

Grace Farms Teams Up With Feds to Train Police Here and Abroad on Fighting Forced Labor

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Grace Farms Foundation and the U.S. government want to reduce, if not eliminate, forced labor around the world, a modern form of slavery that the foundation has made one of its goals.

To that end, on Thursday officials from the foundation and federal customs and immigration agency signed an agreement to form a partnership meant to help law enforcement develop new approaches to combat forced labor.

— *an announcement from* [Grace Farms Foundation](#)

Officials from New Canaan-based Grace Farms and the Global Trade Investigations Division of Homeland Security Investigations signed a memorandum of understanding agreeing to work together. HSI is a division of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency, also known as ICE.

The two organizations are partnering to convene law enforcement personnel for capacity building opportunities and training sessions starting this year at Grace Farms.

The goal of the collaboration is to bring experts in forced labor to work with law enforcement and sharing data, knowledge, and research to improve transparency and access to justice for victims of modern slavery.

Grace Farms and HSI believe businesses and individuals profiting from forced labor should be held accountable and liable. These are matters of criminal and civil law, not just questions of ethical conduct.

“Forced labor is the most common element of modern slavery, and often affects the most vulnerable, excluded population groups in the world,” said Steve Francis, director of the National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center. “Sadly, this type of exploitation spans across multiple industries and sectors and must be dismantled using a multifaceted approach.”

At present, those benefiting directly and indirectly from engagement in forced labor activities may do so with seeming impunity and those providing the labor are often without access to justice.

“With this new partnership, HSI’s broad legal authorities, coupled with Grace Farms Foundation’s vast capabilities, will help advance our mission to end this type of exploitation and bring justice to victims of forced labor, both locally and abroad,” Francis said.

U.S. laws do provide a number of far-reaching mechanisms to hold accountable those engaging in and benefiting from forced labor.

HSI’s Forced Labor Programs coordinate and initiate criminal investigations into U.S.-bound supply chains whose goods are made wholly or in part by means of forced labor.

Grace Farms’ Justice Initiative, which develops comprehensive strategies and partnerships to combat all forms of contemporary slavery through policy, training, and advocacy work, is the primary focus of the collaboration with HSI.

“The public-private partnership is the most promising model for achieving substantive results in disrupting transnational organized crime syndicates involved in modern slavery and wildlife trafficking,” said Rod Khattabi, Grace Farms chief accountability officer and Justice Initiative director.

“In partnering with HSI, a premier investigative agency, and its Global Trade Investigations unit, we will maximize our assets in achieving successful outcomes.”

HSI is focused on the elimination of forced labor worldwide and investigates U.S. firms benefitting from or having knowledge of forced labor in their supply chains.

By partnering with organizations like Grace Farms, which can host discussions and convene public, private and government sectors, HSI officials hope to gather information that will not only help with prosecutions but provide information to corporations looking for ethical supply chains that don't involve forced labor.

About Grace Farms Foundation's Justice Initiative

With Grace Farms as the nexus for convening the public and private sectors, NGOs, and government agencies, Grace Farms Foundation's Justice Initiative develops comprehensive strategies and partnerships to combat all forms of contemporary slavery, wildlife crime, and gender-based violence.

Through a unique interdisciplinary approach, Grace Farms Foundation makes sustainable advancements in these areas through effective [training](#), policy, and advocacy.

About Grace Farms Foundation

Grace Farms Foundation supports initiatives in the areas of nature, arts, justice, community, and faith, and encourages participation locally and globally.

The Foundation carries out its work through the publicly available facilities and integrated programs of Grace Farms, an 80-acre property owned and operated by the Foundation.

Grace Farms was established as an essential platform for the Foundation, serving as a welcoming place where individuals, not-for-profit organizations, and government entities come together to collaborate for the common good.