

## Boycott Israeli Goods (Big) Campaign



Norwich PSC have been targeting supermarkets every 4 -6 weeks and leafleting the public in Norwich City Centre for the last 18 months.

The supermarkets are the most obvious outlets for Israeli goods. They generally have exotic fruits and dates (Israeli dates seem to be a specialty of Waitrose). Peppers and citrus fruit, particularly grapefruit are common. In the spring time there is much more produce including herbs and potatoes. Unfortunately the origin of flowers is rarely declared, but we know from the imports by Carmel-Agrexco that Israel is a big supplier to the flower trade.

One 'Israeli' product that stands out are Dead Sea Salt products which although the salt is extracted in nominally Israeli territory in the south of the Dead Sea most of the processing takes place in the illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank. 'Aharva' admitted to this but other products such as 'Sea Spa' almost certainly have the same origin. These products are labeled illegally as 'Israeli' when they should be labeled 'West Bank (settlement produce)' and pay a tariff to the EU. They continue to perpetrate fraud by not paying tax. By not acknowledging their origin deceives the customer. Most customers may also well consider using such products as immoral. Sea Spa occasionally has stalls in the Castle Mall staffed mostly by Israelis but traveling under Bulgarian or Romanian passports!

Despite the large agricultural and industrial production of the illegal settlements everyone seems to have trouble in identifying these. It is interesting that the Palestinian Authority has only recently declared the consumption of these products by West Bank Palestinians illegal. These

products now mostly enter the general Israeli economy and some may enter the international market under the EU-Israeli trade agreement labeled as 'Israeli'.

At the beginning of this year (2010) Defra and the EU tightened up the requirement for illegal Israeli settlement goods to be clearly labeled and since that time hardly any 'West Bank (Israeli Settlement Produce)' has been seen. These products are going somewhere and one can only assume that they are being labeled 'Israeli'

M&S which are almost alone amongst the supermarkets in declaring that they will not sell 'West Bank' produce state that their salad products labeled 'produce of more than one country' may well contain Israeli produce, and they do also sell a lot of labeled 'Israeli' produce.

Tesco stock Israeli produce and label a lot of their packs in an uncommitted manner (eg packed in UK) despite Defra saying it is not lawful. Tesco claim that they are obeying the law despite the fact that such vague labeling is deceptive.

Sainsburys claim not to label their produce in this vague way but they too do label some produce like this. We are waiting for their legal team to rule on their attitude to such labeling. They also continue to say they will stock West Bank produce under the 'customer choice' argument

Morrisons do not at the moment sell West Bank produce and have supplied a list of addresses of the supposed origin of all their 'Israeli' produce. These addresses are in 'pre67' Israel.

Waitrose stocks a great deal of Israeli produce but claims at the moment not to stock West Bank produce due to quality concerns.

We have attempted to check how each supermarket assures itself of the correct origin of the produce they import from 'Israel'. Each supermarket believes it has an efficient checking system, but this is always heavily reliant on Israeli personnel. Many Israelis do actually believe the whole area to the Jordan River to be 'Israel' so it is no surprise that they have no conscience in declaring that all the produce being packed and shipped to the UK to be 'Israeli'. There was a case highlighted recently by the Israeli newspaper Haaretz where exactly this was happening.

The only supermarket to state an origin for their Israeli produce is Morrisons, so we must assume that others such as Tesco and Sainsburys are so unsure, that they do not want to risk being specific. These supermarkets are very

happy to name the British farmer and his location, so one must question why they are so reticent with the Israelis. From our point of view we are therefore quite entitled to conclude that 'Israeli' produce may have an illegal West Bank content.

Other clear cut boycott targets must be Veolia and Caterpillar.  
(see [www.bigcampaign.org](http://www.bigcampaign.org) and other correspondence on this site for detail)

If we extend our focus to others which support the general Israeli economy we must include Nestle which has extensive manufacturing interests in Israel. Nestle is not alone and most other international companies could be included (see the BIG websites). However it is a good idea to concentrate on a particular company and no longer buy its products. So we should include Nestle with Veolia and Caterpillar in our boycott and divestment campaign and let them know our feelings.

Supermarkets need to feel customer pressure by letters and emails to their Head Offices and protests at the local level. Local protests filter up the management chain as 'customer resistance'. This campaigning brings the issues to the attention of the executives and occupies their time. It will also make them very careful as to what Israeli products they import as they will feel their buying policies may be challenged in the future.

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So keep up the pressure and join in our next supermarket action at the end of the month at Waitrose Wymondham.

Follow this, with our next public leafleting on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> October in Norwich. This is the occasion to raise public awareness of the odious Israeli regime and encourage them to also 'Boycott Israeli Goods'.

Details are always on [www.norwichpsc.org.uk](http://www.norwichpsc.org.uk) and if we have your email we will let you know of the latest actions.

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Peter,  
NPSC