

## Commodity Report: Strawberries (2021)

Strawberries are reportedly produced with forced labor (FL) and/or child labor (CL) in the following countries:	Top ten countries that produce strawberries worldwide (FAOSTAT 2019):	Top ten countries that export fresh strawberries worldwide (UN Comtrade 2020): <sup>1</sup>	Top ten countries that import fresh strawberries (UN Comtrade 2020): <sup>2</sup>
Argentina (CL) Burma (FL) Spain (FL)	1. China 2. United States 3. Mexico 4. Turkey 5. Egypt 6. Spain 7. Russia 8. Poland 9. Morocco 10. South Korea	1. Spain 2. Mexico 3. United States 4. Netherlands 5. Belgium 6. Greece 7. Egypt 8. Morocco 9. South Korea 10. Italy	1. United States 2. Canada 3. Germany 4. United Kingdom 5. France 6. Netherlands 7. Belgium 8. Italy 9. Russia 10. Hong Kong, China

### Where are strawberries reportedly produced with human trafficking and/or child labor?

According to the U.S. Department of State 2021 *Trafficking in Persons Report*, strawberries are produced with forced labor in Burma and Spain.<sup>3</sup> According to the U.S. Department of Labor’s 2021 *List of Goods Produced by Child Labor and Forced Labor*, strawberries are produced with child labor in Argentina.<sup>4</sup>

Burma is listed as a Tier 3 country by the U.S. Department of State 2021 *Trafficking in Persons Report*. Argentina and Spain are listed as Tier 1 countries.<sup>5</sup>

### What does human trafficking and/or child labor in strawberry production look like?

According to the U.S. Department of State 2021 *Trafficking in Persons Report*, vulnerable populations are subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor in seasonal strawberry harvesting in **Burma**. The large number of Burmese make up one quarter of the population; among them, those who do not have access to citizenship or identification documents are much more vulnerable to human trafficking that disproportionately victimizes ethnic minority groups, who are located mainly in Kachin, Shan, and Rakhine States. Rohingya individuals are at particularly high risk of labor trafficking in Rakhine State.

<sup>1</sup> International Trade Center (ITC Calculations based on UNCOMTRADE Statistics). [www.intracen.org](http://www.intracen.org).

<sup>2</sup> International Trade Center (ITC Calculations based on UNCOMTRADE Statistics). [www.intracen.org](http://www.intracen.org).

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of State. *Trafficking in Persons Report*. 2021. [www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/TIP\\_Report\\_Final\\_20210701.pdf](http://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/TIP_Report_Final_20210701.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Labor. *List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor*. 2021. [www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/reports/child-labor/list-of-goods](http://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/reports/child-labor/list-of-goods).

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of State. *Trafficking in Persons Report*. 2021. [www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/TIP\\_Report\\_Final\\_20210701.pdf](http://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/TIP_Report_Final_20210701.pdf).

Men, women, and children at the greatest risk of trafficking include those from mostly ethnic minority areas, such as an estimated 104,000 persons displaced by conflict in Kachin and northern Shan States, 16,000 persons displaced in southeast Burma, and at least 25,000 persons displaced in Rakhine and Chin States, who are at increased risk of trafficking as of December 31, 2020. The 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report also describes up to 47 government-operated prisons and 48 labor camps in Burma, called “agriculture and livestock breeding career training centers” and “manufacturing centers,” respectively, although it is not specified if this includes strawberry harvesting.<sup>6</sup>

Significant numbers of migrant workers from sub-Saharan Africa have been noted in **Spain’s** agricultural sector, including in the production of strawberries.<sup>7</sup> While cases of human trafficking have not been authoritatively documented among this migrant worker population, the debt they may owe to the smugglers who facilitated their migration may increase their vulnerability. There is also anecdotal reporting that some employers may make deceptive promises about securing legal documentation.<sup>8</sup> Since the signing of a bilateral contract in 2001, thousands of Moroccan women have worked seasonally from April to June to cultivate and harvest strawberries in Spain. According to media reports from 2020, thousands of Moroccan women were brought to

