

FOOD AND JUSTICE

Published by United Farm Workers

September 1985



**KENNEDY
SUPPORTS
FRESH GRAPE
BOYCOTT**

Kennedy Supports Fresh Grape Boycott



Taking the pledge: Cesar Chavez is flanked by Sen. Edward Kennedy and Rep. Edward Roybal (D-Calif.) at a Washington, D.C. event where senators and congressmen took the pledge not to buy California grapes.

Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Mass) recently led a group of Washington congressmen in signing a pledge to boycott all California fresh grapes (except the 3% produced under UFW contract).

At the signing ceremony, Kennedy said: "I am proud to stand here today with Cesar Chavez and to join this boycott in the ongoing battle for justice for America's farm workers."

"I have signed this pledge to support the boycott because I believe in the merit of their cause. The United Farm Workers deserve protection, not obstruction, of their rights under the California Law. The certification of union election results, the recognition of the union by the growers, and negotiations in good faith are legitimate demands. They constitute the only effective process to improve the wages and working conditions of farm workers."

"The issue is justice for the farm workers of America. And if all in America who share their cause will join in this new struggle, I am confident that we shall prevail." 🍷

Volume 2, Number 4
FOOD AND JUSTICE
Sept. 1985

Magazine of the United Farm
Workers of America, AFL-CIO
La Paz, Keene, CA 93570



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Food and Justice (USPS publication number pending) is published monthly for \$5 per year by the United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO, Old Highway 58, La Paz, California 93570. Application to mail at second-class postage rates is pending at Keene, California.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
Food and Justice
La Paz, CA 93570.

PESTICIDES

Grower Fails in Attempt to Cover up Death of Farm Worker Stricken in Pesticide-Sprayed Tomato Field

Earlier this year farm worker Juan Chavoya, 32, crossed the border from Mexico to find a job and make some money to support his wife and four children.

All he found was death. And what his family received from north of the border was a coffin containing their husband and father.

At 8 a.m. on August 5, Chavoya was among a work crew which started working in a tomato field in Jamul, near San Diego. The field, part of Mirada Farms owned by grower Frederick Hatashita, had been helicopter-sprayed only an hour earlier with two pesticides, Pydrin and Monitor.

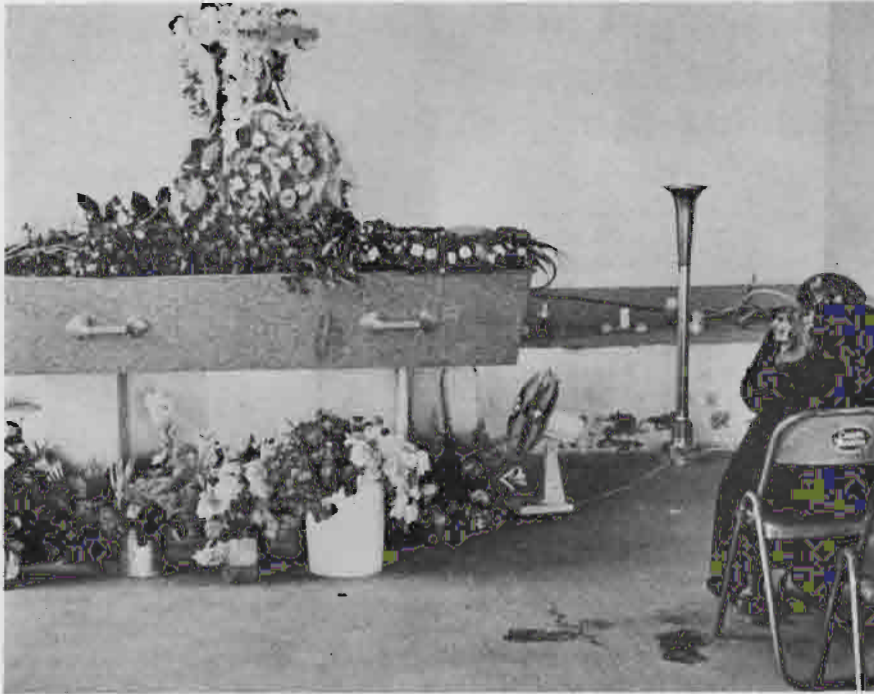
(A former county agricultural commissioner described Pydrin as similar to a common household insecticide but said Monitor was "highly potent" and "very deadly" when not used correctly.)



