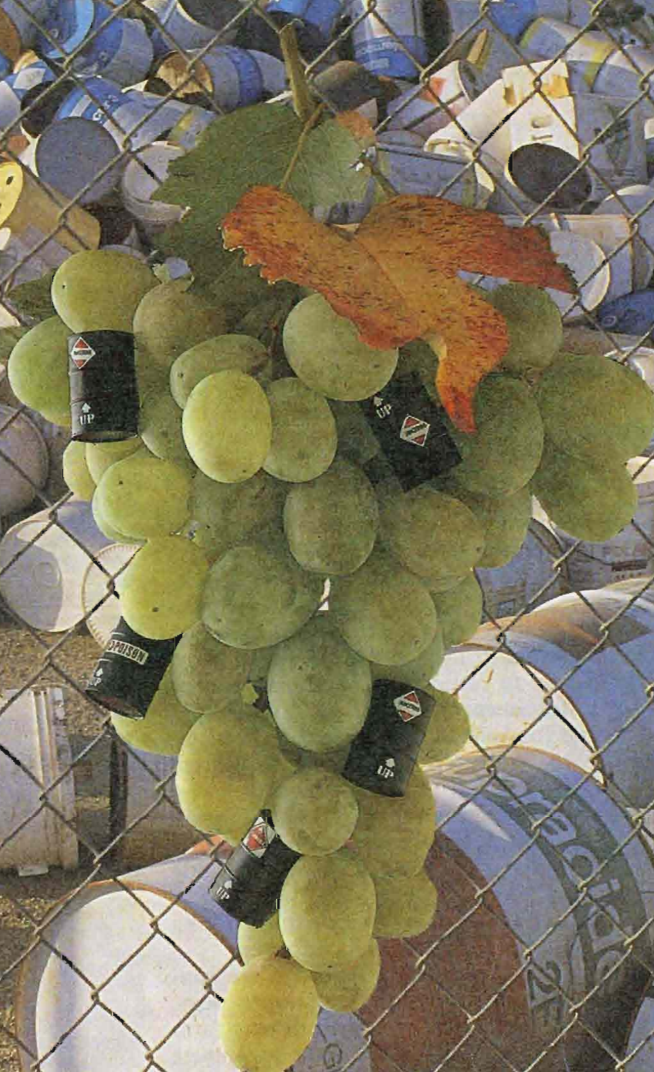


FOOD AND JUSTICE

Published by the United Farm Workers

February 1987



IT WON'T WASH

EDITORIAL




Grim Findings

With good reason, our February issue devotes several pages to two separate but related reports released in December by the General Accounting Office.

The titles alone convey the GAO's strong indictment of how ineptly both the Food and Drug Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency are handling the pesticide menace to consumers: "Pesticides: Better Sampling and Enforcement Needed on Imported Food" and, on domestic food, "Pesticides: Need to Enhance FDA's Ability to Protect the Public From Illegal Residues."

The results are far too grave for us to take comfort in a we-told-you-so attitude, but the temptation is hard to resist since California grape growers have arrogantly scorned as a "hoax" and "Goebbels-like" propaganda our boycott focus on the terrible pesticide threat facing the entire nation — farm workers and consumers.

The grim findings of the GAO should make consumers as outraged at their own slow poisoning by pesticides as we are at the deaths and birth defects farm workers and their children suffer. We invite consumers to join us in an all-out drive to force growers to stop their pesticide crimes and their scorn for those who warn Americans about them.

A successful grape boycott will be a big step in that direction. 