Spain as essential workers to pick strawberries during the COVID-19 pandemic, largely in the southern Huelva province, where severe labor conditions that include forced labor and sexual abuse were reported. A United Nations rapporteur described extremely poor and abusive conditions, including unpaid wages, unhygienic and overcrowded accommodations, poor access to water, and no evidence of sanitization of workers’ surroundings.<sup>9</sup> A 2019 New York Times report stated that Moroccan women work on isolated farms deprived of resources and are forced to endure sexual abuse and assault by their bosses who threaten them if they resist.<sup>10</sup> Abusive labor conditions on these farms include working long hours without breaks for less pay than was promised and living in inhumane conditions on the farms. In May 2018, several Moroccan women working on a strawberry farm near Almonte, Spain, filed lawsuits due to these abuses. Similar reports of sexual exploitation on strawberry farms in Spain were documented in 2010 by El País.<sup>11</sup>

According to a 2017 Reuters report, Europe’s top human rights court accused **Greece** of failing to protect migrant agricultural workers who had been subjected to forced labor and shot at by security guards when protesting over unpaid wages in 2013. This investigation found that Bangladeshi strawberry harvesters, some in their early teens, had been forced to work 12-hour days while supervised by armed guards and lived in makeshift huts without toilets or running

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<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of State. *Trafficking in Persons Report*. 2021. [www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/TIP\\_Report\\_Final\\_20210701.pdf](http://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/TIP_Report_Final_20210701.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Browne, David. African Migrants Survive in ‘The Cemetery’ to Work In The Fields And Greenhouses Of Andalucia. 2 March 2019. [www.equaltimes.org/african-migrants-survive-in-the#.XYopxChKhPY](http://www.equaltimes.org/african-migrants-survive-in-the#.XYopxChKhPY).

<sup>8</sup> Gorney, Cynthia. National Geographic. African Migrants in Europe Trade One Hardship for Another. June 2019. [www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/2019/06/african-migrants-in-europe-trade-one-hardship-for-another-feature/](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/2019/06/african-migrants-in-europe-trade-one-hardship-for-another-feature/).

<sup>9</sup> Davies, Sophie. “Shocking’ Abuse of Migrants Forced to Pick Strawberries in Spain, U.N. Says.” Reuters. 1 July 2020. [www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-morocco-farms-migrants-trfn/shocking-abuse-of-migrants-forced-to-pick-strawberries-in-spain-u-n-says-idUSKBN24271J](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-morocco-farms-migrants-trfn/shocking-abuse-of-migrants-forced-to-pick-strawberries-in-spain-u-n-says-idUSKBN24271J).

<sup>10</sup> Aida Alami. NY Times. “Workers in Spain’s Strawberry Fields Speak Out on Abuse.” 20 July 2019. [www.nytimes.com/2019/07/20/world/europe/spain-strawberry-fields-abuse.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/20/world/europe/spain-strawberry-fields-abuse.html).

<sup>11</sup> Jerónimo Andreu. El País. “Víctimas del Oro Rojo.” [elpais.com/diario/2010/06/13/domingo/1276401156\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/2010/06/13/domingo/1276401156_850215.html).

water.<sup>12</sup> These workers had gone unpaid for seven months before their protest.<sup>13</sup> The majority of migrants who work in Greece are employed illegally, and over 40 percent of Greece’s undocumented workers are migrants.<sup>14</sup> The U.S. Department of State 2017 *Trafficking in Persons Report* noted that Greece had indeed failed to defend these Bangladeshi migrant workers from forced labor, citing the European Court of Human Rights’ verdict.<sup>15</sup>

**Mexican** berry pickers have reported wage theft, sexual harassment, and poor working and living conditions.<sup>16</sup> According to a 2015 Reuters report, Mexican strawberry harvesters on a farm in San Quintin in Baja California state, Mexico live in cardboard shacks, regularly work over 50 hours per week, and earn as low as one to two USD per hour. Harvesters reported that the fields are fumigated with pesticides as they are nearby picking fruit, leading to health problems for workers.<sup>17</sup> There are reports of workers in San Quintin being pressured to work seven days a week during the harvest. At one berry-producing company, if workers take Sunday off,

they are docked USD 13-20 and are not allowed to return to work until the following Wednesday.<sup>18</sup> Another news report details workers at a farm in San Quintin who experienced wage theft, work alongside children as young as 12, and witnessed people shot or beaten for trying to form a union. Union organizers reported that they have been trying to achieve 300 pesos a day, or USD 16, for farm workers supplying fruit and berries to Driscoll’s in both Mexico and the United States, while workers currently make about USD 6 for 12 hours of work per day.<sup>19</sup>

