

### **Chiquita's ethical move**

**Emma Twynings, Fresh Produce Journal (also published on Freshinfo)  
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**Banana giant Chiquita has signed up to a new scheme by the Ethical Trading Initiative to improve the labour rights of its workers in developing countries.**

Banana giant **Chiquita** has signed up to a new scheme by the Ethical Trading Initiative to improve the labour rights of its workers in developing countries.

This week, ETI, an alliance of companies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and trade union organisations, launched a new agenda concentrating on how companies can promote trade justice by using their trading relationships with suppliers to protect poorer workers.

The agenda concentrates on five core issues, including 'putting workers centre stage' under which **Chiquita** has demonstrated its commitment – creating a booklet to inform workers of their rights.

Designed for places with low levels of employee literacy, the booklet uses easy-to-follow dialogue and illustrations to educate staff about the code of conduct followed by **Chiquita**.

It includes issues such as prohibition of child labour and informing employees of their right to collective bargaining through trade union involvement.

**Chiquita** has also provided training to trade unions on the code and on health & safety issues and signed a labour standards agreement with the International Union of Food Workers (IUF) in 2001.

George Jaksch, senior director of corporate responsibility and public affairs for **Chiquita**, said: "It has our very strong support. It addresses the issue of bringing ethical standards to our business. Without the participation of workers, there will be no progress. The approach that has been used by companies in the past, such as auditing, is proven to be inefficient.

"We encourage the maintenance of communication with trade unions and workers, and it's very important to maintain that momentum – which is far from easy. We have agreed to recognise consistently high standards in human rights."

Accompanying the launch of the new agenda at a meeting on Monday, ETI also introduced its Training Programme showing how companies can train their employees to deliver on the new agenda, taking ethical trade beyond auditing.

The programme, developed with the Co-operative College, gives retailers and brand representatives' practical tools and tips on implementing ethical trade in their business.

Speaking at the launch, Baroness Amos, leader of the House of Lords said: "The ETI

Training Programme is such an important step if we are to ensure that the enormous opportunities for growth and development offered by expanding international trade are to benefit the poorest. I strongly encourage those who are committed to ethical trade to make use of the wealth of knowledge and experience made available through the Training Programme.”