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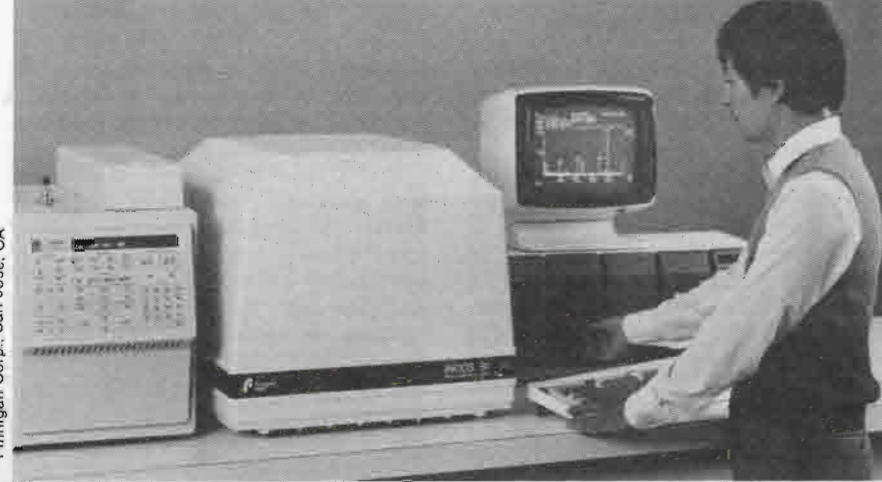
Production Director:

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Finnigan Corp., San Jose, CA



The FDA uses instruments such as the one pictured below to test for pesticide residues. The instrument detects less than half of the pesticides which may end up on food.

FDA is Failing

The growers are lying. They are lying when they claim the government protects consumers from eating pesticide residues on California table grapes. How do you know they are lying? Just ask the government.

In early December, the General Accounting Office released a study it did on the Food and Drug Administration at the request of Senator David Durenberger (R-Minn.). The FDA is charged with protecting the public from illegal pesticide residues on domestically produced food, but the GAO reports show the FDA is failing miserably at its job.

Durenberger, chairman of the Subcommittee on Toxic Substances and Environmental Oversight, drew this conclusion about illegal residues from the report: "Your chances of contracting a disease — or at least a serious illness — are fairly high."

The GAO reviewed the FDA's ability to sample, test, and seize adulterated (unsafe) food, including California table grapes.

FDA's failure to protect the public begins with the amount of food the

agency samples. The GAO estimates that the FDA sampled less than two-tenths of one percent of the domestic food supply in 1985. Even with that small sample, the FDA found that almost three percent of the food tested was adulterated. If the FDA had taken representative samples, it is probable that the amount of adulterated food detected would be even higher.

Limited Testing

The FDA has determined that there are 496 pesticides which may leave residues, and yet the agency cannot detect almost 60% of these with its most commonly used multiresidue tests.

By the FDA's own admission, it should be using other tests to detect these pesticides. Yet, the GAO report states, "These tests were not performed even though (1) it was likely the pesticides were used on these foods and (2) the FDA's . . . program required continuous or periodic monitoring of these pesticides."

Pesticides which are not tested for include many used on grapes. For instance, laboratories in California do

not test for methyl bromide, a chemical widely used on grapes and one of the pesticides the UFW wants banned as part of its grape boycott.

Further limiting the FDA's testing procedures is its reliance on the Environmental Protection Agency's data. The FDA determines that a residue level is illegal if it exceeds the tolerance level set by the EPA (i.e., the amount of a pesticide the EPA says is safe to eat) or if it detects a pesticide not registered for use on a particular crop. The EPA is currently reassessing its information about pesticides, and since this process will take until the 21st century to complete, the FDA will not have accurate information on which to base its tests for years to come.

No Penalties for Growers

Perhaps the most disconcerting aspect of the GAO report is its finding that the FDA does not penalize growers whose produce is found to be adulterated. Instead the FDA relies on growers to voluntarily destroy adulterated food. The grower is under no obligation to do this, however, unless the produce is seized by a U.S. marshal (a lengthy procedure).

The GAO takes note of the FDA's lack of power: "Ironically, growers who voluntarily hold and remove food from

Senator David Durenberger (R-Minn.) requested the GAO report.

the market suffer an economic loss while growers who do not remove food . . . are usually able to market the food and avoid any economic loss."

Even if the FDA did have the power to seize adulterated food, it is unlikely it would. The GAO says the FDA should spend no more than 48 hours to collect and analyze a food sample. Yet in 107 cases in which the FDA found illegal residues, the agency took more than 10 days to complete this process in 71% of the cases. By the time the FDA has analyzed a sample, most of it is on its way to the market.