Friends carry Chavoya's simple gray coffin to church services.



Widow Maria Soledad and her children in front of their home in Manadero, Mexico: (l-r) Norma Alicia, Olga Irene, Salvador, Yolanda.



Juan's mother grieving alone with her son.

Paulino Osorio, a friend and co-worker of Chavoya, said he complained of strong pesticide odors in the morning but appeared fine until about 3 p.m., when he collapsed in the field.

Osorio informed Hatashita. The grower, ranch foreman Jesus Sanchez, and Osorio carried Chavoya to a van. But instead of taking him to the hospital in El Cajon, only 10 minutes away, Hatashita drove the stricken farm worker across the border to an emergency clinic in Tijuana, an hour away, where doctors pronounced him dead on arrival.

"We asked Hatashita to take him to the doctor, but he took him to Tijuana instead," Osorio said.

Though Chavoya was not a mem-

ber of the United Farm Workers, his relatives went to nearby San Ysidro to seek help from Minnie Ybarra, director of the Martin Luther King Jr. Farm Workers Service Center.

Ybarra had strong words for Hatashita: "He's a typical grower. He's profit-hungry enough to hire cheap labor from below the border but too 'law-abiding' to be caught with them on his property. Especially if they're dying -- or dead!"

Outraged at the grower's attempt to cover up the tragedy, UFW President Cesar Chavez contacted California Attorney General John Van de Kamp. The UFW was successful in halting the burial of Chavoya in Mexico and having his body returned to the U.S. for an autopsy.



Juan Chavoya's mother sees her son for the last time before his coffin is covered at the cemetery.



Juan's wife, Maria Soledad (face covered, center) grieves with relatives: 'now even Juan is taken away.'



Paulino Osorio tended Chavoya as the grower drove the stricken worker across the border instead of to a nearby hospital.

According to Deputy San Diego County Coroner Chuck Bolton, the autopsy initially revealed no "definitive cause of death," but he said further lab tests of tissue and fluid samples by toxicologists would determine if pesticides caused or contributed to Chavoya's death.

Dr. Marion Moses, director of The Farm Workers' California clinics and a specialist in environmental disease, attended the autopsy in San Diego. "In my opinion, there can be no doubt that pesticide poisoning was at the very least a contributing factor in Juan's death," she said.

Because Chavoya's death was work-related, it comes under the jurisdiction of the Deukmejian-controlled CAL-OSHA (the state Occupational Safety and Health Administration). "They move with all the speed of a glacier so God only knows when we'll get the lab results," Moses said.

"The way Hatashita handled the emergency in the first place was not just an error," Moses said. "It was a crime!"

For Juan's wife, Maria Soledad Sanchez de Chavoya, the world of pesticides, autopsies and investigations is unreal and remote. Closer to home, in Maneadero, near Ensenada, Maria and her children watched as Juan Chavoya's simply gray coffin was lowered into a hillside gravesite.

"Before we had nothing," she said. "And now even Juan has been taken away."

Grape Pesticides Worse Than Watermelon Poisons

At least four pesticides used in California vineyards are as dangerous or more hazardous to workers than the insecticide Aldicarb, which caused hundreds of illnesses among west coast consumers in July, farm labor leader Cesar Chavez said.

"Before these grapes go to market, state and federal agencies responsible for protecting the nation's food supply should see if chemical residues on the fruit make it unsafe for consumption," the farm workers' leader said.

Chavez identified the chemicals as the insecticides Parathion and Phosdrin; Methyl Bromide, a fumigant; and Dinoseb, a herbicide. He said the California Department of Food and Agriculture and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency should ban the four pesticides from use in agriculture. A fifth chemical, Captan -- while not an acutely toxic poison -- should also be banned on food because it causes cancer and birth defects, the UFW

president said.

