

# Getting Fair Trade Bananas on Your Supermarket Shelf

## Building Awareness & Showcasing Demand in Your Community



1. Buy other Fair Trade products and help demonstrate to supermarkets that there is a growing demand for Fair Trade in your community.
2. Organize a Fair Trade banana themed event to raise awareness and build demand for Fair Trade bananas in your community.
3. Fill out a product request card or online form at the store you frequent requesting Fair Trade bananas.
4. Talk to your Produce Buyer or Store Manager. (See below)

### Talking to your Produce Buyer/ Store Manager

1. Print out the list of importers and distributors from the **“Where to Buy”** section of the web site and visit the store where you shop.
2. Request to speak with your Produce Buyer or Store Manager.
3. Greet them. Then, ask if they know what Fair Trade certification is. Give a short & sweet explanation. (Ex: Fair Trade certification ensures that producers are getting fair wages and improved living conditions. Products include coffee, tea and bananas.)

4. Show them the list of Fair Trade importers and distributors, letting them know that if they don't see their preferred vendor listed, Fair Trade Towns USA might be able to help that vendor source Fair Trade bananas. Email [gobananas@fairtradetownsusa.org](mailto:gobananas@fairtradetownsusa.org) and we will be happy to assist.

5. Tell them that you'd love to see Fair Trade bananas sold at the store, and that you're working in your town to raise awareness and demand for Fair Trade bananas. Offer to promote other Fair Trade products available in their store to showcase that there is demand.

## Understand Distribution & Picking Your Target

Bananas have just a couple of weeks between harvest and when they start to ripen—so careful and quick logistics are essential.

**Supermarket chains** with more than 50 stores or so buy full container loads (1000 boxes/40,000lbs) from an importer on a weekly basis and tend to ripen bananas at their own regional facilities. Generally they have long term, exclusive contracts with the big banana companies



# Getting Fair Trade Bananas on Your Supermarket Shelf (cont'd)

on conventional bananas. Organic bananas aren't always on contract and can be more open to working with smaller importers. It is difficult for supermarkets to buy small quantities of Fair Trade bananas for a couple of stores. However, if there is a regional distributor that can deliver ripe bananas directly to those stores, it's possible they will consider. Buying large quantities and distributing Fair Trade bananas to many stores is easier from a logistical perspective, but could cut into retailer margins. So getting to "yes" isn't easy, but getting to "yes" could be life-changing for an entire community.

**Independent supermarkets** tend to work with regional distributors which ripen the bananas and deliver them to their stores several times

a week. For independent stores to get the right color banana (yellow with green tips) at a price that's reasonable, that regional distributor needs to handle a good volume of bananas each week, which means they'll need other customers. If that regional distributor already carries Fair Trade bananas for other customers, it's easy enough to have them serve one more store. If that regional distributor isn't yet carrying Fair Trade bananas, you may need to either 1) convince the independent supermarket to buy from another distributor or 2) help their preferred distributor sell Fair Trade bananas too.

So, when picking your target it is best to understand your target, and to know that you'll achieve success faster when you are demanding them on a local level. If your target is a small store, are their patrons willing to pay a .20 - .40 more per lb difference? If your target is a supermarket, can you build enough demand? Either way make this fun, be patient, and support the store-level staff as much as you can!

*"In my experience, when empowered shoppers request fair trade bananas, they must also address the store's bottom line. When encouraging your store to go for the better banana option explain that fair trade products are more trusted, celebrated, and purchased, which actually rewards supermarkets through more sales volume and a better public image." - Michela Calabrese, Employee at Interruption\* Fair Trade, a Fair Trade banana importer*

