

BANANAS UNPEELED!

The Hidden Costs of Banana Production and Trade;

a Global Education Curriculum Developed for the
Ontario Grade 12 Canadian and World Issues Course

by

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Why Go Bananas Over the Price of Bananas?

The theme of banana production and trade is perfectly suited to a curriculum unit intended to help students gain a more global perspective of important world issues. Growing bananas, occurring as it does in Southern countries with unstable or dictatorial political situations, may have devastating effects on the land and workers. Examine the table below to see examples of these effects. For more detailed information related to these issues, please refer to the Fact Sheets included in the Research assignment.

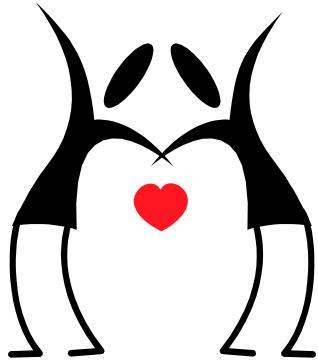
ENVIRONMENT	DEVELOPMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- deforestation and soil erosion- heavy use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides- loss of soil fertility- loss of bio-diversity- destruction of natural habitat- water and soil pollution- destruction of coral reefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- total dependence on export crops- large plantations destroy small farms- dominance of multi-nationals- diminished crops for local consumption- globalization of trade discourages Fair Trade- impact of western culture on local arts and customs
HUMAN RIGHTS	PEACE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- poor working conditions/wages of banana workers- impact of use of chemicals on workers' health- harassment of union leaders and members- lack of respect of workers' right of association (unionization)- child labour- sexual harassment of women workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- violence used against workers who try to organize unions- assassination of union leaders- assault and jailing of union members on strike- small farmers evicted from their land through violent means- involvement of United Fruit Co. in violent overthrow of democratically elected government of Guatemala

Head, Heart and, Hand

A global education curriculum unit does more than just present facts. It strives to involve students at three different levels: the Head, Heart, and Hand.



First, **the Head**: hence a presentation of as many of the facts as possible, touching on many aspects mentioned above. Students are also made aware of many other sources of information, which can be accessed in print or on the Internet. Our activities will try to help them assimilate this information, analyze it, practice some critical thinking, undertake a research project on a specific, related topic and share this information with fellow students.



Secondly, **the Heart**: involves an examination of the basic human and moral values, which come into play within these issues. Without these activities, a critical analysis remains simply a cold, intellectual exercise, which will not help the students integrate and act upon the knowledge they have gained. In this section, students reflect on what they've learned, share their ideas and feelings and, potentially develop an interest in taking some form of action.



Finally, **the Hand**: involves seeking out and examining possible solutions to the problems students have studied, and choosing ways they may become involved in these solutions. This stage of the unit is very important. As educators, we do not want to leave students with the impression that there is no hope for resolution to some of the problems they have learned about. We need to help students develop a sense of their power as consumers and as global citizens instead of cynicism and hopelessness in the face of larger powers in control over their lives. Thus they will understand that they have a role to play in influencing global change.

Teacher's Guide

(Please note, for semestered schools, two lessons may be combined in one class.)

Lesson 1:

- a) Introduce the topic of bananas to students. Ask how many of them like bananas? How many do they eat in a week? What do they know about where bananas are produced? Why do they think bananas are so inexpensive compared to locally grown fruit? What do they think are some of the issues that may be of concern to conscientious consumers in relation to banana production and trade?
- b) Have students take the pre-unit quiz on page 11. Do not take up allow them to correct their answers at this time. Save them for the end of the unit in order to give them an opportunity to compare these results with those taken after the unit.

Lesson 2:

- a) Give some background information about the video “Banana Split”. (see Synopsis)
- b) View the video. Have students make point-form notes during the viewing.
- c) Do the post-viewing activity “Going Bananas Together”.
- d) Facilitate a discussion about what they've discovered about banana production and trade through viewing the video. What surprised them the most? How do they feel now as consumers of bananas? What are some of the problems related to banana production and trade? What are some of the solutions?

Lesson 3:

- a) Present possible research topics on banana production and trade. Students indicate their choice of topic on the sign-up sheet, or select another topic of their own.
- b) Have students meet with their partner/s to form their group and begin reading the Fact Sheet related to their topic, as follows:

Topics 1 and 2: *The Story of Banana Production in Latin America*
Topic 2: see also “Clinton Apologizes” in the Appendices

Topics 3, 4 and 5: *USA: Going Bananas*

Topic 6: *The Human Impact of Banana Production*

Topic 7: *The Impact of Banana Production on the Environment*

Topics 8, 9 and 10: *Solutions/Alternatives.*

topic 9: see also the *Financial Times* article and Chris Wille's response to the criticism of the *Better Banana Certification* in the Appendices

For other topics: Go to <http://www.bananalink.org.uk/resources/documents.htm> for the document "*Better Bananas With Biotechnology?*" and "*Honduran Banana Breeder*", IDRC, 1995, in the Appendices.

- c) Present the instructions for their **Research Assignment**, given below.
- d) Students begin to develop research questions with their partner/group using the handout "Research Questions".
- e) With each team at a computer connected to the internet, use the hot list: "*The Internet Guide to Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Bananas*"

Lesson 4: (It is expected that students will need to work on their own time to complete their research.)

- a) If possible, consult the teacher-librarian to discuss preparing students to research in the library. Or, book a computer lab for students to do on-line research using the above selected Guide.
- b) Students may want to bring hard copies of information related to their topic found on the Internet in order to work on their research notes during class.
- c) Students may further refine their research questions in relation to new information.
- d) Students will begin to plan the structure of their presentation and to identify the visual support material they will use.

Lesson 5:

- a) Begin student presentations. Limit the time (10 minutes) per presentation. Have students take point-form notes during other students' presentations.
- b) Allow for a brief question/answer period after each presentation for further clarification.
- c) Students may do self and peer evaluations of the presentations.

Lesson 6:

- a) Return the pre-unit quizzes to the students. Have them review their answers and make any changes they feel are necessary. Take up the correct answers with them. Did their answers change considerably by the end of the unit? How and why?
- b) Organize a round table discussion during which students have the opportunity to discuss and to reflect on the problems and solutions raised during the presentations. For example:
 - Why is banana production and trade a good example of the problems related to globalization of the economy?
 - Which of the problems related to banana production and trade seem the most serious/urgent? Why?
 - What kind of action can we take as consumers of bananas and as concerned global citizens?
 - Which of the solutions/alternatives presented seem the most promising? Why?
 - Does Canada seem to be playing a role in solving some of these problems? How? How could Canada do more?
 - Are they themselves now willing to pay a higher price for bananas? Why or why not?
 - In what other way could they become involved in making others aware of the situation related to support of banana workers?
- c) As a final activity, students will write a short reflection piece on what they have learned, how they feel about what they've learned and, what they would propose as the best solution/alternative, with reasons and support. Will they plan to engage in any kind of activity related to awareness-raising about banana consumption, solidarity with banana workers, and/or changing their own habits in relation to bananas?

Supplementary activities:

If time permits, you may want to engage your students in some of the Activities provided in the Appendices:

- Banana Globingo and answer sheet
- Simulation activity, “Growing Bananas”

As well you may want the whole class to read and discuss some of the additional Articles provided in the Appendices:

- “Clinton: Support for Guatemala Was Wrong.”, Washington Post
- “The Banana Giant That Found It’s Gentle Side”, Financial Times
- Response by Chris Wille to criticism by Nepenthes (an environmental watchdog organization) of Rainforest Alliance certification program of Chiquita banana plantations (+ short bio of Chris Wille)
- “Honduran Banana Breeder”, IDRC, 1995
- Information on the fair trade banana supply in Vancouver, B.C. at <http://www.spud.ca>

Banana Research Topics - Team sign-up sheet

- 1- The History of Banana Production in Latin America
Team members:
- 2- Bananas and the Cold War (United Fruit in Guatemala)
Team members:
- 3- The Wild Bunch - The world's biggest banana producers
Team members:
- 4- The Situation of Small Banana Producers
Team members:
- 5- The Banana Wars (the U.S. vs the EU via the WTO)
Team members:
- 6- Banana Production and Current Labour Issues:
 - a) Anti-union strategies of big producers
 - b) Worker health issues
 - c) Human rights abuses
 - d) Banana workers' union campaigns
Team members:
- 7- Bananas and the Environment:
 - a) impact on land
 - b) impact on water
Team members:
- 8- Organic Bananas
Team members:
- 9- Certified Bananas
Team members:
- 10 - Fair Trade Bananas
Team members

Other topics as suggested

Research assignment

1. Review and choose a topic, and meet with your team.
2. Read the Fact Sheet related to your topic. Based on what you've read in the fact sheet, start developing some ideas for your research together.
3. Begin to develop some specific research questions.
4. Explore the links on the hot list you have been provided, "Internet Guide to Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Bananas....".
5. To update your resources, consult on-line databases of periodicals in the library. You may find other useful links by using a variety of search engines. (<http://www.vivisimo.org>). Ensure that the source is legitimate, credible, and authoritative.
6. Record all your sources, using the bibliographical style recommended by your school.
7. When you have done some additional research, modify and/or refine your research questions. Divide up the research tasks with your group or partner. Begin taking point form notes and organizing your draft.
8. Do not overlook visual support materials, as you will be doing an oral presentation to the class. Look for maps, graphs, photos, diagrams, charts, editorial cartoons, etc. Periodical databases can help with this task.
9. Complete your first draft, meet with your partner or group and verify that the complete presentation respects the amount of time you have been allocated, which is approximately 5 minutes or as determined by your teacher.
10. Practice the presentation with your partner or group.
11. Immediately after you present, be ready to participate in facilitating a discussion based on your presentation. Be prepared to answer some questions with supplementary information. As well, ask the class questions about what they think about the information you have presented.
12. Be prepared for self- and peer-evaluation.