Joining Chavez at a Los Angeles news conference was Dr. Marion Moses, medical director of the Farm Workers' California clinics and a leading expert on pesticides and occupational diseases. They stated the five poisons pose serious health risks to workers and consumers:

- Parathion causes more worker deaths in California fields than any other organo-phosphate (nerve gas class) pesticide. Phosdrin also causes large numbers of workers to become ill.
- Dinoseb, a highly toxic chemical, recently caused a farm worker death in Texas and kills large numbers of workers in other nations and in the U.S.
- Methyl Bromide causes more worker deaths outside agriculture than any other pesticide. It is being used more and more on California farms.



Cesar Chavez and Dr. Marion Moses in Los Angeles: 'grape pesticides worse than watermelon poison'.



Applying pesticides to a field as farm workers march by.

The consumer illnesses which resulted from Aldicarb-tainted watermelons only reveal "the tip of the iceberg" when it comes to pesticide contamination, Chavez said. "With Aldicarb the results could be seen right away. But how do we know about the pesticides we consume now and which could produce harmful health effects 10 or 20 years from now?"

The watermelon poisonings occurred when Aldicarb was illegally found on watermelons, a crop for which it was not registered. Chavez and Moses said the same kind of illegal use of poisons is occurring in fresh grapes.

In June, Tulare County agriculture officials quarantined a 26 square block area at the A. Caratan, Inc. grape ranch near Delano because residues of the pesticide Orthene were found in the vineyard. Orthene is not registered for use on table grapes.

The underreporting of farm worker pesticide poisonings is so pervasive that it is estimated that only one percent of the actual number of pesticide poisoning cases in agriculture is actually recorded by the state. The UFW and experts on pesticide poisoning state that 99% of poisonings go unreported in California because doctors don't report cases and many workers are afraid to admit being poisoned to their employers.

Reaction from grape producers was immediate and intense. California Table Grape Commission head Bruce Obbink bitterly denounced the UFW for raising the pesticide issue. But he and other grower spokesmen couldn't refute arguments by Chavez and Moses that poison residues from the pesticides are present on grapes and pose a health risk for consumers and workers.

'Grapes of Wrath' Conditions Still Common

Some growers like to talk about the progress farm workers have made. The miserable 1930s plight of uprooted families described in the *Grapes of Wrath* is gone, they say, so farm workers don't need Cesar Chavez.

But those conditions are still too common in many California farming regions.

Take the grape ranch K.K. and "Corky" Larson run near Coachella, only a short drive from the rich golf courses and luxurious swimming pools of Palm Springs.

K.K. Larson Company employs 500 to 600 farm workers; 200 migrants are hired during the peak seasons. A few sleep in their cars. Most live in grapefruit orchards under the trees in 110 degree heat. Some have rotten mattresses; others sleep on pesticide-treated dirt. Winters are even worse said one worker who didn't want to give his name. "The valley gets real cold and rainy, especially at night. It's so wet you can hardly keep a fire going."

Larson's workers use irrigation water for bathing, cooking, and washing their clothes. They carry in drinking water in used pesticide containers. Some are just teenagers. Recently several workers overcame the fear of reprisal and asked the UFW for help. They worked for more than three weeks without pay.

Thousands of farm workers live under savage conditions beneath brush and trees, and amid stenchy garbage and human excrement near state-of-the-art tomatoe farms in San Diego County. Vicious rats gnaw on them as they sleep, they walk miles to buy food at inflated prices, and carry in water from irrigation pumps.



Living conditions under grapefruit trees only a short drive from wealthy Palm Springs.

Child labor is common in many farm areas. As much as 30 percent of Northern California's garlic harvesters are under-aged. Kids as young as six years old voted in state-conducted union elections since they qualify as workers. "Without them we could not survive," farm worker Jose Ruelas said of his four children (ages seven to 14) who work in the fields.

No one wants to live under these conditions. And farm workers have worked for change. Many have organized and voted in state-held elections under the state farm labor law.

But the law which protects their rights stopped working when Gov. Deukmejian took office in 1983. So grape workers still bathe in irrigation water and live out in the open at K.K. Larson Company.



These workers are lucky. They have a rotten mattress to sleep on. Most migrants living in the open at K.K. Larson sleep on dirt treated with pesticides.