In the **United States**, many workers in the strawberry industry are immigrants from Mexico, speaking Spanish or languages indigenous to Mexico. Workers often work up to 13 hours a day in hazardous conditions, and face wage theft, low wages, harassment, overcrowded housing, few breaks from work, and hurdles to effective unionization.<sup>20</sup> A 2016 report by The Guardian stated that California strawberry pickers risk their health with exposure to toxic pesticides and chemicals, and

<sup>12</sup> Reuters. “European Rights Court Condemns Greece Over Migrant “Forced Labor.” 20 March 2017.

[www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-greece-court-migrants-idUSKBN17120B](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-greece-court-migrants-idUSKBN17120B);

Amnesty International. “Greece: Despair Pervades Camps After 33 Migrant Workers Shot in Manolada.” 2013.

[www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2013/04/greece-despair-pervades-camps-after-33-migrant-workers-shot-in-manolada/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2013/04/greece-despair-pervades-camps-after-33-migrant-workers-shot-in-manolada/).

<sup>13</sup> Amnesty International. “Greece: Despair Pervades Camps After 33 Migrant Workers Shot in Manolada.” 2013.

[www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2013/04/greece-despair-pervades-camps-after-33-migrant-workers-shot-in-manolada/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2013/04/greece-despair-pervades-camps-after-33-migrant-workers-shot-in-manolada/).

<sup>14</sup> Reuters. “European Rights Court Condemns Greece Over Migrant “Forced Labor.” 20 March 2017.

[www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-greece-court-migrants-idUSKBN17120B](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-greece-court-migrants-idUSKBN17120B);

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Department of State. Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. *Trafficking in Persons Report*. 2017.

[www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/271339.pdf](http://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/271339.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> Yu Hsi Lee, Esther. “Berry Farmworkers Toil 12 Hours A Day For \$6. Now They’re Demanding a Raise.” *Think Progress*.

April 1, 2016. [archive.thinkprogress.org/berry-farmworkers-toil-12-hours-a-day-for-6-now-theyre-demanding-a-raise-](http://archive.thinkprogress.org/berry-farmworkers-toil-12-hours-a-day-for-6-now-theyre-demanding-a-raise-ea4f5800caf8/)

[ea4f5800caf8/](http://archive.thinkprogress.org/berry-farmworkers-toil-12-hours-a-day-for-6-now-theyre-demanding-a-raise-ea4f5800caf8/);

Allen, Bradley. “Boycott Driscoll’s Action in Watsonville.” *Indy Bay*. 4 Jan 2016.

[www.indybay.org/newsitems/2016/01/04/18781500.php](http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2016/01/04/18781500.php).

<sup>17</sup> Diaz, Lizbeth and Garrido, Edgard. “Picking Strawberries in Mexico for U.S. Tables Leaves Workers Asking for More.”

*Reuters*. 16 May 2015. [www.reuters.com/article/us-mexico-farms-widerimage/picking-strawberries-in-mexico-for-u-s-tables-leaves-workers-asking-for-more-idUSKBN000X720150517](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mexico-farms-widerimage/picking-strawberries-in-mexico-for-u-s-tables-leaves-workers-asking-for-more-idUSKBN000X720150517).

<sup>18</sup> Marosi, Richard. “Mexican Farmworkers Target Driscoll’s, a Firm with Labor-Friendly Image.” *Los Angeles Times*. 10 April

2015. [www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-baja-farmworkers-20150411-story.html](http://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-baja-farmworkers-20150411-story.html).

<sup>19</sup> Yu Hsi Lee, Esther. “Berry Farmworkers Toil 12 Hours A Day For \$6. Now They’re Demanding a Raise.” *Think Progress*.

April 1, 2016. [archive.thinkprogress.org/berry-farmworkers-toil-12-hours-a-day-for-6-now-theyre-demanding-a-raise-](http://archive.thinkprogress.org/berry-farmworkers-toil-12-hours-a-day-for-6-now-theyre-demanding-a-raise-ea4f5800caf8/)

[ea4f5800caf8/](http://archive.thinkprogress.org/berry-farmworkers-toil-12-hours-a-day-for-6-now-theyre-demanding-a-raise-ea4f5800caf8/).