Going Bananas - Quiz

1. Bananas grow on trees. True False
2. Bananas are not native to Latin America. True False
3. Bananas rank _____ among the world's food commodities.
4. World trade in bananas total what amount in dollars annually?
a) \$ 500 million
b) \$1 billion
c) \$ 2.5 billion
5. The first company to successfully import bananas to North America was the
U_____ F_____ C_____ .
6. It is possible that bananas as a species could be wiped out. What is the name
of the dreaded disease which might accomplish this?

7. A banana company was in part responsible for 40 years of brutal repression in
one of Central America's "Banana Republics". In which country did this take
place? _____
8. Today's world production of bananas is controlled by 4 companies nicknamed
"The Wild Bunch". Name at least 3 of these companies:

9. Latin American banana workers are not unionized. True False
10. Banana workers are now protected from human rights abuses thanks to
strong and progressive legislation in their home countries. True False
11. Today, the banana producing countries of Latin America depend much less
on this crop than they used to. True False
12. Bananas are cheap to buy in North American grocery stores because they
are very cheap to produce. True False
13. Banana companies have recently discovered a pesticide that is able to
control diseases that attack banana plants. True False

14. Banana workers' salaries have increased/decreased greatly over the past decade. True False
15. The World Trade Organization has come up with a ruling that will help protect the income of small banana producers in the Caribbean. True False
16. The "Banana Wars" refers to:
a) a war which occurred during the Spanish colonization of Latin America;
b) the invasion of Nicaragua by American mercenary troops during the 1800s;
c) a trade dispute between the U.S. and European Union
d) the civil war which has been raging in Colombia for the past 50 years;
17. A group of banana workers has successfully sued one of the "Wild Bunch" for health problems incurred due to their spraying of pesticides. True False
18. Diseases which attack bananas are easier to control on large/small plantations.
19. The past decade has seen a decrease/increase in global banana production. True False
20. Banana production and trade often translate into abuse of workers' rights and their health as well as untold damage to the environment. True False
21. Banana production on large plantations is often associated with widespread detrimental impacts on the immediate and surrounding environments. True False
22. Canada has participated in developing disease-resistant types of bananas. True False
23. Name a Canadian NGO which is trying to import fair trade bananas into Canada.
-
24. Name one thing you hope to find out more about in relation to bananas.
-

Going Bananas - Quiz - Answers

1. Bananas grow on trees. False *Bananas are the world's tallest grass.*
2. Bananas are not native to Latin America. True *They are native to Asia.*
3. The banana ranks fourth among the world's food commodities.
4. World trade in bananas total what amount in dollars annually?
c) \$ 2.5 billion.
5. The first company to successfully import bananas to North America was the United Fruit Company.
6. It is possible that bananas as a species could be wiped out. What is the name of the dreaded disease which might accomplish this?
Black Sigatoka.

7. A banana company was in part responsible for 40 years of brutal repression in one of Central America's "Banana Republics". In which country did this take place? Guatemala in the 1950s.
8. Today's world production of bananas is controlled by 4 companies nicknamed "The Wild Bunch". Name at least 3 of these companies:
Chiquita, Dole, Del Monte, Noboa
9. Latin American banana workers are not unionized. False
Many are unionized but, as well, many are not. It is not easy to unionize a plantation and many of the banana companies use anti-union strategies which range from the paternalistic to extreme violence, and even assassination.
10. Banana workers are now protected from human rights abuses thanks to strong and progressive legislation in their home countries. False
In many banana exporting countries, the legislation in fact favours the multi-nationals.
11. Today, the banana producing countries of Latin America depend much less on this crop than they used to. False
If anything, in this time of economic globalization, they depend even more on this cash crop.
12. Bananas are cheap to buy in North American grocery stores because they are very cheap to produce. False
Only the economy of scale operations allowed by vast plantations and the effectiveness of integrated vertical operations make bananas cheap.

13. Banana companies have recently discovered a pesticide that is able to control diseases that attack banana plants. False

The disease Black Sigatoka is becoming resistant to the pesticides used so far...Biotechnology seems to hold more promise...

14. Banana workers' salaries have decreased greatly over the past decade.
Banana workers in most countries make less now than they used to a decade ago because of overproduction.

15. The World Trade Organization has come up with a ruling that will help protect the income of small banana producers in the Caribbean. False

The small growers of the Windward Islands will now have to compete against the large multinational without the benefit of the preferential tariffs they used to enjoy from the E.U.

16. The "Banana Wars" refers to:

c) a trade dispute between the U.S. and European Union

17. A group of banana workers has successfully sued one of the "Wild Bunch" for health problems incurred due to their spraying of pesticides. True

18. Diseases which attack bananas are easier to control on small plantations.

19. The past decade has seen an increase in world wide banana production.
..in part due to the opening of markets in countries of the ex-Soviet Union.

20. Banana production and trade often translate into abuse of workers' rights and their health as well as untold damage to the environment. True. *Organic bananas, fair trade bananas, other banana certification programs, scientific research into disease-resistant bananas, solidarity campaigns to protect banana workers' rights and improve their working conditions are all solutions.*

21. Banana production on large plantations is often associated with widespread detrimental impacts on the immediate and surrounding environments. True.

22. Canada has participated in developing disease-resistant types of bananas.

True

The International Development Research Council (IDRC) funded research in Honduras (see video - Number One Banana)

23. Name a Canadian NGO which is trying to import fair trade bananas into Canada. *Oxfam Canada.volunteers in Vancouver have imported fair trade bananas through the Fair Fruit Initiative. See <http://www.spud.ca> for source. Oxfam volunteers in Toronto have done research into the matter. Oxfam Québec hopes to begin importing fair trade bananas in 2004.*

Going Bananas Together !

Before viewing the video “Banana Split”, take a few moments to look over the statements below. When you have finished viewing the video, look at the statements again but do not write anything down. When your teacher gives the signal, find a partner with whom to complete 2-3 statements. Get your partner to initial the squares you did together. When you are done do the same for all the other statements, finding different partners with whom to complete 2-3 statements.

1- Canadians eat _____ bananas a year.	2. Bananas are the _____ most important staple food crops in the world.	3. Bananas grow on the largest _____ in the world, not on trees.
4. Bananas were domesticated _____ years ago.	5. _____ % of the world's bananas are NOT grown for export.	6. 99% of bananas grown for export are of the _____ variety.
7. ____ million 40 lb. boxes of bananas are imported into North America every year.	8. Bananas represent up to ____ % of sales in a store's produce section.	9. _____ is the Central American country featured in the film “Banana Split”.
10. The company Chiquita used to be named _____	11. Work on banana plantations is dangerous because of the use of _____ .	12. Bananas are/are not grown from seed. Only 1 or 2 of these will be found in _____ of bananas.
13. Workers must go on _____ at times in order to gain better wages and working conditions.	14. To avoid the use of pesticides, research is being done into _____ varieties of bananas.	15. In 1998, the entire banana crop of Honduras was wiped out by _____
16. In the reestablish-ed banana plantations of Honduras ____ % of the workers have been replaced by technology.	17. The local people want Chiquita to give them_____ when the company closes down and moves away.	18. _____ is an alternative to Free Trade.
19. Bananas are the _____ fruit in our supermarkets.	20. Consumers could be less concerned about the _____ of bananas.	21. Consumers could be more willing to pay a _____ price for bananas.

Going Bananas Together ! (answers)

1- Canadians eat <u>approximately 3 billion</u> bananas a year.	2. Bananas are the <u>fourth</u> most important staple food crops in the world.	3. Bananas grow on the largest <u>grass</u> in the world, not on trees.
4. Bananas were domesticated <u>tens of thousands</u> of years ago.	5. <u>90%</u> of the world's bananas are NOT grown for export.	6. 99% of bananas grown for export are of the <u>Cavendish</u> variety.
7. <u>Four</u> million 40 lb. boxes of bananas are imported into North America every year.	8. Bananas represent up to <u>10-14 %</u> of sales in a store's produce section.	9. <u>Honduras</u> is the Central American country featured in the film "Banana Split".
10. The company called Chiquita was formerly named <u>United Fruit Company</u> .	11. Work on banana plantations is dangerous because of the use of <u>pesticides</u>	12. Only 1 or 2 seeds will be found in of bananas <u>thousands of kilos of bananas</u> .
13. Workers must go on <u>strike</u> at times in order to gain better wages and working conditions.	14. To avoid the use of pesticides, research is being done into <u>disease-resistant</u> varieties of bananas.	15. In 1998, the entire banana crop of Honduras was wiped out by <u>Hurricane Mitch</u> .
16. In the reestablish-ed banana plantations of Honduras <u>75%</u> of the workers have been replaced by technology.	17. The local people want Chiquita to give them <u>land</u> when the company closes down and moves away.	18. <u>Fair Trade</u> is an alternative to Free Trade.
19. Bananas are the <u>cheapest</u> fruit in our supermarkets.	20. Consumers could be less concerned about the <u>appearance</u> of bananas.	21. Consumers could be more willing to pay a <u>fair</u> price for bananas.

