

Submission for the
POSITIVE AWARD
2006

**Filed by: Corporate Watch,
Oxford, UK**

Corporate Watch (UK)

Headquarters:	Oxford, England
Established:	1996
Web site:	www.corporatewatch.org.uk
Number of employees 2005:	8
Number of members 2005:	8
Area of activity:	Research and education
Main objectives:	Corporate Watch supports people and organizations with well-founded information to help them oppose multinationals and target large corporations.

Summary

Corporate Watch (UK) is contending for the Positive Award with its campaign against Tesco and other large retailers, whom the NGO accuses of capitalizing on their market power, and of selling cheap goods at the expense of small farmers and retailers as well as the environment and public health. According to the British NGO, the campaign has brought a broad movement to life and has already triggered rethinking at Tesco.

Reasons for the submission

Until recently, large retailers and supermarkets did not attract the interest of the media or large NGOs in Great Britain; they were commonly regarded as ethically neutral deliverers of foods. The campaign by Corporate Watch and "Grassroots Action on Food and Farming (GAFF)" aims to reveal the consequences of the company policy of such large retailers on the consumer society and to initiate public debate. Tesco is in the campaign's spotlight as the market leader in Great Britain. Corporate Watch and its sympathizers want to put a halt to Tesco's abuse of power.

The NGO accuses large retailers of capitalizing on their monopoly positions and harassing farmers with excessive demands and arbitrary company policies. Furthermore, these retailers prefer industrial mass production at the expense of smaller farms. The NGO also criticizes large shopping centers on the city outskirts of driving small retailers to ruin, and causing an increase in travel by private automobile, both of which have a negative effect on public welfare and the environment.

Corporate Watch compiles informational material. It documents subjects ranging from the influence of supermarkets on the quality of foods to the exploitation of labor, both domestically and abroad. By its own account, Corporate Watch's brochure "What's Wrong with Supermarkets?," published in 2001, is the first comprehensive and groundbreaking documentation to reveal the misconduct of large retailers. Between 2001 und 2003, Corporate Watch organized various meetings in Great

Britain between farmers and environmental activists, to discuss the pressure put on agriculture by the corporations, and to further develop their criticism of large retailers. The Tesco company portrait, first published on the Corporate Watch Web site in 2002 and regularly updated, continues to attract interest.

Corporate Watch also works together with various local groups and makes national and international alliances for its campaign against large retailers. In particular, Corporate Watch attempts to coordinate its activities with GAFF, which is particularly strong in the areas of networking and campaigning.

Results of the campaign

Corporate Watch has succeeded in highlighting the problems the supermarket's role and to raise the awareness of a wider public. It has strengthened local campaigns against specialized supermarkets, and prompted other NGOs as well as politicians to be more critical of the "stealthy profiteers of an inequitable globalization." Corporate Watch also contributed to the establishment of the "Breaking the Armlock" and "Tescopoly" alliances. "Breaking the Armlock" is a network of environmental, consumer and agriculture organizations that aim for a code of conduct in the relationships between supermarkets and suppliers. On the other hand, "Tescopoly," as the name suggests, focuses on those corporate practices of Tesco categorized as harmful.

What happens next?

Among other things, Corporate Watch (UK) calls on Tesco:

1. to introduce a binding code of practice to ensure that all suppliers within the supply chain, both domestically and abroad, are treated fairly.
2. to create an independent controlling body to guarantee that Tesco's corporate policies are in the interests of consumers, farmers and small retailers.
3. to undertake measures that make Tesco and other large retailers responsible for adhering to internationally-recognized labor rights for the entire supply chain.

According to Corporate Watch, the British Competition Commission will most likely carry out a study of the supermarket sector. The campaign of Corporate Watch and GAFF plans to keep on the pressure for this purpose.

Detailed submission: www.publiceye.ch/nominierungen

Further information and links:

- www.tescopoly.org
- www.breakingthearmlock.com/
- www.gaff.org.uk/
- www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/the_tesco_takeover.pdf