



Mitigation plan Rice from India

Mitigation plan – Rice from India

The risk analysis of all products and product groups that Jumbo conducted in 2022, identified rice as a high priority commodity. Of its rice varieties, private label basmati rice is sold the most in Jumbo supermarkets. The main supplier of that rice is LT Foods, with whom Jumbo has a good, long-term relationship. LT Foods sources basmati rice from three regions in India, including Madhya Pradesh. Recent studies have shown that rice production entails social and environmental risks. Many families in rural India, of both farmers and (landless) labourers, are strongly reliant on rice production for their livelihood. LT Foods sources its basmati rice mainly and preferably from relatively large-scale farmers for reasons of quality, volume and delivery security.

This is why, as part of the due diligence process of Jumbo, a human rights impact assessment was conducted: in collaboration with LT Foods, it was investigated whether salient human rights risks are actually experienced in the rice supply chain of Jumbo and LT Foods. This resulted in a [report](#).

The impact assessment identified the following issues of concern: children of migrant families involved in farm activities, poor working conditions of workers sub-contracted through intermediaries, health impact resulting from long hours working in water-filled paddy fields, and the perception of a gradually falling groundwater table in rice producing communities.

During field work for the assessment, migrant families were found that reported to have been employed with their children by large-scale rice farmers who supply to LT Foods. Migrant families moving in search for employment and putting their children to work, is known as a systemic issue that applies to various countries and several supply chains. A main root cause lies in the high disparity in farming and employment opportunities to rural families that live in deprivation.

Jumbo considers issues of potential child labour of utmost urgency and highest priority to mitigate. With this plan Jumbo and LT Foods aim to mitigate the risk of child labour in its rice supply chain from India. Child labour resulting from systemic issues related to deprivation and migration in rural India, cannot be solved by Jumbo and LT Foods alone. This required active collaboration with rice farmers, collection centres, NGOs, authorities and other stakeholders. As root causes are systemic, it will take time to change. This plan has been developed to get started on such change.

1.1 Mitigation strategy: child labour as part of migrant family labour in LT Foods/ Jumbo's rice supply chain

In response to the impact assessment report, Jumbo announced the move towards buying Sustainable Rice Platform (SRP) verified rice. This is a first and fundamental step to enable more engagement with organised rice farmer groups that is required for mitigation of child labour as part of migrant labour. However, the main focus of SRP is environmental making human rights weakly covered within the SRP standard. This requires strengthening, which can be taken up in collaboration with other retailers, rice traders and interested stakeholders.

This plan consists of 3 complementary parts plus monitoring and evaluation.

1) Advocacy for strengthening human rights in the Sustainable Rice Platform standard

In collaboration with retailers, rice traders and other stakeholders in the SRP, advocate with SRP for inclusion of a more comprehensive human rights chapter in the SRP standard.

Strengthening the SRP standard has the potential of creating a level playing field with regard to human rights impact amongst rice farmers, processors and traders which is crucial to mitigating child labour in the sector.

For effective advocacy with the current SRP platform, Jumbo will collaborate with other retailers, CBL, supply chain partners, human rights defenders and NGOs such as Oxfam Novib and other stakeholders.

2) Awareness and social acceptance of abolishing child labour in rice farming

2.1) Further increase the awareness and social acceptance amongst farmers supplying basmati rice to LT Foods, of abolishment of child labour in all rice production activities.

2.2) Organise farmers that regularly supply rice to LT Foods around compliance to the SRP standard with inclusion of the condition of abolishment of child labour.

2.3) Develop a joint social monitoring to be carried out by organised farmers thus monitoring progress on abolishment of child labour.

2.4) Investigate effects of abolishment of child labour on farmer income and labour income, including migrant families.

2.5) Investigate effects of the abolishment of child labour on wages and cost prices in basmati rice, including implications to prices to LT Foods and Jumbo.

2.6) Identify the needs of children of migrant families and other impacted rightsholders in order to define the best interests of the children related to potential solutions to root causes.

This identification will be complemented by interviews with NGOs and CSOs that deeply understand the needs of the families and systemic bottlenecks.

Who involved: Jumbo, LT Foods, local NGOs, impacted rightsholders, research party

3) Taking action: mitigating and preventing child labour

Collaborate with organised SRP farmers and local NGO(s) to develop a social monitoring system along with a grievance mechanism, to ensure that complaints from workers, farmers or any other rightsholder are heard.

4) Monitoring and evaluating

Monitoring and evaluating the activities in this mitigation plan of Jumbo and LT Foods is important to ensure effective results and to allow adjustments when needed..

Who involved: Jumbo, LT foods, external advisor / evaluator