Banana Split preview

Banana Split is a documentary film (47 min.) about the most popular fruit in Canada. The film examines the historical, social, economic, scientific and environmental aspects of banana production. *Banana Split* begins in a grocery store in Canada and takes viewers on a journey to Honduras to see where the fruit comes from. Filmed in Thunder Bay, Toronto, Los Angeles, Montpelier (France) and Tela (Honduras). *Banana Split* is available in English and French.

Synopsis of the video:

The banana is the cheapest fruit available in Canada at any time of the year. Canadians eat approximately 3 billion bananas a year. In Canadian supermarkets, bananas account for over 10% of total sales in the produce section and 1% of total sales. All this, despite the fact that the nearest plantation is 5000 kilometres away and the banana is the most perishable fruit on our store shelves. *Banana Split* takes the viewer on a journey that begins with the hustle and bustle of a fruit market in Thunder Bay, Ontario and ends up with an examination of the daily challenges of life in Honduras. In addition to being a popular fruit in Canada, bananas are used as a staple food in more than 100 tropical and sub-tropical countries. In the developing world, bananas rank behind rice, wheat and corn as the most important staple food crops. Filmed in Canada, the United States, Honduras and France, "Banana Split" explores the North/South split between Canadian consumers and the people whose lives revolve around the "curvaceous fruit from the herbaceous plant."

Attention Educators: Every copy of the video comes with a guide for teachers. The guide suggests ways in which the video can be used in class. Contact Magic Lantern Communications for more information about *Banana Split* and the guide for teachers. In addition to the guide, you can access Banana Stories online at <http://shebafilms.com/text%20files/projecttxt.html>

Banana Stories/Histoires de Bananes is published by Shebandowan Films in co-operation with Canada's International Development Research Centre. It contains articles about bananas by Ron Harpelle of Lakehead University, Linda Ross of Oxfam Canada, Jean-Marc Fleury of the International Development Research Centre and Charlotte Lusty of the International Network for the Improvement of Banana and Plantain. The publication is aimed at teenagers and young adults and provides an overview of the history of the banana industry, international development efforts in the developing world, the science of banana cultivation, food security, and the issues involved in bringing the fruit to northern markets.

Director: Kelly Saxberg

Producer: Ron Harpelle

Distributor: Magic Lantern Communications

<http://www.magiclantern.ca/Search/VideoList.asp>

Fact sheet 1. The story of banana production in Latin America

Did you know that bananas don't actually grow on trees? They may look like trees, but bananas are really giant members of the grass family. This plant, which grows in profusion in many parts of the hot and humid tropical lowland areas of Central and South America, is not native to the area. Edible varieties of bananas are native to the tropical regions of Asia and are thought to be one of the first plants to be domesticated by man and may be tens of thousands of years old. They were first introduced to the Caribbean Islands during the Spanish colonization of the New World. The banana ranks fourth among the world's agricultural commodities. For the world's poorest people, it is a nutritious and important staple food. Here, however, we will concentrate on the fruit produced in Latin America for export to North America and Europe. The banana is the most important of all fruits with world trade totaling \$2.5 billion annually. (year?)

The first bananas arrived in North America in 1870 when Captain Lorenzo Dow Baker bought 160 bunches in Jamaica for a shilling each and sold them in Jersey City, N.Y., for \$2.00 each. After this success, he and entrepreneur Andrew Preston began trying to establish a banana market in Boston.

At the same time, in 1871, work began on the construction of a railroad in Costa Rica. During this project, Minor Cooper Keith, whose uncle was in charge of the project, planted bananas next to the railway tracks to provide a cheap source of food for the workers. Nearly 5,000 men died during the construction, mostly of malaria, including Keith's uncle and two brothers. Keith took charge of the project. He used the railway to export bananas from his plantations and his first shipment to the U.S. was a great success. Meanwhile Captain Baker and his partner Preston had established the Boston Fruit Company because the American demand for fruit increased steadily. Keith's operations grew as he purchased a 50% share of a 6,000 acre plantation in Panama. In 1898, Keith merged his company with the Boston Fruit Company and the United Fruit Company was born. At this point, the three men controlled 75% of the banana market in the United States. Keith married the daughter of a Costa Rican President and was heralded as the "Uncrowned King of Central America".

During the following years, United Fruit expanded their operations into Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala and even Jamaica, which opened a door for them to the European market. At this time, 1903, "Panama Disease" struck the UF plantations and thousands of acres of bananas were destroyed. A few years later the disease spread to Nicaragua, Guatemala and Costa Rica. Plantations had to be abandoned and new ones opened. There were few government restrictions on expansion into primary forest land.

At this time, and for many decades to come, banana companies and the U.S. government also extended their influence throughout Central America and the Caribbean, which often involved the intervention of American troops and the

navy. The U.S. Military invaded countries such as Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. Workers on some of the banana plantations tried to fight for better wages and working conditions but their efforts did not meet with success. The U.S. army was sent to Panama during a workers' general strike in 1925.

In 1928, the workers of the Colombian United Fruit plantations went on strike. They demanded written contracts, eight-hour days, six-day weeks and the elimination of food coupons, which must be used at company stores. This strike turned into the largest labour movement ever witnessed in the country. The government sent the Colombian army into the banana zone and soldiers fired on the unarmed workers; some historical sources maintain that up to a 1,000 workers and bystanders were killed. The local police later detained some of the soldiers and found their pockets full of U.S. dollars. Researchers have documented UF paying the military to break the strike by any means. More and more workers on banana plantations throughout Latin America began trying to organize and win better working conditions and wages. Union leaders were often the targets of successful assassination attempts.

In exchange for various services, such as running national railways and postal services, banana companies, such as United Fruit, obtain vast land concessions in Central American countries. But at home, in the U.S., the banana company was not free to operate as it pleased. Under American anti-trust laws they were, at times, forced to sell off shares of their holdings and were, on occasion, denounced in the Congress and Senate, for corrupt business practices in Latin America.

In 1935, the dreaded Black Sigatoka disease appeared for the first time on banana plantations in Honduras and threatened to wipe out the entire crop. The companies began large-scale pesticide spraying programs. This proved to be successful but extremely expensive. In 1942, United Fruit established the Escuela Agricola Panamericana in Honduras. It specialized in agricultural research and Central American students could attend without paying tuition.

During WW II, operations were reduced but at the end of the war, plantations went back to normal. Beginning in 1945, the Guatemalan government tried to improve working conditions for banana workers and established a Labour Code. United Fruit denounced these efforts as "Communistic" and threatened to leave the country. Many strikes followed and the company was forced to make concessions. American politicians accused the Guatemalan government of failing to protect United Fruits' interests. United Fruit gained international fame with the publication of literary works such as Chilean Pablo Neruda's epic work *Canto General* about the history of Latin America, which has a whole chapter devoted to the company. Colombia's Gabriel Garcia Marquez published a novel, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, which has as its main emphasis the infamous strike of 1928. Although other major banana producers existed at this time, such as

Standard Fruit Company, UF held a monopoly over the banana industry until the 1950's.

In the 1950's, a progressive politician, Jacobo Arbenz, became President of Guatemala and promised to improve the life of his country's peasants. Under his government's Agrarian Reform Act, he declared that 209,842 acres of uncultivated land belonging to United Fruit would be purchased and distributed to landless peasants. The government paid \$627,572 for this land. The value of the land was determined by the company's declared tax value. It is possible that UF had undervalued the land in its tax declaration. By this time UF's landholdings in Central America had grown to over 400,000 hectares, with only 53,200 in production. United Fruit began an aggressive public relations campaign against Arbenz who had, to set an example, begun with the redistribution of his own lands. The UF Company had the backing of the American government. The President's personal secretary at that time was the wife of UF's public relations director.

In April 1953, then U.S. Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, sent a note of protest to Arbenz, declaring that the expropriation of UF's land was unjust. UF approved the publication of a book, which claimed that the Agrarian Reform was a "Soviet plot" and the book was distributed to members of congress. The American ambassador to Guatemala claimed Communism was spreading in Latin America. On June 18, a Guatemalan opposition force invaded Guatemala from a base in Nicaragua and forced Arbenz to go into exile. This operation received the support of the American government and led to over 40 years of brutal repression of the Guatemalan people. United Fruit's expropriated holdings were returned to the company and plantation operations returned to normal.