Migrant workers at K.K. Larson bathe, cook and wash their clothes in pesticide-laden water from an irrigation reservoir.

Dr. Marion Moses: Methyl Bromide Kills Farm Workers!



Dr. Marion Moses, director of the Farm Workers clinics, is a leading specialist in environmental disease.

The synthetic pesticide methyl bromide has been responsible for more occupationally-related worker deaths in California than any other single poison.

Many farm workers are told to apply methyl bromide without protective equipment, without training or proper supervision, and without even knowing the name of the pesticide or what its health hazards are.

About 10 million pounds of the poison is used each year. It belongs to a class of highly toxic chemicals called fumigants and is extremely poisonous to all forms of life. A colorless, odorless gas usually mixed with the "tear" gas chloropicrin, methyl bromide readily and rapidly penetrates most materials such as food packaging, cardboard, cellophane, clothing, leather and rubber gloves.



The legacy of Gov. Deukmejian's farm labor policies: Migrant farm workers use this discarded pesticide can to carry water for drinking and cooking at K.K. Larson grape ranch near Coachella.



Using old chemical containers to harvest crops in the San Joaquin Valley.

It is used to kill insects, worms, weeds, bacteria, fungi, and viruses, as well as rats, ground squirrels and gophers. It causes cancer in laboratory animals. Methyl bromide is even more powerful than mustard gas, one of the most potent mutagens known.

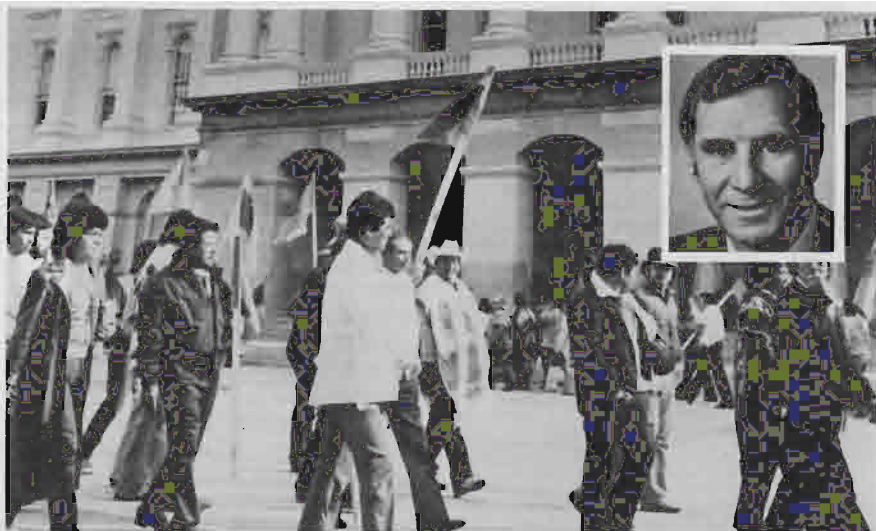
In humans, acute high exposures can produce delirium, convulsions, pulmonary edema, and death from half an hour to within three or four hours of exposure. Non-fatal poisoning may develop immediately or in several days to weeks from lower level of exposure. It can cause severe, irreversible effects on the nervous system with permanent brain damage.

Workers poisoned with methyl bromide have been incorrectly diagnosed as being drunk, on drugs, or mentally ill. Testicular cancer has been found in young men who worked in a plant where the pesticide was manufactured.

Methyl bromide is often incorporated into the soil to sterilize it for strawberry production. It is also used in vineyards, nurseries and greenhouses. Many fresh fruits and vegetables are fumigated for quarantine purposes or as imports. Stored foods are fumigated with methyl bromide after harvesting. They include almonds, peanuts, grains, soy beans, cocoa beans, coffee beans, dates, and dried fruit; meats may be fumigated while in cold storage.

Farm workers apply methyl bromide when they aren't told about its dangers because they are afraid of losing their jobs. They often suffer pesticide-related illness and do not realize it. Growers often refuse to send them to doctors. Doctors -- especially in rural areas -- often refuse to admit that the problem may be pesticide-caused.