<sup>20</sup> Yu His Lee, Esther. “Berry Farmworkers Toil 12 Hours A Day For \$6. Now They’re Demanding a Raise.” *Think Progress*. 1

April 2016. [thinkprogress.org/berry-farmworkers-toil-12-hours-a-day-for-6-now-theyre-demanding-a-raise-ea4f5800caf8/](http://thinkprogress.org/berry-farmworkers-toil-12-hours-a-day-for-6-now-theyre-demanding-a-raise-ea4f5800caf8/).

must crouch low to the ground for many hours at a time without lunch or rest breaks, leading to illness and injuries among workers.<sup>21</sup> According to the Environmental Working Group (EWG), a U.S. non-profit, strawberries grown in the United States have topped their “Dirty Dozen” list of produce with the most pesticide residues since 2016.<sup>22</sup> In addition, laborers picking strawberries said their wages were not paid in full, they had to serve three days in an unpaid “apprenticeship” to secure the job, and there was a lack of protective equipment including gloves, goggles, and masks.<sup>23</sup>

One walk-out led by workers in 2015 took place at Cedar Point Nursery, where field workers harvest, trim, and pick root stock for commercial strawberry growers in California. Workers protested low wages, dirty bathrooms, and harassment from supervisors. In 1996, there was a campaign to organize the strawberry industry in Watsonville in order to raise their low wages.<sup>24</sup> In both cases and many others, union organizers utilized the 1975 California Agricultural Labor Relations Act, which allows organizers to meet with, educate, and organize workers by entering their place of work during non-work hours and after notifying the business. In June 2021, non-profit CalMatters reported, the U.S. Supreme Court invalidated the decades-old access rule, as producers including Cedar

Point Nursery had filed lawsuits against unionizers that sought access to their property to speak with workers and regarded them as trespassers. Union organizers can no longer enter workers’ place of work, compared to being authorized to do so for a maximum of three hours a day, 120 days a year while the regulation was in place. Although union organizers can contact workers outside of their workplace, unions argue that the access rule allowing in-person meetings where workers are gathered is crucial to helping workers understand their rights and make demands, especially as many workers speak languages indigenous to Mexico, do not own cell phones, and have isolated accommodations after immigrating to the United States.<sup>25</sup>

Child laborers who work in the agricultural sector of **Argentina** harvest blueberries, grapes, and strawberries, among other crops.<sup>26</sup> The Government of Argentina reports that child labor affects 9.4 percent of all children aged 5 to 15 and is commonly found within agriculture, in a family setting.<sup>27</sup> These children may be exposed to harmful pesticides and work long hours.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Carroll, Rory. “Fruits of Labor: Sunny California Is No Paradise for Farm Workers.” *The Guardian*. 15 Aug 2016.

[www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/aug/15/california-farms-pick-your-own-fruit-vegetables-working-conditions-jobs](http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/aug/15/california-farms-pick-your-own-fruit-vegetables-working-conditions-jobs).

<sup>22</sup> EWG Science Team. *EWG’s 2021 Shopper’s Guide to Pesticides in Produce*. The Environmental Working Group. 17 March 2021. [www.ewg.org/foodnews/summary.php](http://www.ewg.org/foodnews/summary.php).

<sup>23</sup> Carroll, Rory. “Fruits of Labor: Sunny California Is No Paradise for Farm Workers.” *The Guardian*. 15 Aug 2016.

[www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/aug/15/california-farms-pick-your-own-fruit-vegetables-working-conditions-jobs](http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/aug/15/california-farms-pick-your-own-fruit-vegetables-working-conditions-jobs).

<sup>24</sup> Bacon, David. “The Real Target in the Supreme Court’s ‘Cedar Point’ Decision.” *The Nation*. 2 July 2021.

[www.thenation.com/article/activism/cedar-point-organizing-labor/](http://www.thenation.com/article/activism/cedar-point-organizing-labor/).

<sup>25</sup> Cimini, Kate. “Supreme Court Limits California Union Recruiting in Favor of Property Rights.” *Cal Matters*. 24 June 2021.

[calmatters.org/california-divide/2021/06/supreme-court-california-farmworker-unions-property-rights/](http://calmatters.org/california-divide/2021/06/supreme-court-california-farmworker-unions-property-rights/).

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Department of Labor. *2020 List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor*. 2020.

