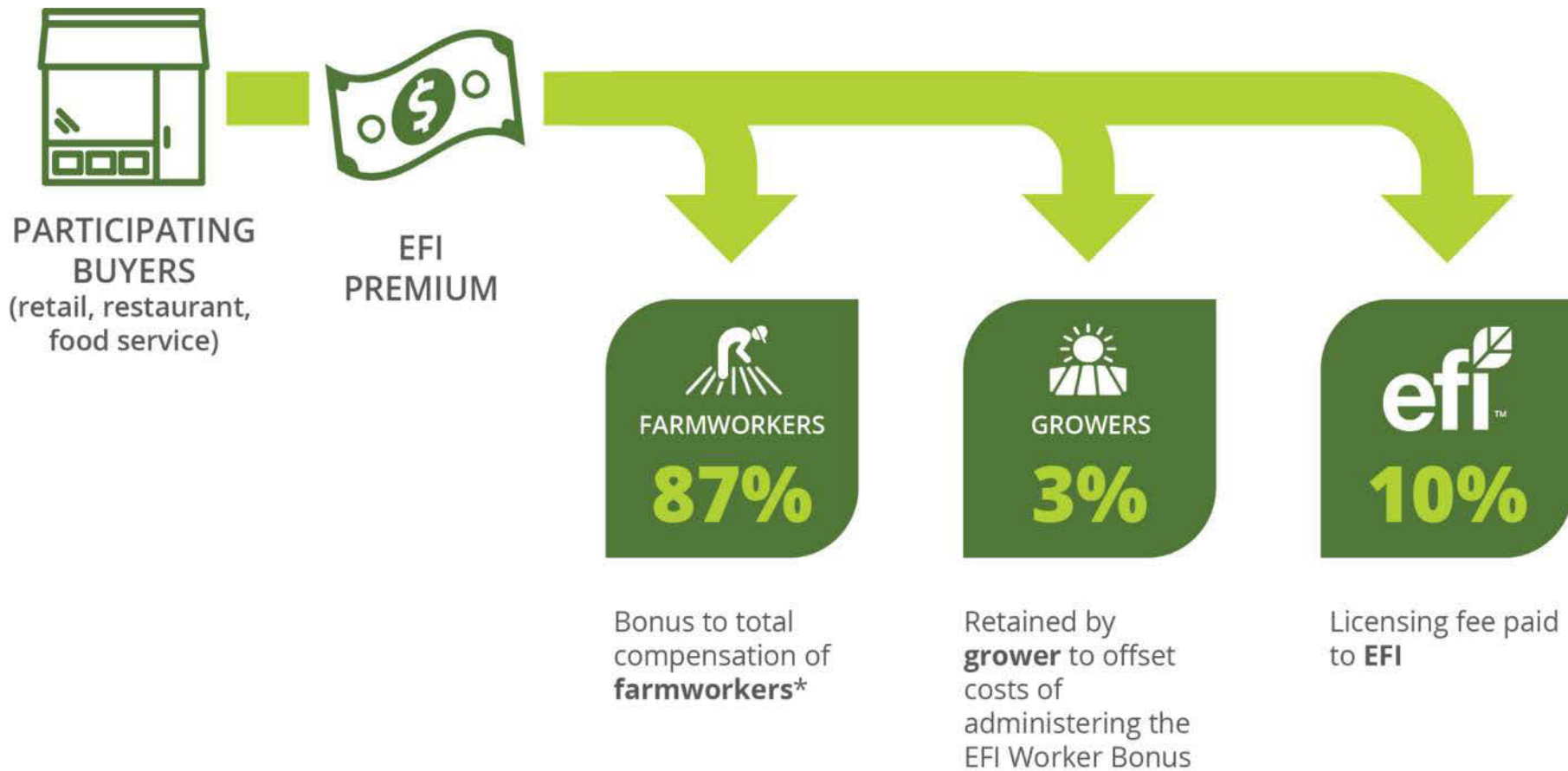
Preferred supplier status, recruitment/retention, “culture”



Source: BSD
Consulting
Report
December 2017

SHARED VALUE: Return to Workers

Better Conditions, Voice/Participation, Wage Bonus



*Cost-neutral to growers

EFI results so far

- 28 farms certified (14 Mexico, 11 US, 3 Canada) with 19 more pending
- 20,204 workers on certified farms; 9,737 on pending farms (*22,116 in Mexico*)
- 75 initial and verification audits conducted
- 18 major produce companies under contract
- Costco, Whole Foods promote EFI with suppliers – other retailers in dialogue

Since 2014, Produce Industry has committed to address labor issues

Los Angeles Times

Hardship on Mexico's farms, a bounty for U.S. tables

By **RICHARD MAROSI**

Photography & Video by **DON BARTLETTI**

DEC. 7, 2014

A Times reporter and photographer find that thousands of laborers at Mexico's mega-farms endure harsh conditions and exploitation while supplying produce for American consumers.

First of four stories



Raising the bar on farm labor

- 🌱 **U.S.** – United Fresh Produce Association and Produce Marketing Association release ***Ethical Charter*** of principles for Responsible Labor Practice
- 🌱 **Mexico** – Growers and trade associations representing 80% of fruit and vegetable exports collaborate through ***AHIFORES*** to secure global recognition for Mexico's leadership in social responsibility

EFI applauds these efforts

We can help growers and associations address three open questions:

- 🌱 *How will training and culture change happen at the farm level?*
- 🌱 *How will retail buyers and consumers know which growers are actually meeting higher labor standards?*
- 🌱 *Are buyers and consumers willing to invest in raising the bar on labor?*

Multi-stakeholder collaboration can improve conditions for farmworkers in Mexico's Export Agriculture *if*:

- 🌱 **Industry associations** partner with credible third-party entities to distinguish produce suppliers that uphold labor standards from those that don't
- 🌱 **Retail and food service** produce buyers commit to doing more business with suppliers that uphold labor standards
- 🌱 **Government and industry** invest in farmworker training and compliance verification
- 🌱 **Resulting market pressure** forces "laggard" suppliers to improve conditions

Questions?



Peter O'Driscoll

Executive Director

Equitable Food Initiative

podriscoll@equitablefood.org