For these and other reasons, methyl bromide has the highest priority on our list of chemicals which should be banned outright from all use in agriculture.



Frustrated farm workers picket nonviolently in Sacramento; (inset:) Gov. Deukmejian and the 'shattered' hopes of farm workers.

The Deukmejian Administration: California Growers' Non-Enforcers

Organized crime has its enforcers. California growers have their non-enforcers. Both are paid handsomely.

In 1982, corporate growers gave more than \$1 million to elect Republican Gov. George Deukmejian and to destroy the 1975 farm labor law. Since the Deukmejian Administration stopped enforcing the law in 1983, growers contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars more.

Through political appointments, budget cuts, and purges of civil service employees committed to the law, Deukmejian has weakened the enforcement of farm worker rights so dramatically that growers act without fear of punishment.

Take the case of the "fair and free" election at Supreme Berries, Inc., a large vegetable ranch near Salinas with over 600 workers. It is

a subsidiary of the J.R. Norton Co., whose former president, J.R. Norton, is now Ronald Reagan's deputy secretary of agriculture.

A year ago, the company informed its farm workers that there would be an arbitrary cutback in both wages and benefits. Over 500 workers protested, organized a two-day walkout, and signed cards asking for a union election.

A victory for the United Farm Workers seemed assured. Right? Wrong! The company fired many workers who had walked out and severely threatened and intimidated others. Then the company restored the cut benefits and granted a pay raise. It contracted with union-busting labor consultants to coerce workers with anti-UFW literature and speeches.

The UFW lost the election by just a few votes. Before and after the election, 70 unfair labor practice charges were filed against the Norton subsidiary with the Agricultural Labor Relations Board. One charge involves the ALRB's improper sealing and safekeeping of a box of challenged votes that affected the outcome of the election.

More than a year later, the 70 charges still have not been processed. They are sitting in the ALRB's office waiting for discretionary decisions from Gov. Deukmejian's appointee as ALRB general counsel, David Stirling.

Since his appointment in 1983, Stirling has brought the issuance of complaints against growers to a standstill; the backlog of uninvestigated farm worker charges against growers has skyrocketed; the process of collecting millions of dollars in back pay which convicted growers owe farm workers has been shut down. He has settled cases where the courts have ordered growers to pay farm workers money for as little as 10¢ on the dollar in violation of state and national labor law rules; and he has taken punitive action for disloyalty against ALRB staff who insist on enforcing the law fairly.

Last May, several attorneys and investigators at the regional ALRB office in Salinas signed a petition to the five-member board and to California legislators asking for a review of Stirling's actions.

The petitioners wrote: "It is our job to enforce a law that was enacted to protect farm workers. But every day that law is being chipped away by an insensitive administration that has proven its unwillingness to enforce the law."

"The farm workers' hope for a better life was the law which protects their rights," UFW President Cesar Chavez said. "But it doesn't work anymore. Deukmejian refuses to enforce it!"

The first chairman of the ALRB after the law was passed in 1975 was Catholic Bishop Roger Mahony of Stockton (newly appointed Archbishop of Los Angeles). In a progress report on the ALRB written last June, Mahony said the agency "merits between a 'D minus' and a 'D' in its overall effect."

Mahony said the "unfortunate" attitude of many California growers is to see the 1975 farm labor law "as another farm 'pest' -- to be eradicated at all costs."



Grape workers have been especially hard-hit by Gov. Deukmejian's political alliance with corporate growers.

Number of Grape Boycott Endorsements Growing



In a relentless criss-crossing of the country, Cesar Chavez and other farm workers leaders have won a constantly growing number of individual and group endorsements.