It's no wonder Durenberger was alarmed by the GAO's findings. To the UFW, however, the report does not come as a great surprise. It is, sadly, further evidence of the danger of pesticides used on grapes and other products.

"The government has finally confirmed what we've been saying all along," Cesar Chavez, UFW president, said.

If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the GAO report, write to: U.S. General Accounting Office, P.O. Box 6015, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877. Ask for report number GAO/RCED-86-125. The report is titled: "Pesticides: Need to Enhance FDA's Ability to Protect the Public From Illegal Residues."

Agencies React to Charges

A report issued by the General Accounting Office in early December contains the following statement: "The probability that FDA [the Food and Drug Administration] will find a grower marketing food with illegal pesticide residues is rather low."



FDA Commissioner Frank Young

Does this mean you are eating pesticide residues? There are, after all, other agencies involved in the process of testing illegal residues.

The Environmental Protection Agency, for instance, sets tolerance levels for pesticides, and the FDA uses these levels to determine if the residue amount detected on food is illegal. The EPA is currently reassessing its information on pesticides.

"There are about 1200 chemicals, and we reassess about 30 a year," Al Heier, EPA spokesman, said. "We've now completed 175." At this rate, the EPA will be unable to provide the FDA with accurate data on all pesticides until the year 2021.

Another agency which monitors pro-

duce is the California Department of Food and Agriculture. CDFA is charged with protecting the public from consuming adulterated produce grown in California.

According to spokesman Julio Calderon, the CDFA uses multiscreen tests which "go through 106 pesticides." There are approximately 300 pesticides used in California, and many of these can be detected only through single residue tests. Calderon admitted that these tests are not routinely done.

The FDA, which also relies on multi-residue tests, would not comment on the GAO report. According to spokesman Jim Greene, FDA's commissioner Frank Young may never respond to GAO's charges. Greene said, "I'm not sure we have to formally respond to GAO or not. If we do then obviously we will, and once we do, we will make it known if people want to know."

Greene claimed he had never read the GAO report, and when asked why, he responded, "Normally these reports are fairly voluminous, and it's not something we respond to overnight." The report is less than 60 pages long. It was released December 3.

Clare Berryhill, CDFA director, does not believe he needs to comment on the GAO report even though the CDFA is as guilty as the FDA of under testing for residues.



Business-As-Usual for Growers

Agribusiness denies that the use of pesticides creates health risks for consumers and workers. It says these chemical poisons are as safe as anything could be.

California growers, who speak through their associations and who produce at least 50 percent of domestic fruits and vegetables at peak season, reflect a business-as-usual attitude when confronted with the GAO report. This is what they have to say.

Pam Jones, executive director of the Alliance for Food and Fiber: "According to the report, in no case was any level of pesticides two times over the legal limit. Between the farm and the consumer, the food is washed, trimmed, peeled, cut or processed; and the chemicals also have a chance to break down. The report says that we have a system in place but because of a lack of manpower, money or scientific data, the FDA isn't doing a very good job of enforcement."

Barbara Buck, Western Growers Association: "We feel the CDFA is doing a better job than the FDA. Consistently, 90 percent of the food samples taken in California by CDFA are free of detectable levels of pesticides, nine percent have legal residues on them and one percent are illegal."

David Marguleas, merchandise manager for Sunworld, a vegetable and fruit marketing company: "We feel extremely confident that California grown food is safe — I would say that the 2.9 percent in the GAO report doesn't reflect on us. But if that 2.9 percent is from California, then we have a problem. If consumers will stop buying certain products, then we, as a marketing company, will have problems."



Grape Commissioner Bruce Obbink says the FDA is "doing a magnificent job" — something even the FDA itself denies.

Bruce Obbink, president of the California Table Grape Commission: "The only thing I know about is grapes. CDFA and the FDA are doing a magnificent job. You can't have a perfect system. To be 100 percent safe, you would need a Nazi-like program of control — and we certainly don't want that."