[www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/child\\_labor\\_reports/tda2019/2020\\_TVPR\\_List\\_Online\\_Final.pdf](http://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/child_labor_reports/tda2019/2020_TVPR_List_Online_Final.pdf).

<sup>27</sup> U.S. Department of Labor. Bureau of International Labor Affairs. *Multi-stakeholder Strategy for Child Labor Elimination in Agriculture in Argentina*. 2019-2021. [www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/multi-stakeholder-strategy-child-labor-elimination-agriculture-argentina](http://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/multi-stakeholder-strategy-child-labor-elimination-agriculture-argentina).

<sup>28</sup> National Center for Farmworker Health. *Child Labor in Agriculture*. 2018. [www.ncfh.org/uploads/3/8/6/8/38685499/fs-child\\_labor2018.pdf](http://www.ncfh.org/uploads/3/8/6/8/38685499/fs-child_labor2018.pdf).

According to the U.S. Department of Labor's 2019 *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor*, **Bolivian** children and children of Bolivian immigrants in Argentina engage in child labor in agriculture.<sup>29</sup>

Mexico, which accounts for 95 percent of the United States' imports of strawberries,<sup>30</sup> has high rates of child labor in agriculture; however, there is limited evidence linking child labor directly to strawberries specifically. A few reports describe children de-stemming strawberries in Baja California Sur and workers toiling alongside children as young as 12.<sup>31</sup> There are anecdotal accounts of child labor and exploitation, as well as indicators of forced labor, in strawberry harvesting in the United States, including workers in Washington putting their children to work (children are paid 85 percent of the minimum wage) in order to pay rent, and children between the ages of 6 and 11 working on strawberry farms in Washington.<sup>32</sup> Strawberry harvesting in the U.S. is highly dependent on migrant workers due to the time-sensitive nature of the harvest.<sup>33</sup> Children of migrant workers may accompany their parents to the fields, particularly when they are not

enrolled in school. Further, strawberry harvesters are often paid a piece-rate wage, which means that slower workers may struggle to make minimum wage. Children may work in strawberry harvesting to augment family income.<sup>34</sup>

### **Strawberry Production and Supply Chain:**

After harvesting, which is done by hand, strawberries are either frozen or shipped directly to companies to further process the fruits or deliver them as-is to retailers, restaurants, institutions, or other organizations. Strawberries are often packaged by pickers in the field and not washed beforehand to reduce handling of the

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<sup>29</sup> U.S. Department of Labor. 2019 *Findings on the Worst forms of Child Labor*. 2019.

[www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/child\\_labor\\_reports/tda2019/Argentina.pdf](http://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/child_labor_reports/tda2019/Argentina.pdf).

<sup>30</sup> Hee Suh, Guan, Khachatryan. "The impact of Mexican competition on the U.S. strawberry industry." *International Food and Agribusiness Management Review (IFAMA)*. 2017. [www.wageningenacademic.com/doi/abs/10.22434/IFAMR2016.0075](http://www.wageningenacademic.com/doi/abs/10.22434/IFAMR2016.0075).

<sup>31</sup> Marosi, Richard. "In Mexico's Fields, Children Toil to Harvest Crops that Make it to America's Tables." *Los Angeles Times*. 14 Dec 2014. [graphics.latimes.com/product-of-mexico-children/](http://graphics.latimes.com/product-of-mexico-children/).

Yu Hsi Lee, Esther. "Berry Farmworkers Toil 12 Hours A Day For \$6. Now They're Demanding a Raise." *Think Progress*. 1 Apr 2016. [thinkprogress.org/berry-farmworkers-toil-12-hours-a-day-for-6-now-theyre-demanding-a-raise-ea4f5800caf8/](http://thinkprogress.org/berry-farmworkers-toil-12-hours-a-day-for-6-now-theyre-demanding-a-raise-ea4f5800caf8/).

<sup>32</sup> Patel, Avni. "Who's Picking Your Berries? Feds Find Young Children on Strawberry Farms." *ABC News*. 11 Aug 2011. [abcnews.go.com/Blotter/feds-find-young-children-working-strawberry-farms/story?id=14281166](http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/feds-find-young-children-working-strawberry-farms/story?id=14281166).

Gonzales, John Moreno. "FBI Probes Treatment of Mexican Workers in LA." *The San Francisco Chronicle*. 10 December 2008.