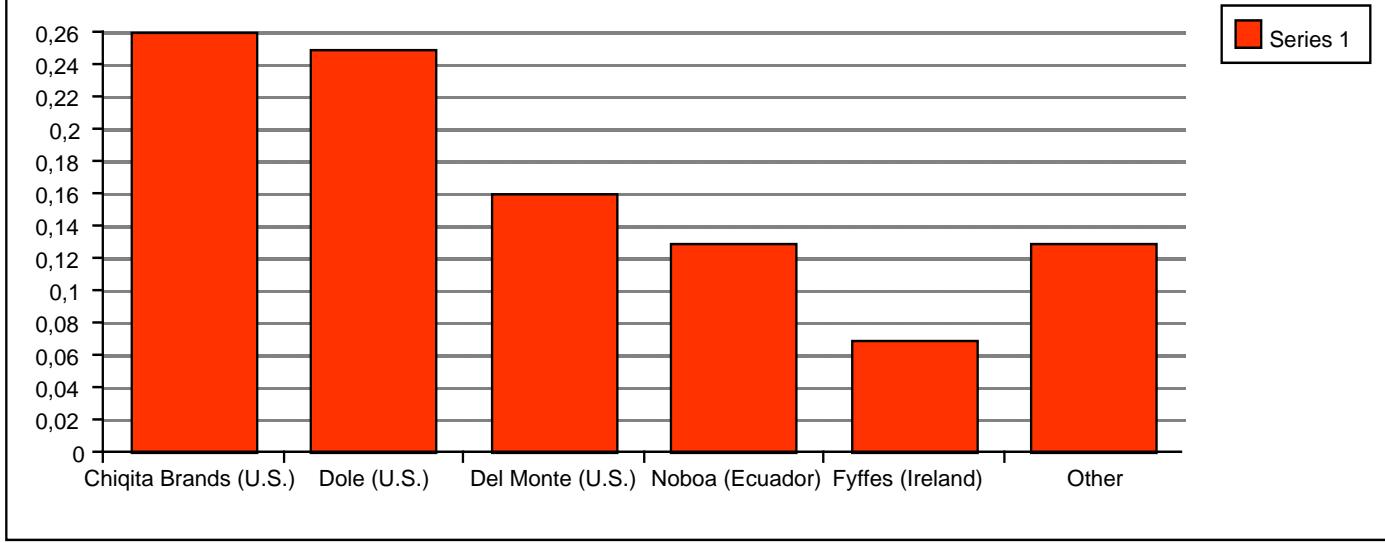
On March 10, 1999, U.S. President Clinton, made an historical statement, expressing regret for the U.S.'s role in the 36-year civil war, saying:

"It was wrong to have supported Guatemalan security forces in a brutal counter-insurgency campaign that slaughtered thousands of civilians." His admission of U.S. involvement came after an independent commission concluded that:

"U.S.-backed security forces committed the vast majority of human rights abuses during the war, including the torture, kidnapping and the murder of thousands of rural Mayan Indians."

The commission stated that this conflict had involved acts of genocide on the part of the U.S.- trained and supported Guatemalan military, in which at least 200,000 people died.

During the years following the coup in Guatemala, United Fruit and other companies are often faced with banana plantation workers' strikes as a way to improve their working conditions. These are rarely successful.



Percentage share of world banana production, 1997 (Oxfam, Canada)

To this day, banana workers throughout Latin America continue in their efforts to gain better working conditions and wages. This is made difficult by the fact that many of the big banana companies divested themselves of some of their lands and began to lease their land to independent growers who were contracted to sell their fruit only to the big companies. This allowed them to maintain profits and control without taking on the risks and problems of production.

Today, four large companies control the global banana industry: Chiquita, Dole, Del Monte, which are U.S. owned companies, and Noboa, which is an Ecuadorian company. The majority of bananas imported into Canada are produced by one of these companies or their subsidiaries. It is very difficult for small, independent banana farmers to compete with these big multi-national corporations. Yet many Latin American and Caribbean farmers' livelihood depends on being able to successfully sell their bananas on the international market.

Chiquita Brands International Incorporated (formerly United Fruit) in its own words apologizes for its company's past practices in Latin America:

“The company has spurred much economic and social progress in rural communities in Latin America, where it has consistently been a leader and innovator in the development of the banana industry. But its predecessor companies, including United Fruit Company, also made a number of mistakes – including the use of improper government influence, antagonism toward organized labor, and disregard for the environment.”

The continued economic dependence of Latin American countries on the revenue and employment created by the banana industry allows these companies to remain very powerful and influential in the social, political and economic activities of these countries. It therefore remains difficult for these countries to solve some of the problems created by the banana industry, such as environmental destruction, pollution and unfair labour practices. Big land holdings for the production of export crops, such as bananas, also means that many rural

inhabitants continue to remain landless. In Honduras, for instance, only 4% of the landowners control 56% of the farmland while 50% of the population remains landless.

There are, however, many attempts to solve the problems related to the banana industry. The “Solutions” fact sheet will help you learn about alternative production methods which are less harmful, trade arrangements which are more fair, and international campaigns to defend banana workers’ rights.

Letitia Charbonneau, Ottawa, 2003.

Fact Sheet 2. USA: Going Bananas

By Michael Jessen, AlterNet, February 6, 2001

<http://www.corpwatch.org/news/PND.jsp?articleid=181>

As an adjective, banana describes a bicycle seat, a slug, a type of country, and a favorite ice cream dessert. It's the most popular fruit in the world and the fourth most important food crop after rice, wheat, and maize.

With a history tied to colonial exploitation, union busting, presidential influence peddling, and environmental degradation, it's obvious the banana is much more than a topping for breakfast cereal or a nutritious snack food. The banana has been at the center of a controversial World Trade Organization ruling and just last month the world's top banana producer (Chiquita Brands International) appeared to teeter on the brink of bankruptcy even as it filed a half-billion dollar lawsuit against the European Union.

Bananas are the most important export fruit around the globe, a market worth nearly \$5 billion a year. Most of these 14 million tons of bananas come from Latin America, where in the past they were produced on giant plantations without care for people or the environment. A lack of social security, dangers from at least eight poisonous pesticides, and the violence of plantation owners against union activists were part of the daily routine on banana plantations.

Three US transnational corporations dominate world trade in bananas. The largest producer and distributor is Chiquita, followed closely by Dole Foods and Del Monte. Between them they produce and control up to 70 percent of world exports.

Lately, the trio has been polishing their corporate images. First, Fresh Del Monte Produce Inc. announced in January 1999 that its Costa Rican banana operations had received the ISO 14001 environmental management systems certificates from Bureau Veritas Quality International (BVQI). According to a report in Ethical Consumer, during 1997 in Costa Rica, half of all work-related accidents occurred on banana plantations -- mostly due to pesticide poisoning.

"Environmental stewardship is extremely important to us, and we feel strongly about environmental responsibility, especially in the fresh produce industry," said Mohammad Abu-Ghazaleh, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Fresh Del Monte. "This accomplishment is only the beginning of Fresh Del Monte's efforts to build world class environment, social, and quality management system throughout its operations."

Then Chiquita acknowledged last November its participation in the Better Banana Project, an environmental and social certification program monitored by the

Rainforest Alliance. Over the past eight years, Chiquita spent nearly \$20 million to meet project standards, company officials said.

"When the Better Banana Project first started in the early 1990s, there were clear problems with deforestation, over-reliance on pesticides, poor working conditions and waste management," said Chris Wille, director of the Better Banana Project. Plastic that resembles dry cleaning bags are used to prevent bugs from invading the harvested banana bunches. The plastic waste, along with bananas that don't meet market standards, are thrown into "big mountains of garbage" that surround banana farms. For every ton of bananas shipped, two tons of waste was being left behind.

Then on January 4, Dole Foods declared it would begin selling organic bananas under the Dole name, tapping into the \$6 billion organic products market. Although at present only a fraction of the world's bananas are organically produced, that figure is growing at 25 percent a year and, with increasing consumer awareness of organic issues, it seems set to grow exponentially in years to come.

Each of these three companies, however, has a shady past. A 1998 PBS Frontline program accused Chiquita's then-President Carl Lindner of making a \$500,000 donation to the Democrats in order to influence the US administration to fight the EU's banana import regime in the WTO court. When The Cincinnati Enquirer published a series of articles in May 1998 questioning Chiquita's business practices, Cincinnati-based Chiquita Brands International swiftly complained. A month later, the Enquirer renounced the series, fired lead reporter Michael Gallagher, and apologized to Chiquita. On January 23 this year, it was revealed the Enquirer's owner -- Gannett Co. Inc. -- paid Chiquita \$14 million in an out-of-court settlement stemming from the expose.

During the 1990's Del Monte was linked to violence against banana workers in Guatemala and accused of union busting. Banana workers in the banana plantations in Central America were being paid as little as 63 cents an hour or \$28 a week. Some had been affected by chemicals in packing plants, making them sick, and giving them sores. Workers in the field were subjected to aerial fumigation of the crops without protective clothing. The foul-smelling chemicals -- reported to be chlorophrifos that attacks the nervous system -- made them feel nauseous, causing nosebleeds, sore eyes, and breathing difficulties.