Ed Angsteadt, Growers and Shippers Association: "I really don't know if California or the FDA is doing a good job of getting contaminated food off the shelves. I don't know if produce is tested in the fields for pesticides. I have never seen any CDFA reports detailing what happens to contaminated or quarantined produce. If the EPA isn't doing its job, then it should be challenged. If CDFA is adopting EPA safety tolerances, then it is doing so because growers have to be able to survive in interstate commerce."

Numerous other individual growers were contacted for their response but they either had not seen the report or refused to return our calls.

Chilean Winter Grapes: Beware!

What's true of California table grapes in the summer is true of Chilean table grapes in the winter.

In either case, the American consumer gets more for his money than meets the eye — more poison. Poison in the form of invisible pesticide residues inside and outside of the luscious-looking, cosmetically doctored-up table grapes.

In late December and early January, table grapes from Chile arrive in the U.S. to take up the slack left by idle California grape growers — who welcome imported winter grapes so U.S. consumers keep up a year-round habit of eating table grapes.

As for the pesticide habit, consumers should be shocked by a recent report from the General Accounting Office (GAO): "Pesticides: Better Sampling and Enforcement Needed on Imported Food." The report said the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) examines less than one percent of the estimated

one million shipments of produce imported annually. But even of those few samples, more than six percent contained illegal pesticide residues.

Last spring, the FDA found residues of the fungicide procymidone, illegal in the U.S., on two shipments of Chilean grapes. Chilean grapes are treated with sulfur dioxide enroute to the U.S. ports. Worst of all, they are fumigated with methyl bromide, one of the most toxic and dangerous chemicals used in agriculture.

Chilean grapes, which now make up 27% of the U.S. market, are grown with pesticides, preserved with chemicals during shipment, and then treated with more chemicals upon arrival in U.S. ports. If that weren't enough, California growers and some produce managers reportedly box and sell Chilean grapes as grapes from California.

Table grapes. Chilean or Californian, winter or summer: Let the buyer beware.



Pesticides used on Chilean grapes are so dangerous that workers must wear protective gear to gauge residues left on produce being shipped to the U.S.

FDA Protection:

A Wild Fantasy

Environmentalists, doctors and consumer advocates view the recent GAO report with concern. Tempered by years of commitment to various struggles and professions, the following persons offer their reactions.



Monica Moore, executive director of the Pesticide Education and Action Project in San Francisco: "The system in place to protect the public is inadequate. Grower claims about the safety of California food just does not bear up under scrutiny. CDFA adopts EPA standards, and like FDA, only regularly tests for about half the pesticides used.

"Pesticide dependence will be seen in the future as agriculture's adolescence — a stage of life on the way to a more sustainable, mature and sensible age."

Carl Pope, national political director of the Sierra Club: "The report shows just how inadequate the FDA's testing really is. The notion that safety can be assured by writing detailed instructions for a pesticide's use is, in reality, a wild fantasy. We cannot expect that everything will play out as planned in the laboratory. People misunderstand

labels, there is wind drift, and some growers just don't give a damn."

Deborah Schechter, director of Americans for Safe Food, Center for Science in the Public Interest, Washington, D.C.: "The FDA is clearly not protecting us. It should have greater authority to detain produce and assess civil penalties.

"Sometimes a report of this kind has a negative effect — it signals the grower that no one from the government is monitoring their use of poisons, that there isn't a policeman on the block."



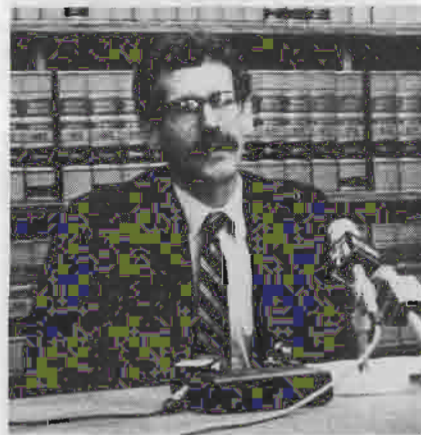
Dr. Marion Moses, National Farm Workers Health Group: "The GAO report shows that we have no idea about the extent of pesticides in our food. There can never be enough money, tests or laboratories to make sure food is safe and free of harmful pesticides. We must remove the poisons from the system.