A recent update shows the following endorsements:

Advocacy for Resources for Modern Survival (ARMS), Boston
 AFSCME, Local 2078, Oakland
 Agricultural Missions
 Associated Students, Cal State, Fresno and Sacramento
 AFL-CIO National Executive Council
 American Baptist Churches of the West, Commission on Public Ministries
 Rep. Jim Bates, California
 Berkeley City Council
 Rep. Howard L. Berman, California
 Rep. Barbara Boxer, California
 Rep. Sala Burton, California
 Rep. Albert Bustamante, Texas
 Board of Directors, Community Church of Boston
 Rep. Dave Bonior, Michigan
 Boston City Council
 Boston Mayor Raymond Flynn
 Central Conference of American Rabbis
 Christian Service Commission, St. Martin de Porres Church, Boston
 Rep. Ron Dellums, California
 Detroit City Council
 District Council #57, AFSCME, AFL-CIO
 Rep. Merv Dymally, California
 Rep. Lane Evans, Illinois
 Bishop John J. Fitzpatrick, Diocese of Brownsville
 Rep. Barney Frank, Massachusetts
 Rep. Robert Garcia, New York
 Rep. Sam Geydenson, Connecticut
 Groundwork for a Just World, Detroit
 Rep. Charles Hayes, Illinois
 IHM Central Administration, Monroe, MI
 Jóvenes Católicos en Acción, Boston
 Justice and Peace Committee, St. Joseph's Church, Salem, MA
 Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, Massachusetts
 Rep. Mickey Letland, Chairman, Congressional Black Caucus
 Rep. Mel Levine, California

Rep. Matthew Martinez, California
 Massachusetts State House of Representatives
 Massachusetts State Senate
 Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis
 M.E.C.H.A., Fresno
 Michigan Farm Worker Ministry Coalition
 Rep. Jim Moody, Wisconsin
 National Farm Worker Ministry
 Northern California Ecumenical Council
 Oakland City School District
 Rep. Mary Rose Oaker, Ohio
 Rep. Major Owens, New York
 P.A.D.R.E.S.
 Poor and Oppressed Women's Ed. Review
 Bishop Kenneth Povish, Diocese of Lansing
 Rep. Charles Rangel, New York
 Rep. Bill Richardson, New Mexico, Chairman, Congressional Hispanic Caucus
 Rep. Peter Rodino, New Jersey
 Rep. Edward Roybal, California
 San Francisco Black Agenda Council
 San Francisco Board of Supervisors
 San Francisco Democratic County Central Committee
 San Francisco Labor Council, AFL-CIO
 Rep. Pat Schroeder, Colorado
 Rep. Gerry Sikorski, Minnesota
 Sen. Paul Simon, Illinois
 Social Concerns Commission, Sisters of the Assumption, Salem, MA
 Southern California Ecumenical Council
 Rep. Esteban Torres, California
 United Church Board for Homeland Ministries
 United Church of Christ, General Synod
 United Methodist Church, General Board of Global Ministries
 Rep. Ted Weiss, New York
 West Hollywood City Council
 Wisconsin Council of Churches

Take the Grape Boycott Pledge



In addition to the growing volume of grape boycott pledges and endorsements Cesar Chavez and UFW boycott staff are collecting in their travels across the nation, there are other signs the fresh grape boycott is having an effect.

Specials on fresh grapes abound. On the west coast grapes are being sold at three pounds for \$1 and in some supermarkets for as low as 29¢ a pound. In many mid-west cities and on the east coast prices are only slightly higher.

The hopes of farm workers for a better life were shattered by Gov. Deukmejian's refusal to enforce the law which protects their rights.

Now their only hope is your support for the new grape boycott*. The farm workers can't win without your help. Please sign and return your Boycott Pledge today!

*except the 3% of grapes produced under UFW contract

tear off and return to:

Cesar Chavez La Paz, CA 93570

Help Us Find the 17 Million Grape Boycotters

The New Boycott of Fresh Grapes

The Harris poll revealed that 17 million American adults boycotted grapes in the 1970s. We need to speak with them again.

You can help:

- Take the Grape Boycott Pledge
- Give the Grape Boycott Pledge to others
- Have your group endorse the Grape Boycott

Farm workers are only boycotting grapes...not wines or raisins. Only 3% of fresh grapes from California are harvested under UFW contracts. UFW grapes have the black eagle union label stamped on the box. If you don't see the eagle...boycott the grapes!

Dear Cesar Chavez:

I pledge to boycott California fresh grapes until Governor Deukmejian decides to enforce the farm labor law and the growers sign contracts.

Sincerely,

Name _____ (please print)

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

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