Dear ...

I am an activist working to make the food system better for everyone—from eaters to growers and the planet itself. And I’m not alone: right now, together with more than [estimate number] people, we are taking action to change things for the better as part of [name of the campaign]. Our goal is to ensure everyone has access to good, clean and fair food.

I am writing to express my alarm at the current level of exploitation of workers in the farming and food sector. Despite being defined as essential when COVID-19 hit, the lived experience of many of these workers remains one of struggle, deprivation and violations of human rights. Inhumane working conditions, poor wages, long working hours, a high proportion of undeclared work and substandard housing are only some of the daily hardships faced by many farm workers. They often fall prey to widespread exploitation, including gangmaster practices and other forms of modern slavery.

I am writing to ask you to enforce the respect of the collective work agreements and international labor standards set by the International Labour Organisation, and make any farming subsidy conditional on the respect of these standards. Such conditionality should cover various areas such as legal employment, equal treatment, remuneration, working hours, health and safety, housing, gender equality, social security and fair conditions for all workers employed in agriculture, including mobile and migrant laborers.

I call on your sense of responsibility and duty. Agricultural workers endure burning heat and freezing cold, injuries, aches and threats, survive on a few hours of sleep and quick, frugal meals, live in shacks or containers, yet demonstrate astounding dedication to their jobs. It is thanks to them that, even in a global pandemic, there is food on our tables.

Agricultural and food workers now expect a clear response from you.

Best regards,

[your name and signature, contact information]
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I am asking you, as one of the leading retailers, to join us in promoting food that is produced with respect for people who grow it. I invite you to issue a statement declaring your commitment to ensure no products of modern slavery are sold in your store. I would love to read from you about the concrete steps you intend to take in this direction, and I am available to discuss together.

Best regards,

[your name and signature, contact information]