"We can no longer pretend that the government will protect us. Its system of regulation is built on bad science, irresponsible assumptions and deceptive practices."



Charles Benbrook, pesticide analyst with the National Academy of Science: "The GAO report illustrates immense gaps in pesticide testing and points to risks of unknown proportion. Using inadequately tested, hazardous pesticides and then not testing for them in food is an indefensible position.

"While residue on food is serious, the problem is dwarfed by the exposure suffered by farm workers, pesticide handlers and residents of agricultural communities surrounded by pesticides."



Michael Picker, director of the Toxics Coordinating Project in Sacramento: "It confirms what we have known for a long time. It's a shame that it took so long for the government to recognize the problem.

"From now on, consumers will distrust both the government and growers. As long as agriculture con-

tinues to use pesticides with ineffective regulation and data gaps, we cannot be safe."

Dr. Jerome Lackner, former director of the California Health Department: "It's disastrous that we must eat poisons intended for insects and weeds because standards are inadequate or not enforced. The GAO report points to one problem. If pesticides are produced and used, then they will cause health problems.

"Testing is really too late to deal with pesticides because by the time it reaches the marketplace as residue, it has already poisoned factory workers, pesticide applicators and farm workers."



Dr. Richard Jackson, chief of the Community Toxicology Unit, California Department of Health Services: "The critical issue for us in the Health Department, because it affects consumers and workers, is that we must often use inadequate scientific data to make social policy decisions about the safety of pesticides used in California.

"To fill data gaps, California has mandated that pesticide manufacturers submit trade secret and proprietary information for review by CDFA. We oversee that review. As the submittal deadline approaches, manufacturers will likely seek relief from this legislation. We can't allow that to happen."



David Smiley

Labor leaders in Canada join a UFW picket line to protest pesticide use on grapes. In foreground is Michael Lyons, president of the Labour Council of Metropolitan Toronto (left) and Gord Wilson, president of the Ontario Federation of Labor (OFL). Behind Lyons and Wilson is Terry Meagher, former secretary-treasurer of the OFL.

Boycotters Busy

A few selected items from boycott directors' reports reflect many grape boycott actions that took place recently throughout the U.S. and Canada.

Texas

The M. Rivas supermarket chain in the Rio Grande Valley has agreed to stop carrying table grapes, reported Rebecca Harrington Flores, Texas boycott director. Rivas Foods said it would "not advertise or sell California grapes in our stores until such time as the demands of the workers are met."

Los Angeles

The Los Angeles boycott staff has been carrying out an intensive church campaign recently. "On one weekend alone, we distributed 10,000 grape boycott leaflets at 25 churches and synagogues," said Oscar Mondragon,

boycott director.

Assisting the L.A. staff were key supporters Ramona Chacon, Stephanie Tomita, Diane Lujan, and volunteers at the Catholic Worker House.

Canada

David Martinez, director of the Canadian boycott, reported that a flurry of boycott activities toward the end of last year was highlighted by a rally and picket line in Toronto attended by approximately 160 labor leaders and supporters. "The spirit was terrific," said Sara Bowser, an active UFW supporter for more than 19 years.

Gord Wilson, newly elected president of the 800,000-member Ontario Federation of Labour, laughingly chided the UFW for "always starting their picketing in Canada in the winter." But winter or summer, he added, "Farm workers can count on our help for as long as the

boycott takes." Metro Toronto Labour Council President Michael Lyons also addressed the rally.

The Ontario New Democratic Party Council first viewed "The Wrath of Grapes" and then joined the demonstration. The rally was given wide coverage by four TV stations and the press.

Mid-Atlantic

Mid-Atlantic Boycott Director Arturo Rodriguez and his staff recently met with New Jersey State AFL-CIO President Charles Marcianti and the executive board to seek support for the boycott. After viewing "The Wrath of Grapes," the board gave the boycott its unanimous approval. "We've given farm workers our support in the past, and we'll do the same thing for this boycott," Marcianti said.