Dole had a dispute with the National Federation of Labour in the Philippines during the 1990's when the NFL accused Dole of forcing cooperatives and local suppliers to sell their produce at a loss.

Since many European countries had colonial empires in Africa, the Caribbean, or Pacific regions, most European bananas were imported from former colonies under a complex system of quotas and licenses. A complaint was launched by

the US to the court of the WTO on behalf of its banana producing transnationals, who wanted greater access to the world's largest market -- the EU. The WTO ruled the EU's import regime was discriminating unfairly. The EU then decided to allow bananas into the EU on a first come first served basis until the year 2006 when a new tariff regime would kick in. Dole supported the new regulation.

But it wasn't good enough for Chiquita, which claimed European import quotas cost the company \$1.5 billion. Chiquita decided to flex its muscles in a different court, filing a lawsuit January 25th in the Court of First Instance of the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg. Chiquita demands \$525 million (564 million euros) in damages from the European Commission, and asks the right to demand future damages if the problems aren't corrected to the company's satisfaction. Earlier in January, the financially struggling company halted some of its debt payments amid rumors of bankruptcy.

While Chiquita controls about 20 percent of the EU's 15-nation market, that share is half of what it was when the rules were first introduced in 1993, company executives said. The U.S. government has vigorously supported Chiquita, accusing the EU of restricting free trade by unfairly protecting its producers and importers and pushing up prices for consumers. European officials counter that the Americans seek to bully small Caribbean and African producers out of business by pushing the interests of giant conglomerates that have cut costs by riding roughshod over workers' rights and environmental concerns.

The Chiquita/Rainforest Alliance certification has received a warm welcome from the Food Alliance, which promotes the expanded use of sustainable agriculture practices. "This is great news and it sends an exciting and positive message to other large food companies that they can be recognized and rewarded for their environmental stewardship," said Food Alliance executive director Deborah Kane.

The Rodale Institute, a group that promotes environmental and human health through better food production, echoed that sentiment. "I think Chiquita has made a really good statement about corporate environmental and social responsibility," said company president Anthony Rodale. "The partnership between Chiquita and the Rainforest Alliance is a great example of a nonprofit and a for-profit working together," he added.

Good company or bad company? Peeling a banana today can be a slippery slope. When all a person wants is a banana split, a banana cream pie, or simply a between meal snack, it shouldn't be so hard to decide who to give one's business. It's enough to drive a person, well, bananas.

Information to Action: Help Bring Fair Trade Bananas to America

The average American eats 27 pounds of bananas a year. Ask your local supermarkets to carry fair trade bananas, which are grown with much higher environmental and labor standards than normal bananas (fair trade bananas have been imported into Europe for decades but are only starting to make their way to America). To learn how to get involved, contact the Food Alliance, a Portland-based fair trade organization.

For background information, the New Internationalist magazine compiled an informative, clear page of banana facts as part of their October 1999 issue.

The big three banana producers all have company web sites:
<http://www.chiquita.com>, <http://www.dole.com> and <http://www.delmonte.com>.

Fact Sheet 3. The human impact of the banana industry

What follows is a look at the impact of the banana industry on people. Bananas are produced by hundreds of thousands of people who rarely enjoy basic human rights or work in decent conditions.

Displacement of Indigenous People:

The exploitation of vast tracks of land by banana companies has often driven out indigenous populations. In the Caribbean coastal regions, the Cabecar and the Bribri peoples are presently facing the threat of the contamination of their rivers, pressure on their lands, as well as the negative effect on their culture when their young people begin working on the plantations. The displaced groups either become banana workers or become an uneducated, underfed and, underemployed source of cheap labour.

A bananero's working conditions are characterized by:

- a) Long and exhausting working days of 12-14 hours or more, without any overtime payment; overtime is mostly compulsory (Workers are often fired if they are unable to work overtime.)
- b) Wages which are not sufficient to cover the basic needs of subsistence for a family; no sick pay or paid holidays;
- c) Being dismissed from their job without any social security or redundancy payments;
- d) Intensive use of chemicals which damage their health and their environment;
- e) Lack of medical attention;
- f) Lack of educational possibilities

Limited employment options and lack of job security:

In the banana growing regions of the majority of Latin American countries the main source of jobs is on the banana plantations. Young people find themselves forced at an early age to enter employment in the plantations; since, apart from the poverty in their homes, the education offered in rural zones is such that it denies them access to higher education. Elderly workers, worn out from working, are quickly replaced by younger workers. These young workers are paid less and have less knowledge of their rights. Many workers are kept on short contracts of three months and are easily replaced.

Decreases in wages and deterioration of working conditions

The inhabitants of the banana zones often live in subhuman conditions of poverty. Rather than increasing, banana workers' wages have been falling over the past years. For example, in 1993, working an eight-hour day in Costa Rica was equivalent to a monthly wage of \$250. In 1997, for the same amount of work, the worker was receiving the equivalent of \$187 per month. Overall, banana workers earn as little as \$1 a day or 1% of the price paid by the consumer. Even when workers are paid the national minimum wage, this is often not enough to meet their family's basic needs.

Health issues:

The majority of workers' health problems are due to the use of poisonous -- even banned -- chemicals. Most of these products used in banana plantations have been classified as highly toxic according to the classification of the World Health Organization. The residues of highly toxic pesticides are constantly present in their lives, like the notorious DBCP, which caused several thousand banana workers to become sterile in the 1970s.

Not only does the excessive use of pesticides cause a major impact to human health, but also it provokes pollution of soil, air, and of the surface and ground water, affecting the health of local inhabitants, fish and wildlife. The banana workers' unions have made considerable efforts to learn to be able to adequately diagnose occupational health problems, so that they can demand that existing laws be respected. The ultimate goal of worker organizations is to phase out the use of these active ingredients completely.

Anti-union policies and practices

Banana companies have implemented a series of unfair practices designed to prevent workers from organizing into unions. These practices go from verbal intimidation against workers who show sympathy with the union through to threats to the life of union leaders, firings and subsequent 'black-listing' of union members. As a result, it is fair to say that the freedom to organize trade unions is severely curtailed. In countries like Colombia, trade union leaders have been victims of the violence on the part of private security forces, paramilitaries and guerrilla groups.

Fact Sheet 4: The impact of banana production on the environment

The Impact of Large Plantations

Large banana plantations present a big challenge to the producer. The rapid depletion of the soil's nutrients requires the application of expensive chemical fertilizers in order to maintain high levels of productivity. The devastation of the dreaded "Black Sigatoka" disease, to which Central American bananas are so vulnerable, requires intensive aerial spraying programs to ward off the possibility of the fruit ripening prematurely. Applications of pesticides to the soil prevent the spread of nematodes which kill the root systems of banana plants.

Large plantations also mean deforestation, the cutting down of tropical forest on immense tracts of land. The success of these plantations has resulted in a dramatic change in the geography of tropical lowland areas from Mexico south to Panama, and further into Colombia and Ecuador. This deforestation, in turn, leads to soil erosion, flooding, and loss of bio-diversity. These open stretches of land also result in pesticides being more easily able to reach the surrounding land and rivers and streams nearby. At least 90% of Costa Rica's coral reefs have died due to the chemicals used by the banana industry reaching coastal waters.

The 1990's have seen increased deforestation after a slowing down period, which began in the 1960's. In anticipation of the opening of the market for bananas in Eastern Europe and the formation of the European Union, the "Wild Bunch" began expanding their production. Although now there are laws against deforestation of primary forest, land buffering national parks, and the vegetation along river banks, these laws are frequently ignored.

Bio-diversity is of great concern because it is estimated that 75% of all known species of plants and animals in the world live in tropical forests. The destruction of rainforest habitat results in great losses. For example, in Costa Rica, recent expansion of plantations has caused the near extinction of 18 species of trees.

Large plantations for monoculture of plants which are not indigenous to a region, usually leads to problems with disease and insects. To prevent the spread of pests and facilitate harvesting, all vegetation and ground cover is removed from around the banana plants. The high amount of rain which falls in tropical lowlands means that nutrients are quickly leached out of the soil. Water which can no longer easily be absorbed by the soil causes soil erosion and sedimentation in streams and rivers.

Banana roots cannot stand in water, therefore, marshes must be drained to make use of the land for plantations. This drainage causes a lowering of the water table and reduces the water supply available to local inhabitants. Streams which run through the plantations are controlled in channels and excess water is carried off in canals, both of which increase the speed with which the water flows and the volume of water leaving the plantation, causing flooding downstream.

Genetic Uniformity and Its Chemical Solutions

There are more than 300 varieties of bananas in the world, ranging from the giant Red Makabu to the tiny yellow Lady Finger (baby banana), and the sturdy quadrilateral "square banana" which tastes like an apple or a pear. Yet, bananas sold in Europe and the US are almost all one type: the "Dwarf Cavendish" (or "Gran Enano"). On thousands of plantations, from Belize in Central America to Ecuador, the fruit is genetically identical : plantation after plantation is planted with the same variety. Because the plants are planted in close proximity and come from the same genetic source, outbreaks of pests, fungi or diseases are frequent, and can quickly wipe out a plantation.

