

## **SIMPLE LIFESTYLE**

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Prepared by Steve Hampton

### **T-SHIRTS AND SWEATSHOPS**

Textiles have always driven economic development, providing lots of jobs where there were none. But they are also notorious for their “sweatshop” conditions, low wages, and lack of regard for worker’s rights. Worker advocates say the key is consumer pressure: Americans, who consume 25% of the world's t-shirts (and everything else), can make a difference by demanding change. Economists agree-- the factories are important, but so is consumer pressure.

I just returned from Nicaragua, where poor women work 11-hour days, subject to harsh treatment by foreign supervisors (usually Chinese or American). But it depends which factory they work in, and what company they are making clothes for. If the factory is dedicated to Wal-Mart, it’s likely they have poor conditions. If the factory also produces for other brands, the owners may be required to implement better conditions. It’s the clothing brands that put the pressure on the factories to improve conditions. And it’s consumers that need to put the pressure on the clothing brands.

Now, 39 cities and many other organizations have committed to “sweat-free procurement policies”. They will no longer reap the benefits of exploitation, but instead support worker cooperatives and factories with standards on par with the US.

[www.sweatfree.org](http://www.sweatfree.org) provides a wealth of information, from a table of “non-poverty wages” for countries around the world to CONSUMER GUIDES for individuals and organizations wishing to buy “clothing produced in facilities where workers are organized into democratic unions or worker-owned cooperatives and have an effective, collective voice in determining their wages and working conditions.”



### **CHOCOLATE REPRISE**

Consumer pressure is working (in Europe). Cadbury announced its most popular European brand will begin using 100% Fair Trade Certified cocoa, free of the child labor issues.

How can we get child labor-free chocolate in the US? Alex Wright directs us to Akoma Fair-Trade Dark Chocolate Chips at <http://www.chocosphere.com/Html/Products/guittard.html> A 25-pound box is \$109.95 + \$10 shipping. Contact him or me to participate in a joint purchase.

### **FARM SALMON COMPLEXITIES**

Our own Gary Marty, currently doing research on salmon in Alaska and British Columbia, notes that the farmed salmon issue is a bit muddy, and no doubt influenced by and environmental and commercial interests (for both wild and farmed salmon). He offers a few additional points: 1) Farm salmon meat is not really "dyed" pink. Rather, the fish are fed astaxanthin, which is the same anti-oxidant that wild salmon get from eating krill in the ocean. It is this that turns their meat pink. 2) There is no risk of hybridization between farm (Atlantic) salmon (the species most commonly sold in Davis supermarkets) and native stocks of Pacific salmon species. (However, there is risk of hybridization of escaped Atlantic salmon from Eastern Canada and Europe with wild Atlantic salmon stocks in those regions.) 3) The contribution of farm salmon to diseases in wild salmon (most notably sea lice) is hotly debated by scientists. 4) Some of the same fossil fuel and CO2 issues associated with feeding farm salmon are true with wild salmon, as many are raised in hatcheries and then released into the wild.

**SUGGESTIONS AND IDEAS** for future tips are welcome! Email me at [hamptons@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hamptons@sbcglobal.net)