In New York, supporters continued picketing against A&P supermarkets. At one demonstration in the Greenwich Village, Edwin Lopez, president of the Santio Iglesias Society, voiced alarm over "the pesticide time bomb California growers have planted in the market-

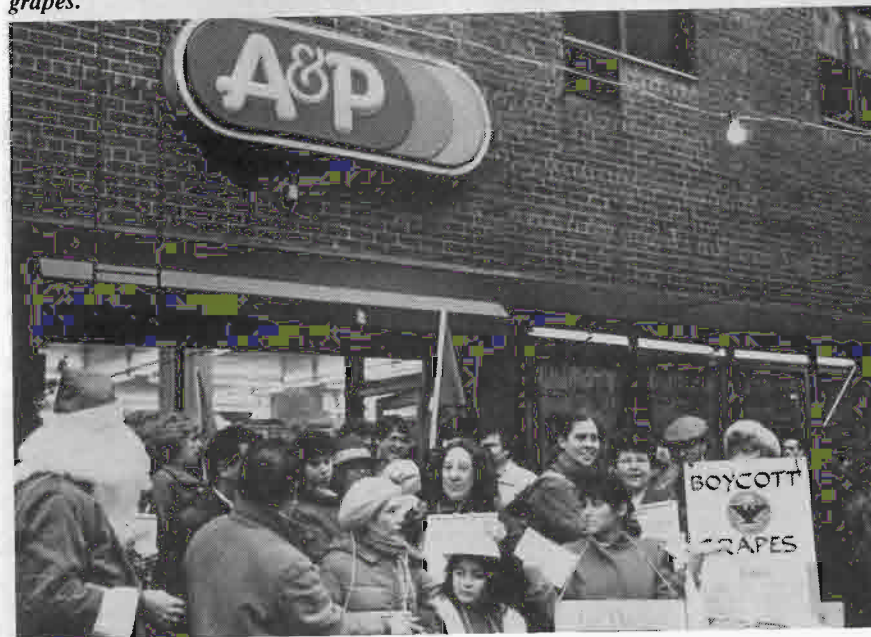
place that will one day explode in a mass poisoning of consumers." Key activists Jane Baron and Margot Hammer both blasted A&P for being just as guilty as growers in their "flagrant disregard for people's health."

Detroit

Two successful fundraisers were among several projects that kept Detroit boycotters busy during late December and January, reported Arturo Mendoza, boycott director. The first was a fundraiser at which Sister Theresa Grekovicz, I.H.M., was honored. Tributes were extended to Sr. Theresa for her involvement in farm worker causes promoted by the UFW, Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), and the Michigan Farm Worker Ministry.

The second fundraiser, a Charlie King concert, was held in mid-January at the United Auto Workers Local 600 Hall in Dearborn. Key committee members for both events were Jack Ray, Maria Flores, Elena Herrada, and Marcos Zuniga. 🐦

New Yorkers protest A&P's refusal to stop buying and selling California table grapes.



GUEST COLUMN

Is Our Water Safe to Drink?

By Dr. Don Villarejo and
Elizabeth Martin

People in California don't think so — with good reason.

In last November's election, by overwhelmingly passing a toxics initiative, Proposition 65, they strongly insisted that action be taken to prevent further contamination of their drinking water from pesticides and industrial chemicals.

An example will show why their fears are justified. In rural California, a principal contaminant found in the water was Dibromochloropropane (DBCP), a pesticide widely used in vineyards and orchards until banned in 1978. Workers had been told it was so safe it was not even a "restricted use" material.

However, the manufacturer knew DBCP caused sterility in laboratory rats but kept that data from workers exposed to it. Only after workers became sterile did government officials ban DBCP from use in the fields. Unfortunately, by

The staff and volunteers of the California Institute for Rural Studies and the California Agrarian Action League. Seated are: Dr. Don Villarejo and Elizabeth Martin. Behind are (from left to right): Claudia Raaen, Kelly Gould, David Bunn, Enrique Garcia, Edie Stanley, and Glenda Marsh.