North American and European consumers demand cheap, uniform, and blemish free bananas. This requires the frequent and intense application of chemicals. Fertilizers must be applied to compensate for the loss of natural nutrients in the soil. Herbicides are used to keep the ground free of vegetation. Nematicides are used to protect the roots from nematode destruction. Aerial applications of fungicides to combat "Black Sigatoka" occur up to 50 times a year. Plastic bags coated with pesticides are used to cover the maturing fruit and protect it from insect damage.

Disposal of these noxious bags is problematic for growers and the common solution has been to burn them or to leave them in open air dumps. The fumes of these burning bags are very noxious and many of these bags end up blowing away to litter the surrounding landscape. Especially harmful are the ones which end up in streams of the ocean. Sea turtles have been found suffocated by the bags after mistaking them for jellyfish.

When the bananas are packed, workers must apply fungicides and disinfectants such as formaldehyde to protect the fruit during shipment. In many regions, the land has been so contaminated that future agricultural use is impossible. One other clue of the severity of the impact of these chemicals is the silence of the plantations. There are no bird song or animal calls because there is no longer any wildlife.

It is estimated that between 30-40 kilograms per hectare, per year, are applied on Latin American plantations. This is more than ten times the amount used in agriculture in any developed, industrialized country. Some of the chemicals used in Central America have been banned or heavily

restricted for use in Canada and the United States, where most of the chemicals are produced and from which they are exported to Latin America. Some of the pesticides favoured by banana growers, Paraquat and Parathion, have been placed on a list called the "Dirty Dozen" because of their high level of toxicity and their danger to humans and wildlife. Use of pesticides often increases as insects eventually develop a resistance to particular chemicals.

Governments in these countries can provide little funding to local groups to monitor the environmental impact of banana plantations and many seriously contaminated areas go undetected and untreated. The impact on local drinking water and fish, in which traces of up to 30 different pesticides may be found, is especially dangerous for local inhabitants. Workers on banana plantations come into daily contact with pesticides and face the greatest risk from chemical contamination. Examples of the effects of exposure to pesticides include: head aches, dizziness, fainting, burns, eye inflammation and, respiratory problems to name only a few. In the 1970's and 1980's over 10,000 workers who applied the nematicide DBCP discovered that they had become sterile. By 1987, 10 years after being banned in the U.S., DBCP was finally banned on all Central American banana plantations. In 2001, Dole was the last remaining defendant in a lawsuit filed on behalf of 26,000 banana workers around the world who claimed they were sterilized. The other defendants paid \$52 million to settle the accusations against them.

Many accidental poisonings also occur due to lack of proper training of the workers and lack of safety equipment. The intense heat of these areas often prevents the workers from wearing safety equipment such as respirators, rubber gloves and boots and, heavy coveralls. Many workers cannot read the instructions on the labels because they are in English rather than in Spanish or because they are illiterate.

Solutions?

Fortunately there are alternative growing methods which demonstrate that many of these problems can be alleviated if not completely eliminated. Small holdings have a definite advantage in that they can produce bananas without the intensive use of chemicals. Much research is being done on sustainable agriculture in tropical areas. As well, more equitable trading arrangements might make it possible for small farmers, using more environmentally friendly methods, to compete with the large producers. Much of the success of these ventures depends of the willingness of consumers to change their attitude towards the appearance of bananas and to be willing to pay a price which more closely reflects the true cost of producing bananas.

Fact Sheet 5. Possible Solutions or Alternatives

1- Organic bananas:

Chemical fertilizers and pesticides are not used on the farm or in the nearby area. The farm must be certified by a legitimate and internationally recognized organization. The multi-nationals have recently begun producing organic bananas. Organic production is more difficult on large plantations; therefore small farmers have a definite advantage in this type of production. Students can

- learn more about the successes and obstacles faced by organic banana growers,
- locate stores in their community where organic bananas may be sold,
- campaign to have organic bananas more readily available in their area and,
- encourage friends and family to buy organic bananas.

2- Fair Trade bananas:

Bananas produced under conditions which permit for a fair wage and good working conditions are “fair trade”. A stable and fair price for the farmer is the ultimate goal of fair trade. Vancouver is fortunate to have the *Small Potatoes Urban Delivery* which can provide certified organic fairly traded bananas to consumers in the Lower Mainland (<http://www.spud.ca>). Other groups in Toronto and Montréal are working hard to make this happen. Students can

- become involved by finding out more about Fair Trade,
- campaigning for fair trade bananas to become available in their local area,
- buying Fair Trade products,
- and selling Fair Trade products during school and community fund-raising activities.

3- Certified banana farms:

The Rainforest Alliance has a project called “The Better Banana” which promotes sustainable agricultural practices in Latin America. It has certified all of Chiquita’s farms in Latin America. There is much criticism of this process from environmental and labour groups. Students can

- learn about this project and assess if it is an adequate solution to the many problems associated to banana plantations.
- Students can enquire if the Chiquita bananas from local retailers are from these certified farms.

4- Campaigns to lobby for banana workers' rights:

Many organizations especially in North America and Europe often launch campaigns to help banana workers protect their rights and improve their working conditions. There are many examples of successful campaigns which have helped banana workers improve their lot and which have led to less harmful environmental practices. They work closely together and as a result of a recent conference in Brussels, the International Banana Charter has been established.

- Students can become engaged in letter writing campaigns.

5- Research to produce a more sustainable breed of banana

(see document: *Goldfinger* in the Appendixes.)

Internet Guide

Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Bananas ...and Then Some...

The History of Banana Production in Latin America:

<http://www.geocities.com/~virtualtruth/chiquita.htm> A site dedicated to the history of U.S. involvement in Guatemala at the instigation of the United Fruit Company, with information on Chiquita Brands International Incorporated current anti-labour activities in Honduras, Costa Rica, Guatemala and, Panama.

http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/US_ThirdWorld/US_Guat.html Article – “A Killing Field” in the Americas: US Policy in Guatemala. THIRD WORLD’s web site has articles about the impact of the policies of the United States’ government, transnational corporations, international trade and financial institutions, on democracy, human rights, and social and economic justice, in the Third World, and in the United States.

http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Transnational_corps/ChiquitaBanana.html Jan Bauman, Sept.'98 reports on the Enquirer article fallout.

http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Transnational_corps/BananasBullets_Chiquita.html *Bananas, Bulldozers and Bullets* -the Cincinnati Enquirer article that began to uncover the real story of Chiquita in Honduras.

<http://www.nancymatson.com/CLDWR3.HTM>

“Spies, Communism, and Bananas”: How and Why the CIA overthrew a government that led to 40 years of brutal repression. Part Three of the Cold War unit. (Many links to other relevant web sites, including President Bill Clinton’s apology for the U.S. involvement in Guatemala and the United Fruit Company’s involvement).

<http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/guatemala/history.html> History of banana production and political turmoil in Guatemala.

<http://www.chiquita.com> Chronology of Chiquita in Latin America from Chiquita’s own perspective (under heading Discover - requires a plug-in).

<http://www.coха.org/newsletter/19.04mexico.html> A prominent journalist in Bogata talks about Chiquita Co. in Colombia, past and present.

<http://www.unitedfruit.org/chronology.html> The United Fruit Historical Society is an independent, non-profit organization created by two doctoral students from California in 2001, whose purpose is to disseminate educational material about the history of the United Fruit Company and to gather historical information about the company.

It contains the most complete and basic information on the history of the United Fruit Company available on the web.

<http://www.mayaparadise.com/ufc1e.htm> - A comprehensive source of information for tourists, ecotourism, history, geography for the Río Dulce, Guatemala. Provides a history of United Fruit in Guatemala.

The Wild Bunch: (the world's four largest banana producers)

Noboa (Ecuador): <http://www.bonita.com>

Chiquita (U.S.): <http://www.chiquita.com>

Dole: <http://www.dole.com/>

<http://www.dole.com/kids/index.html>

<http://www.dole.com/kids/classroom/protectourearth/activities.html>

Del Monte: <http://www.delmonte.com/>

Small Producers:

Association of Caribbean Banana Exporters: <http://www.cbea.org/>

Windward Islands Farmers' Association (WINFA) is a network of banana farmers cooperatives in the Windward Islands -- St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia, Dominica, and GrenadaEmail

address; Renwick Rose, winfa@caribsurf.com PO Box 817, Kingstown, St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Go to <http://www.mwengo.org/acp/partners/winfa.htm> for more information from OXFAM volunteers. They would be happy to answer students' questions about their work and their efforts to promote fair trade in collaboration with WINFA.

<http://www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/kidsweb/banana/index.htm>

Bonkers About Bananas, Oxfam UK interactive web site for young people. Interviews with small banana farmers and workers in the Caribbean.