As cited in Verité. Help Wanted. *Immigrant Workers in US Agriculture: The Role of Labor Brokers in Vulnerability to Forced Labor*. June 2010. [www.verite.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/HELP-WANTED\\_A-Verite%CC%81-Report\\_Migrant-Workers-in-the-United-States.pdf](http://www.verite.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/HELP-WANTED_A-Verite%CC%81-Report_Migrant-Workers-in-the-United-States.pdf).

Yu Hsi Lee, Esther. "Berry Farmworkers Toil 12 Hours a Day for \$6. Now They're Demanding a Raise." *Think Progress*. 1 Apr 2016. [thinkprogress.org/berry-farmworkers-toil-12-hours-a-day-for-6-now-theyre-demanding-a-raise-ea4f5800caf8](http://thinkprogress.org/berry-farmworkers-toil-12-hours-a-day-for-6-now-theyre-demanding-a-raise-ea4f5800caf8); Allen,

Bradley. "Boycott Driscoll's Action in Watsonville." *Indy Bay*. 4 Jan 2016.

[www.indybay.org/newsitems/2016/01/04/18781500.php](http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2016/01/04/18781500.php).

<sup>33</sup> Whitaker, Bill. "Farmer Says His Strawberry Harvest Depends on Immigration Bill." *CBS News*. 11 Apr 2013. [www.cbsnews.com/news/farmer-says-his-strawberry-harvest-depends-on-immigration-bill](http://www.cbsnews.com/news/farmer-says-his-strawberry-harvest-depends-on-immigration-bill).

<sup>34</sup> Patel, Avni. "Who's Picking Your Berries? Feds Find Young Children on Strawberry Farms." *ABC News*. 11 Aug 2011. [abcnews.go.com/Blotter/feds-find-young-children-working-strawberry-farms/story?id=14281166](http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/feds-find-young-children-working-strawberry-farms/story?id=14281166).

delicate fruit, unless being frozen.<sup>35</sup> If the strawberries are processed, they are made into syrups, jams, juices, or yogurts, or are frozen or dried.<sup>36</sup> Data from the Food and Agriculture Organization found that global strawberry

production has increased by almost 40 percent between 2008 and 2018.<sup>37</sup>

**How consumers are linked to human trafficking and/or child labor in strawberry production:**



As of December 2020, strawberries are the fifth most consumed fresh fruit in the United States.<sup>38</sup> In 2020, the United States imported 849,000 pounds of fresh strawberries.<sup>39</sup> Reports state that individual Americans consume about 8 pounds of strawberries every year, 75 percent of which are fresh and the rest frozen,<sup>40</sup> and 94 percent of households consume strawberries.<sup>41</sup>

raise awareness of child labor in agriculture and promote children’s right to education, and the latter has hosted workshops to prevent agricultural child labor in collaboration with ILO and the Santa Fe Provincial Commission for the Eradication of Child Labor.<sup>42</sup>

**Examples of what governments, corporations, and others are doing:**

The U.S. Department of Labor reported in 2018 that Argentina’s Universal Child Allowance Program has been successful in reducing child labor. RENATRE and CONAETI, programs funded by the Government of Argentina, also

In the United States, the Equitable Food Initiative (EFI) was established in 2015 as a partnership of farmworker groups, businesses, and social justice organizations. The partnership has developed labor standards and training programs to improve working conditions and

<sup>35</sup> Bunning, Marisa, et al. “Strawberries.” *Colorado State University, Food Source Information*. 2021.

[fsi.colostate.edu/strawberries/](https://fsi.colostate.edu/strawberries/).

<sup>36</sup> Community Food Security Coalition. *Leveraging Institutional Dollars for a Just and Healthy Food System - Strawberry Supply Chain*. 28 June 2013. [www.slideshare.net/cfsc/strawberry-supply-chain-1-pager](http://www.slideshare.net/cfsc/strawberry-supply-chain-1-pager);

Agricultural Marketing Resource Center (AgMRC). *Strawberries*. April 2019. [www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fruits/strawberries](http://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fruits/strawberries).

<sup>37</sup> Hortidaily. “Global Strawberry Production Up by Almost 40%.” 23 Sep 2020. [www.hortidaily.com/article/9252391/global-strawberry-production-up-by-almost-40/](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/9252391/global-strawberry-production-up-by-almost-40/).