Claudia Raaen

that time millions of pounds of DBCP had already been used.

Now DBCP is being found in underground water supplies for millions of residents in California's Central Valley. Workers were the first to suffer from exposure to DBCP, but now, years later, consumers have become its secondary victims. As usual, company and state officials took action *after* the disaster instead of preventing it in the first place.

We in the California Institute for Rural Studies (CIRS) ask the public to join us in speaking out against the toxic pollution of our water and in working for four goals: the monitoring of drinking water for chemicals, notification to consumers of water-testing results, the clean-up of contaminated drinking water, and the promotion of agricultural practices that do not use toxic chemicals.

(Dr. Villarejo is the executive director and Martin the pesticides project director of CIRS. A slideshow on how consumers can protect their water can be rented or purchased by writing CIRS, P.O. Box 530, Davis, CA 95617.)



Table grape workers in California at "home." From left to right are David Fuentes, Tomas Barrios, and Manuel Mendoza.

Precious People

Imagine the homeless. No doubt your image is of people who live in city streets, people without jobs and often without hope.

Now imagine a group of men who have steady jobs, many of whom have held the same position for 10 years or more.

These images are probably very disparate, and they should be. But in Thermal, California there is a group of men who are steady workers and who are homeless. These men come to Thermal every year to work in the table grape fields of David Freedman & Co. They work from November until June and usually stay in company housing.

Freedman's housing is inspected annually by the county health department. This year a health official told the company to mend screens, replace broken windows and make other minor repairs. The company refused and instead allowed the camp to be condemned. The workers now live under a mesquite tree a few feet from their former shelter.

Lionel Steinberg, Freedman's president, told reporters, "We don't need these single male workers anymore. There is an adequate supply of family workers."

These men have worked for the company for 10 and 12 years. Pablo Herrera is a 12-year employee. He said, "We have worked here a long time. Now we live under a tree. We have nothing, and it's raining and cold. We harvest the food that feeds the world, and we do not even have a place to live."

The living conditions are taking their toll on the workers. Many are ill from sleeping in the open air and bathing in cold water. For shelter the men sleep inside or underneath a rusted boxcar. At night they are taunted by wild dogs which invade their makeshift homes.

Like the homeless in this country's cities, they are losing hope. The company has no plans to improve the workers' lives. In fact, Steinberg summed up the company's feelings when he asked, "What makes these people so precious?"

Minister's Legacy



Rev. Fred Eyster

Farm workers lost a long-time champion of their cause when the Rev. Fred Eyster, a United Church of Christ minister and co-director of National Farm Workery Ministry, died on December 17. His death at 47, following surgery at Oakland's Peralta Hospital, was unexpected.

At a memorial service, farm labor leader Cesar Chavez praised Eyster as a dedicated man of God "who showed us how to live life for others, especially those most in need."

Shortly before his death, Eyster climaxed 14 years of service to farm workers — the last four first as NFWM director and then co-director with Franciscan Sister Pat Drydyk — by initiating a new ministry to farm worker families victimized by pesticide poisoning.

New NFWM Program

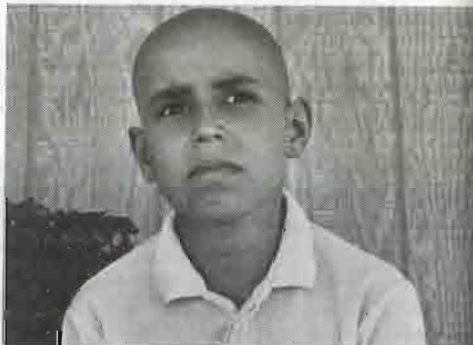
Responding to the anguish of a continually rising number of deaths, steril-

ity, cancer cases, and birth defects from the pesticide poisoning of farm workers and their children, Eyster and Drydyk last year opened a Ministry Among Pesticide Victims office in Delano, the center of a vast table grape area in the San Joaquin Valley.