Labour and Trade Issues in the Banana Industry:

http://members.tripod.com/foro_emaus/entrng.html Costa Rica. Foro Emaús is a network of religious, civil society organizations and unions in Costa Rica founded to address the human and environmental costs of the banana regime. They published the excellent article: The Price of Bananas: The Banana Industry in Costa Rica

www.banafair.de/kamp/aktivitaeten/chartha.htm BananaFair is a German web site with a printer-friendly version of International Banana Charter in English.

<http://www.usleap.org/Banana/bananatemp.html> U.S./Labor Education in the Americas Project, featuring campaigns by banana workers.

<http://www.bananalink.org.uk/> Very broad range of information related to many aspects of banana industry globally from the UK.

<http://www.globalexchange.org/economy/bananas/> Very broad range of information related to many aspects of banana industry form the USA.

<http://www.globalissues.org/TradeRelated/Bananas.asp> Article on trade issues 2002, carried by Global Issues.

<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/ecuador/ecuad0402-04.htm>

Human Rights Watch. Publication "Tainted Harvest" about banana plantations in Ecuador, especially concerning child labour.

<http://www.oneworld.net> Use the search box and "bananas" to locate up-to-date materials about many issues surrounding bananas

<http://www.colsiba.org/> Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Sindicatos Bananeros

This web site is all in Spanish, however they may be able to reply to students' question in English via email at: info@colsiba.org

Violence Associated with the Banana Industry:

<http://www.korubo.com/Colombia/maria.htm> Violent removal of small farmers from their land by paramilitary groups in Colombia.

Environmental Impact of Banana Production:

http://members.tripod.com/foro_emaus/entrng.html Costa Rica. Foro Emaús is a network of religious, civil society organizations and unions in Costa Rica founded to address the human and environmental costs of the banana regime. They published the excellent article: The Price of Bananas: The Banana Industry in Costa Rica

<http://panna.igc.org> Pesticide Action Network (North America)

Use the Search box and "banana" for information on pesticides and workers.

The Banana Industry:

<http://www.fruitnet.com> Internet site for the global fresh produce business.

<http://wpni01.auroraquanta.com/pv/banana> "The Business of Bananas", photographic essay by Peter Essick/Aurora, Washington Post

Fair Trade Bananas:

<http://www.fairtrade.net/> Fair Trade Labeling Organizations International (includes map with links to global fair trade organizations)

<http://www.transfair.ca> Certification authority for F. T. products in Canada.

<http://www.spud.ca> Delivers certified organic fairly traded bananas to the Lower B.C, Mainland.

<http://www.commerceequitable.com/> French site of volunteers working through Oxfam Québec, trying to make fair trade bananas available in eastern Canada.

<http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/products.htm> Fair Trade Mark, U.K. ---MORE!!

<http://www.eftafairtrade.org/yearbook.asp> EFTA Yearbook: Challenges of Fair Trade 2001-2003 , featuring bananas in the Windward Islands.

<http://www.fairtradetoronto.com/products/banana.html> Fair Trade Bananas in Toronto, is an active Oxfam working group.

<http://www.maketradefair.com> Oxfam site related to fair trade in general.

<http://www.maxhavelaar.ch/web/havelaar/mainR2.nsf/WEnFrame> Max Havelaar, Switzerland supports fairly traded products. Go to Products for bananas,

<http://www.ethicaltrade.org/index.shtml> The Ethical Trading Initiative (both Chiquita and the IUF are members.)

Organic Bananas:

http://www.fao.org/WAICENT/OIS/PRESS_NE/PRESSENG/1999/pren9928.htm FAO press release from 1998 on the growth of the organic banana market.

<http://www.fao.org/>

Use Search under "banana" for articles over the past 5 years.

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/Meeting/X1149E.htm> An FAO report of a meeting regarding the international market for organic and fair trade bananas.

<http://www.inibap.org> A report of the international workshop on the production and marketing of organic bananas, which took place in November 1999, has been produced by the International Network for the Improvement Of Bananas And Plantain, based in France. Contents include overviews of the current situation, country perspectives, marketing, certification and production constraints.

Banana Certification Programs:

http://virtualexhibit.net/new/globalShowcaseTemplate.php?project_id=196®ion_id=all&industry_id=all Virtual showcase: Chiquita and Rainforest Alliance

<http://www.rainforestalliance.com/news/2004/news85.html>

Article on book ,Smart Alliance, regarding the work Rainforest Alliance has done to improve the image of Chiquita.

<http://www.cepa.org> Social Accountability International (SAI), a non-profit human rights organization dedicated to improving workplaces and communities by developing and implementing socially responsible standards. Use Search box under "banana" to locate articles.

<http://www.isealalliance.org/sasa/> International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling (ISEAL) Alliance. Social Accountability in Sustainable Agriculture (SASA) is a collaborative project of FAO, FLO, SAI, SAN and IFOAM, four main social and environmental verification systems in sustainable agriculture. (Fair Trade Labelling Organizations International, Social Accountability International, Sustainable Agriculture Network, International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements) They will be conducting a pilot audit of a large banana plantation in Costa Rica.

Sustainable Production and Trade of Bananas:

<http://www.awish.net/AWISHPages/BananaProject.html>

Sustainable Banana Project in Central America.

<http://www.idrc.ca/books/reports/V221/banana.html> "Breeding a Better Banana": article regarding a project funded by the International Development Research Council (Ottawa, Canada) and others available by searching under "banana".

<http://www.futureharvest.org/> Future Harvest promotes agricultural research and works with partners and international agricultural research centers to initiate projects that promote and fund agriculture for sustainable development, for poverty reduction, and to relieve hunger.

<http://www.iita.org/crop/plantain.htm> The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture offers extensive research papers on better ways of producing bananas.

<http://www.cgiar.org> Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research

This site has a search engine which will allow students to find many documents on the problems and solutions of banana production.

<http://www.promusa.org> Genetic breeding programs to develop pest resistant bananas.

Banana Globingo

Instructions

- You must find a different person for each box
- Get them to answer the question and sign the appropriate box
- Fill in as many boxes as you can in the time
- If you fill in all the boxes find the workshop facilitator

Find someone who ...

1. can name 3 countries where bananas are grown
2. can name 2 of the 5 large banana companies that control more than 80% of world trade in bananas
3. can guess what the most important characteristic of a banana is for the average consumer
4. knows whether the people involved in producing bananas for export mostly work on
 - a. large commercial, mechanised plantations which export nearly all of their bananas
 - b. small, family-owned farms
5. knows whether banana workers on big plantations are usually contracted for
 - a. life
 - b. during the summer season when bananas are ripe for the picking
 - c. short-term contracts of 3-6 months
6. can estimate roughly what percentage of the price of a conventional banana a large supermarket usually takes
7. can estimate how much a Nicaraguan banana worker takes home for a basic 8 hour day
8. has bought organic bananas recently; ask them where.
9. eats a banana almost every day

1. Bananas are grown in - - - Name:	2. Two big banana companies are: Name:	3. The most important characteristic of a banana for the average consumer is that it be: Name:
4. Most people who work in the banana industry work on <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. large plantations b. small family farms Name:	5. A banana worker's contract is usually <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. for life b. in the summer c. short-term (3-6 months) Name:	6. A supermarket can take more than% of the price of a banana. Name:
7. A Nicaraguan banana worker takes home US\$ for a basic 8 hour day Name:	8. I've bought organic bananas recently in (which supermarket) Name:	9. I eat a banana almost every day. I love bananas... I adore bananas... What would life be without bananas...? Name:

ANSWERS

1. 3 countries where bananas are grown:

Countries of the tropics - Africa, Latin America, Caribbean, Pacific etc - grow bananas. The important issue is that many countries produce bananas as a staple food, but that only around 20% of all bananas that are produced are actually exported.

Countries of export (the following lists are not comprehensive lists):

- Latin America: Ecuador, Costa Rica and Colombia export the most bananas in the world. Other Latin American exporting countries - Guatemala, Honduras, Belize, Panama, Nicaragua, Suriname
- Caribbean: Windward Islands (St Vincent and the Grenadines, St Lucia, Dominica), Jamaica, Dominican Republic
- European supplying countries - ie that are part of the EU so don't actually 'import' bananas, although their bananas are traded within the EU: Martinique (France), Guadeloupe (France), Canary Islands, Greece, Portugal
- African: Ghana (Fairtrade plantation only), Cameroon, Ivory Coast

2. 5 large banana companies that control more than 80% of world trade in bananas:

Dole (US based): 25%
Chiquita (US based): 25%
Del Monte (US based): 16%
Noboa (Ecuador): 11%
Fyffes (Ireland): 8%

3. The most important characteristic of a banana for the average consumer is that it be blemish free. Most supermarkets have high quality standards and its apparently because consumers want perfect-looking fruit and vegetables. The consequences though are that there is more waste and more intensive production methods used in a bid to achieve cosmetic quality perfection throughout the whole crop. And the fruit inside a banana can be perfect whether there are marks on the skin or not. Despite this, if there are many 'quality' problems with a box of bananas, the farmer or plantation owner who has supplied this fruit (this can be recognised through the codes on each box of bananas) will be told that there are problems, and may even lose the contract.

4. Do the people involved in producing bananas for export mostly work on large commercial, mechanised plantations that export nearly all of their bananas or small, family-owned farms?