<sup>38</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). *Apples and Oranges Are America’s Top Fruit Choices*. 2020. [www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/chart-gallery/gallery/chart-detail/?chartId=58322](https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/chart-gallery/gallery/chart-detail/?chartId=58322).

<sup>39</sup> International Trade Center (ITC Calculations based on UNCOMTRADE Statistics). [www.intracen.org](http://www.intracen.org).

<sup>40</sup> Bunning, Marisa, et al. “Strawberries.” *Colorado State University, Food Source Information*. 2021.

[fsi.colostate.edu/strawberries/](https://fsi.colostate.edu/strawberries/).

<sup>41</sup> University of Illinois Extension. “Strawberries & More: Facts.” [web.extension.illinois.edu/strawberries/facts.cfm](http://web.extension.illinois.edu/strawberries/facts.cfm).

<sup>42</sup> U.S. Department of Labor. Bureau of International Labor Affairs. *2018 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor*. Argentina. 2018. [www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/argentina](http://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/argentina).

Visit link above to see other projects funded by the USDOL to address child labor within agriculture in Argentina.

produce safer food.<sup>43</sup> EFI also offers a certification for the growers of some products, including strawberries, to promote responsible recruitment and contracting. Optimal Berry Group, a berry cooperative and exporter in Mexico, was certified in 2016.<sup>44</sup> In June 2021, EFI was awarded a grant from the Walmart Foundation to support the development of an improvement program for growers selling to EFI-certified suppliers, along with a pilot

initiative to measure quality improvements of ethically recruited workers who have received services through EFI-certified employers.<sup>45</sup> In May 2021, Whole Foods Market began selling strawberries from EFI-certified GoodFarms, their first EFI-certified product, using a Sourced for Good seal that indicates to shoppers which products were cultivated under improved working conditions and benefits.<sup>46</sup>

### Where can I learn more?

[Read](#) the LA Times' investigation into labor violations in the Mexican agricultural sector.

[Read](#) an article on the abuse of workers in Spain's strawberry fields.

[Read](#) an article on the conditions of strawberry picking in Mexico.

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<sup>43</sup> American Public Health Association. *Improving Working Conditions for U.S. Farmworkers and Food Production Workers*. November 7, 2017. [www.apha.org/policies-and-advocacy/public-health-policy-statements/policy-database/2018/01/18/improving-working-conditions](http://www.apha.org/policies-and-advocacy/public-health-policy-statements/policy-database/2018/01/18/improving-working-conditions).

<sup>44</sup> GoodFarms™ brand packaging displays EFI's 'Responsibly Grown. Farmworker Assured'™ trustmark. 2016. [equitablefood.org/latest-news/costco-stocks-goodfarms-blueberries-strawberries-and-organic-strawberries-from-equitable-food-initiative-certified-farms/](http://equitablefood.org/latest-news/costco-stocks-goodfarms-blueberries-strawberries-and-organic-strawberries-from-equitable-food-initiative-certified-farms/).

Optimal Berry: Redefining a Strawberry Legacy. March 2019. [equitablefood.org/latest-news/optimal-berry-redefining-a-strawberry-legacy/](http://equitablefood.org/latest-news/optimal-berry-redefining-a-strawberry-legacy/).

<sup>45</sup> Equitable Food Initiative. "EFI Receives New Grant from Walmart Foundation." 28 June 2021. [equitablefood.org/latest-news/efi-receives-new-grant-from-walmart-foundation](http://equitablefood.org/latest-news/efi-receives-new-grant-from-walmart-foundation).

<sup>46</sup> Diep, Lilian. "GoodFarms' Strawberries Chosen as the First Equitable Food Initiative-Certified Product in Whole Foods Market's Sourced for Good Program." *AndNowUKnow*. 12 May 2021. [www.andnowuknow.com/whats-store/goodfarms-strawberries-chosen-first-equitable-food-initiative-certified-Eric-Farley-Erik-Brown-LeAnne-R-Ruzzamenti/lilian-diep/73409](http://www.andnowuknow.com/whats-store/goodfarms-strawberries-chosen-first-equitable-food-initiative-certified-Eric-Farley-Erik-Brown-LeAnne-R-Ruzzamenti/lilian-diep/73409).