



**UNDER
CONTRACT**

A FILM BY
Sally Lee & Marcello Cappellazzi
As featured on Last Week Tonight with John Oliver

Trailer
[youtube.com/c/UnderContractFilm](https://www.youtube.com/c/UnderContractFilm)

Photo Stills
<http://bit.ly/UCphotos>

Website
undercontractfilm.com

Facebook
[@undercontractfilm](https://www.facebook.com/undercontractfilm)

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Full Title & Format

Under Contract: Farmers and the Fine Print
Documentary Film, HD Video
Runtime: approx. 75 mins.

Selected Press

Clips from the film featured in broadcast (HBO).
Last Week Tonight, Host: John Oliver

Film and farmer interviews featured in late 2016 and early 2017 press coverage including *POLITICO*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *NPR*, and *Mother Jones*.

Short Synopsis

For the first time in a full-length documentary, contract farmers tell their stories, and industry experts reveal how the corporate production model pits farmer against farmer. *Under Contract: Farmers and the Fine Print* takes audiences across the American South and to Southern India to understand what's happening to farmers living under contract and what we can do to change our food system for the better.

The story of the contract farmer is the story of what's changing in rural America. Power in agriculture is changing hands, but few people know what's happening to the farmers producing our food. *Under Contract* tells this story through the lens of global poultry farming. In the U.S. alone, 97% of the chicken produced is raised by family farmers under contract with large companies. Around the world and all across agriculture, contract farming is taking hold. But farmers who sign contracts often face unfair challenges and hidden risks under the terms offered by large firms. *Under Contract* provides a timely glimpse into the little understood fine print of modern agriculture.



Photo: NC Poultry Farmer Craig Watts

Long Synopsis

When poultry production began to industrialize in the 1940s, the largest companies came up with a new system for organizing the producers: production contracts. The boilerplate language in these contracts has evolved over time to become one-sided, with benefits and security going to the companies and the majority of the risks placed on the farmers. Today, the use of production contracts is spreading into other types of livestock production and other markets.

Approximately 97% of the chicken produced in the U.S. is raised by family-operated farms under contract with large, vertically integrated companies. While the companies own the chickens, the farmers own the costly production facilities, which places them in an extremely risky financial situation. Companies use complicated contract clauses and exploitative payment mechanisms to control their own costs and outsource risk to poultry farmers. These companies benefit from a power imbalance: a farmer at risk of losing their family's land is not likely to speak out.

Under Contract: Farmers and the Fine Print is a groundbreaking documentary that explores the under-reported story of unfair production contracts in agriculture. It features interviews with a diverse group of farmers across the country—many of them describing the hardships and hidden risks that come with the corporate production model. The film focuses on the contracts and practices pioneered by the chicken industry to tell a larger story about the changing nature of farming.

Under Contract reveals how specific industry practices have created a perilous environment for American farmers and how those practices are being exported abroad to countries like India. It includes expert interviews with author Christopher Leonard (*The Meat Racket*) and attorney Dudley Butler (a former USDA agency Administrator) that describe the problems with this model, the necessity of protecting farmers' rights, and the integral role of consumers who demand a real choice in the marketplace.

Credits

Written by Marcello Cappellazzi, Sally Lee, Jean Willoughby

Directed by Marcello Cappellazzi, Sally Lee

Editor // Marcello Cappellazzi

Line Producer // Jean Willoughby

Music Composer // Dylan Shrader

Animator // Drew Jordan

Filmmaker Bios

Marcello Cappellazzi is an independent filmmaker and journalist. He worked as researcher for Revolve Media in Belgium, producing articles, videos, and infographics before moving to the U.S. He has completed a joint master's degree in Human Nutrition and Rural Development. His portfolio is available at MarcelloCappellazzi.com. Marcello filmed and edited Under Contract.

Sally Lee is the Director of the Contract Agriculture Reform program at the Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI). She has completed a joint master's degree in Agricultural Economics and International Rural Development. Sally served as the lead researcher, interviewer, and narrator for Under Contract.

Jean Willoughby is the Communications Manager for the Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI). She attended the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University, where she completed the Video Institute, and holds a bachelor's degree in Sociology. She assisted with all aspects of post-production for Under Contract. Press and media inquiries about the film may be directed to her at jean@rafiusa.org or 919-621-8453.