Most bananas are grown on the large-scale, monoculture plantations in Latin America. In the Caribbean it is mainly small family owned farms

5. Are banana workers on big plantations usually contracted for life, during the summer season when bananas are ripe for the picking or on short-term contracts of 3-6 months?

Most banana workers on the big plantations are on short-term contracts. This means that workers have fewer rights than permanent workers, and often lower wages etc. (Bananas are not seasonal really, so 'during the summer season' is a red-herring!)

6. What percentage of the price of a conventional banana one of the large British supermarkets usually takes?

Around 30 to 40% whilst a worker can take less than 2%.

7. How much does a Nicaraguan banana worker take home for a basic 8 hour day?

Around US\$1.20 - about 75pence. This is about one-third the estimated value of a basic food-basket in Nicaragua.

8. Where can you buy Fairtrade bananas?

By the end of 2002, Waitrose, Sainsbury, Safeway, Asda, Tesco, Out of this World and Co-op (who were the first to launch in January 2000) all sold Fairtrade bananas in at least some of their stores in Britain.

For more information, contact Banana Link, 38 Exchange Street, Norwich, NR2 1AX, UK
Tel: 01603 765670 Fax: 01603 761645 Email: blink@gn.apc.org Website: www.bananalink.org.uk
Not-for-profit company number:3144239

Fairtrade Lesson 2: Growing Bananas

Time: 1 hour



- Aims:
- ◆ To enable students to empathise with disadvantaged producers;
 - ◆ To develop students' awareness, and understanding, of Fairtrade;
 - ◆ To enable students to make informed choices about what they buy, and take action to support Fairtrade.

Timing	Activities	Resources
10 mins	<p>Introduction. Organise students into groups of 4 or 5. Explain the 'Growing Bananas' simulation. Each group of students represents a family growing bananas in the Windward Islands, in the Caribbean. The simulation should run for at least 3 rounds, each round representing a year of banana growing. At the start, each group should choose someone to draw up and complete a 'balance sheet' (as shown on the worksheet). Stress that this needs to be completed for each round/year.</p> <p>During each round:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The groups use scrap paper to 'grow' bananas, by drawing, colouring and cutting them out. Stress the importance of quality – the buyer will accept only perfect bananas! ◆ Offer each group an event card from a selection of upturned cards. They should respond to the information on their card by entering it on their balance sheet. If the event card is for 'everyone' it should be announced to the whole class. ◆ Once each group has an event card, announce that it is time to trade. Collect/reject completed bananas as appropriate. Tell each group how much they have earned – roughly \$100. They must then decide how to allocate their money. 	<p>Growing Bananas worksheet</p> <p>Scrap paper</p> <p>Crayons and scissors</p>
30 mins	<p>In round 1: Make sure none of the groups are offered 'Good News!' Fairtrade cards so that, in this first round, they all experience how difficult life can be for producers involved in conventional trade</p> <p>In round 2: Make sure the cards include some 'Good News!' Fairtrade cards, and that 2 or 3 groups choose them.</p> <p>In round 3: Make sure each group picks out the same colour card as in the last round.</p> <p>Further rounds can be played if appropriate, bringing other groups into the Fairtrade system. The outcomes of the game should be that some students experience the benefits of becoming Fairtrade producers, while others remain 'locked' into the injustices of conventional world trade. The events should not only develop students' understanding of Fairtrade and how it works, but also</p>	<p>Event cards (duplicated onto two colour: one for Fairtrade cards, one for all other cards)</p>

	show that it isn't a 'quick cure' for the problems faced by producers.	
10 mins	<p>Debriefing the simulation. Ask each group to report back on what had happened to them including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their financial situation as the simulation progressed, and how they felt about it; • If they were able to join Fairtrade, what benefits it had brought • How well they worked together; • What was realistic/unrealistic about the simulation. <p>Ask the class what they had learnt about the impact of Fairtrade (e.g. it brings many benefits, but producers still have problems to face).</p> <p>Summarise what has been understood about the importance of Fairtrade, explain use of Fairtrade Mark.</p>	
10 mins	<p>Follow up actions. Students could be given a choice of activities as follow up or homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Write up their experience as a banana grower (Using writing frame sheet if appropriate); ◆ Design materials that raise awareness of Fairtrade. Display these around the school; ◆ Writing letters to local supermarkets, asking them to stock more Fairtrade items. 	

Fairtrade Lesson 2: Worksheet

Growing Bananas



Our role was

What we had to do was

In the first year we

In the second year we

In the third year we

It was good for the Fairtrade banana growers because

The other growers might have felt bad because

Fairtrade is important because

When we see the FAIRTRADE Mark we know that

Fairtrade Lesson 2: Worksheet

Growing Bananas



You are banana growers in the Caribbean Windward Islands.

Every year you earn about \$100 for the bananas you grow.

You then have to decide how to spend the money – you may have to make some difficult decisions about what you can afford. Keep a record of the decisions you make:

	Income	Expenses	Outcome/comments
Year 1			
Year 2			

Cost of Living:

These costs are for your whole family, for one year.

Essential items

These **must** be paid for each year, because it's hard to survive without them. If you can't afford them, you'll have to borrow money.

Basic Housing	\$10
Basic Food	\$50
Basic Clothes	\$30

Desirable items

You'll have to decide which you can afford each year – try to provide all these things for your family if you possibly can:

School	\$50
School books	\$10
Shoes	\$10
More food or clothes	\$25
Home improvements	\$15

Non-Fairtrade cards 1

Your daughter is ill.

You need to spend \$15 on medical care this year.

The company you sell your bananas to will only pay you 75% of your normal price, because their shipping costs have risen unexpectedly.

Your children need shoes.

\$2 per child this year.

EVERYONE!

Banana prices have fallen! Everyone's income falls by \$30 this year (unless you are selling to a Fairtrade company).

Rats have attacked your food store and eaten the food you were saving. Pay \$10 to replace it.

EVERYONE!

Banana prices have fallen! Everyone's income falls by \$20 this year (unless you are selling to a Fairtrade company).

Pests have attacked your newly formed bananas. You must throw them away and start again.

EVERYONE!

World banana prices have risen! Everyone's income goes up by \$10 this year.

Your water supply is contaminated. Two members of your group are unable to work this year.

You've produced a bumper crop – you make an extra \$20 this year.

Your children need to start secondary school. It will cost you \$50 each year.

EVERYONE!

EARTH TREMORS!
Your buildings are damaged, and water supply cut off. Only produce 5 bananas this year.

Non-Fairtrade cards 2

Your roof is leaking badly, and you have to fix it. One person can't grow bananas this round.

Your children need to start secondary school. It will cost you \$50 each year.

Your mother is ill. You must take her to the hospital (a two day walk, each way). One person can't grow bananas this round.

Heavy rains have washed away the road. Half your bananas will over ripen before you can get them to the shippers. Throw half this year's crop away.

Your water supply has become polluted. Everyone is ill as a result. Only produce one banana each this year.

Your son is ill. You need to spend \$10 on medicine this year.

EVERYONE!
HURRICANE!
All your partly grown bananas are destroyed.

EVERYONE!

The Government has introduced a new tax. You'll need to pay \$15 each year to cover it.

Pests have attacked your banana trees. You'll only receive half price for your lower quality crop.

World banana prices have fallen, with a glut of bananas from plantations in South America. You'll receive 20% less for your crop this year.

EVERYONE!

Carnival!!
Spend \$5 on a party!

Your children need some school books. It will cost you \$10 this year.

You've produced a bumper crop this year – you make an extra \$20!

Fairtrade cards

Good news!

A Fairtrade company has offered to buy your entire crop – as long as you stop using pesticides. This year you'll receive 50% more for your crop.

Bad news!

UK consumers are buying fewer Fairtrade bananas – your Fairtrade partner buys 25% less of your crop, and you make 10% less money.

Good news!

A Fairtrade company has offered to buy your entire crop – as long as you stop using pesticides. This year you'll receive 50% more for your crop.

Good news!

A Fairtrade company has offered to buy half your crop – as long as you stop using pesticides. This year you'll receive 25% more for your crop.

Good news!

A Fairtrade company has offered to buy 25% of your crop – as long as you stop using pesticides. This year you'll receive 10% more for your crop.

With Fairtrade, you can no longer use weedkillers. One person must stop growing bananas to weed between the trees.

UK consumers are buying more of your Fairtrade bananas – you can sell another 25% of your crop through Fairtrade and receive an extra 10% more money.

Thanks to Fairtrade you've been able to improve your water supply. This saves you time, so you can concentrate on looking after your crop. Earn an extra \$20 for your high quality crop.

With your Fairtrade premium you can now improve your home. Spend \$20 on new concrete floors this year.

With Fairtrade you no longer use pesticides and artificial fertilisers. Lose two bananas while you get used to working without chemicals.

The Fairtrade company have helped you to buy new equipment – you can produce more and earn more – an extra \$10 each year.

The extra money you get from selling your bananas to the Fairtrade company means you can afford electricity for your home. Cost \$10 each year.