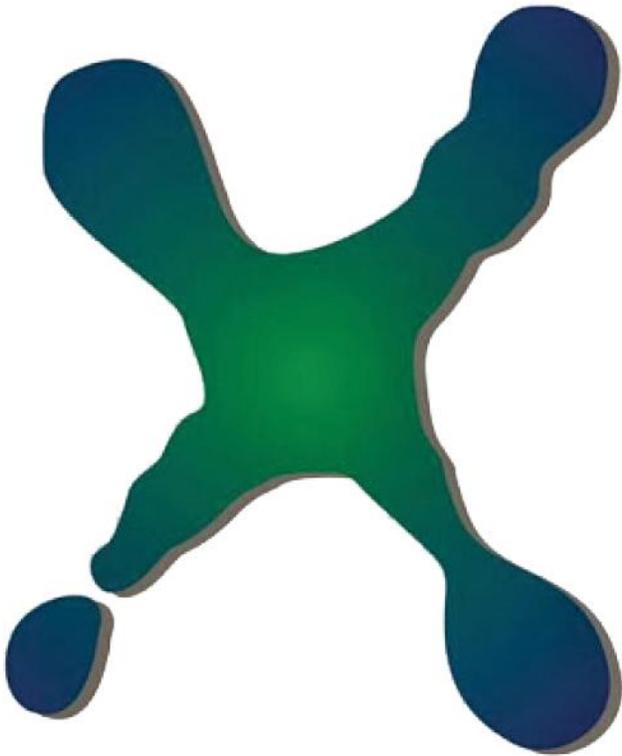


SWEATFREE TRIBE
INTERVIEW SERIES
PRESENTS



AN INTERVIEW WITH
Colette Cosner

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Stepping into the ED role at DFTA in 2013, what are a couple of your goals for the organization in your first year?

One of the organizational goals I am most excited about this year is growing our membership and capacity. The Domestic Fair Trade Principles are only relevant in so far as they can be widely known and worked towards by stakeholder groups throughout the agricultural system. By growing our membership we will increase our collective knowledge and the mechanisms by which we can learn from one another. The ultimate goal of the DFTA is to be a community, not just for cross-sector accountability, but also for cultivating systemic change in our food and farming system. With that in mind, I am also looking forward to the advocacy opportunities this year especially regarding immigrant rights, GMO labeling, and the farm bill. As a multi-stakeholder association the DFTA has a unique and powerful role to play in national policy issues. One of my goals is to provide meaningful engagement tools for our members to have their voices heard by one another as well as policymakers.

What campaigns does DFTA have in the works currently? Is there a particular campaign you are especially proud of or excited about?

With immigration reform taking the national spotlight this year, it will be critical for DFTA members to have the opportunity to come together in dialogue and action around guest worker programs, farmworker health and safety, economic conditions that cause forced migration, and diminished workers' rights on both the domestic and international levels. The DFTA has a unique voice to add to these social justice issues as an association representing people throughout the supply chain. With the Farmworkers Association of Florida hosting the DFTA's annual meeting this year, I am hopeful that the gathering will foster important internal education for our members and movement building for immigration reform.

Does DFTA have a stance on Fair Trade labeling in the United States? Which certifying entities have the organization's support?

One of the primary focuses of the DFTA this year will be to publish the evaluations and comparative analysis we've conducted of prominent fair trade and social justice programs over the last year. The DFTA will provide information about specific programs and key issues to the public, promote strong and legitimate programs, and facilitate collaboration among programs seeking continual improvement. The criteria for our evaluations are based on the

[Principles of Domestic Fair Trade](#) and will hopefully educate consumers about the integrity of certain market claims. But perhaps more important than clearing up consumer confusion, the evaluations assert high bar standards as critical to reforming an exploitative food and farming system. Conscious consumerism is an important, but we also need consumers to be advocates for the change we want to see in national policy and practice.

You can read about the DFTA's principles [here](#) to see what our criteria are for the evaluations.

Ethix believes that the trading of union labor produced goods in the USA is the foundation of any ethical standard for trade. What is DFTA's stance on union labor in the manufacturing of domestic fair trade goods?

One of the domestic fair trade principles is the [Rights of Labor](#). Fair trade means a safe and healthy working environment for producers and workers that conforms to all [International Labour Organization](#) conventions and the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#). Moreover, fair trade should ensure that there are mechanisms in place through which hired labor has an independent voice and is included in the benefits of trade through living wages, profit sharing, and direct and transparent communication through cooperative workplace structures. I believe organized labor has a huge role to play in ensuring safe and healthy work environments. It is my hope that the DFTA's relationship with unions will be a resource for US manufactures of fair trade goods to develop better mechanisms for ensuring workers rights. Similarly, I hope that the cooperatives and worker-owned businesses in our association can be a resource for creating more egalitarian work environments.

With DFTA based in Seattle, alongside the Washington Fair Trade Coalition, Community to Community Development and other groups, do you see a sort of fair trade "supercell" forming in the Northwest around issues like fair trade and food justice? What sorts of partnerships might we see between these groups?

The Pacific Northwest plays a unique role in the trade justice movement, as it is one of the most trade dependent regions in the country. It is also a hotbed for political activism and movement building. The fair trade and food justice movements here are strong because they do not operate in a vacuum and have worked hard to articulate solidarity with other struggles.

As a board member of the [Washington Fair Trade Coalition](#), I am excited for the opportunities ahead to amplify the voices of both the domestic and international fair trade movements. Increasingly we see that the challenges faced by producers in developing countries are also facing family farmers here in the US. Especially as international free trade agreements (such as the TransPacific Partnership) become more prevalent in national discourse, I think the work of fair trade activists will be to connect local and global struggles for health, justice, and sustainability.

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