"This is where we belong," Drydyk said. "This is where grape growers flood their fields with some of the most deadly pesticides, where so many farm workers are being poisoned, where at least eight children have died of cancer in recent years, and where others have suffered severe birth defects."

Drydyk added: "Fred would be happy to know we're hard at work not only ministering to pesticide victims but also organizing church and community support to make growers and pesticide producers stop this senseless death and misery." 🐦

Two of the children the NFWM program helps are Salvador DeAnda (top) and Amalia Larios (bottom).



YOUR LETTERS

Please keep up the good work — yes, truly pioneering efforts — on the pesticide and related water poisoning battle. It is to be hoped that the growers and government authorities do not wait until some of their own family members come down sick and ailing like yours before they finally decide to act on such a deadly serious problem that really affects us all.

Harry and Ann Hughes
San Francisco, CA

You can tell the grape growers that I haven't eaten a grape for three months. The last ones I ate made me very sick. I believe we should be using organic methods in farming.

Martin Stansbury
Pekin, IL

Dear Mr. Chavez,

I'm here at the University of Washington doing my homework. Next year I hope to be an engineer with some aerospace company.

I heard you speak today and was greatly moved. I've read about you and have seen you in documentaries. I've often wondered about who was this guy who doesn't know when to quit.

I too come from a farm laboring family from Yakima. I chose to go into engineering to get away from manual labor. Now I pray that I never lose sight of where I came from and the struggles of those left behind.

Thank you for coming to the University of Washington. I hope I can be half the man you are.

Patricio Leon
Seattle, WA

I will continue to support the UFW and the table grape boycott until the rights of farm workers are respected by

the growers of the United States. May 1987 be the year that this goal is finally achieved. I want to encourage you and everyone at the UFW to continue your fight. My prayers are with you all.

John L. Ferguson
San Luis Obispo, CA

I have boycotted grapes for the last two years. I would rather deprive myself of the pleasure of eating grapes than deprive farm workers of their livelihood.

Fanny Schneiderman
Seal Beach, CA

We must change this mentality that makes people expendable for the purpose of larger profits. A successful boycott will do this.

The United Farm Workers' struggle to obtain justice must succeed. If we do nothing to help you, it may be our turn to suffer next.

David M. Kohl
Chillicothe, OH

It is a sad, sad, sad state of affairs when business, industrial, and government leaders ignore standards of fair labor practices, safe and proper working conditions, and adequate protections for the environment and human health.

Obviously, the governor of California gains greater satisfaction in feeding the pockets of money-hungry corporate growers than in providing proper working conditions and adequate wages to farm workers.

I support the United Farm Workers and share in your cause to bring justice to the laborer.

Jeffrey Moser
Member, South Dakota
Farmers Union
Wessington, SD



**EVERY YEAR MORE THAN
300,000 FARM WORKERS ARE
POISONED BY THE FOOD YOU EAT.**



Welcome to Death Valley.

Each year, hundreds of thousands of people who labor in the fields are poisoned by toxic pesticides like those used in the cultivation of table grapes.

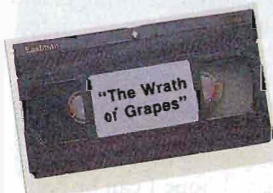
The fruits of their labor are birth defects, cancer, chronic illness. And death.

But the danger of pesticides isn't just to field workers. The danger sits right on your table.

You see, one third of all pesticides are known to cause cancer. And some of them won't even wash off under your kitchen tap. Which means that you could unwittingly be poisoning yourself or your family with every table grape you eat.

There is only one way to know the whole story. Send for our free video cassette, "The Wrath of Grapes", and see how the farm workers have dedicated themselves to saving their lives. And yours.

What you choose to do after that is up to you. After all, we don't want to poison your mind. We just want to give you food for thought.



UNITED FARM
WORKERS OF
AMERICA
P.O. Box 62
Keene, CA 93570

YES! Please
send me a free
copy of "The
Wrath of Grapes."
(Available in VHS
format only.)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____



UNITED FARM WOR
OF AMERICA

01
SAMUEL B TRICKEY
723 NW 19TH ST
GAINESVILLE FL 32603