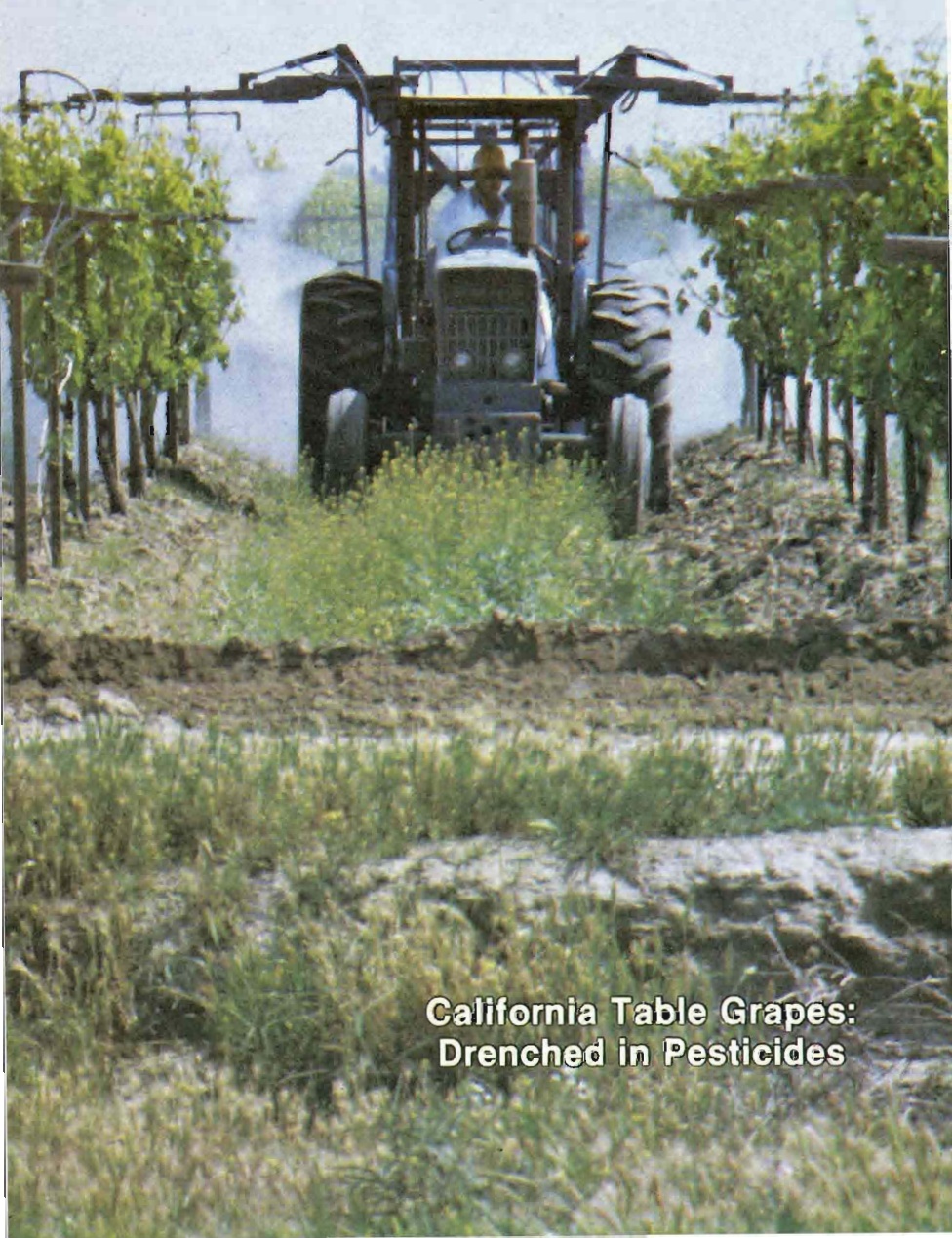


FOOD AND JUSTICE

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**California Table Grapes:
Drenched in Pesticides**



The marketplace -- the only place where farm workers can find justice when growers and law officials deprive them of their rights -- now has its supermarket and sidewalk fruit stands full of 1986's first harvest of table grapes from the vineyards of California.

The process of getting grapes to the marketplace in May is a long one. From December through mid-March, workers were pruning the vines. A few weeks later, they began thinning out the bunches, and in late April they picked the grapes for marketing throughout the nation.

During that process, growers dumped thousands of tons of pesticides on the grapes. First, they put them into the ground. Then they irrigated the vines with toxic chemicals in the water. Later they sprayed pesticides on the blossoming vines and grapes. Finally, more chemicals were applied to the grapes for shipment to preserve them and keep them looking delicious -- like a perfectly "natural snack."

This year, we hope there will be another step in the grape-marketing process. We hope consumers will boycott non-union table grapes and send back a quick and urgent message to California grape growers:

"We will not buy or eat your grapes until they are free from pesticide residues ... until you guarantee free and fair elections for farm workers ... until you agree to sit down and bargain with farm workers in good faith." ✎

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From preparation of soil until bunches are picked and shipped to stores across the country, California table grapes are saturated with dangerous pesticides.

Grape Growers' Pesticide Philosophy: More is Better!

California table grapes would be a perfect example of the old proverb that "beauty is only skin deep" -- if most of them weren't covered with pesticide residues.

The first table grapes of the 1986 season are now arriving in supermarkets across the nation. But no matter how chemically luscious they have been made to look -- like "the natural snack" -- they are a threat to consumers.

From the time pesticides are first mixed into the ground during the pre-harvesting vineyard work, through irrigation with more toxics, through

pesticide spraying on the growing blossoms and bunches, through the application of additional chemicals during storage and shipment, until they arrive in the nation's stores with pesticide residues still on them, California table grapes are unnatural from the outside skin to the seed inside.

Pesticide Residues on Grapes

Only one grape grower currently under contract with the United Farm Workers has agreed to use none of the five most toxic chemicals the UFW is demanding be banned from use in agriculture: Dinoseb, Captan, methyl

bromide, parathion, and Phosdrin.

All other California grape growers use one or more of them as well as many others. The worst offenders are the huge growers such as Tenneco, Inc., Giumarra Vineyards, Pandol and Sons, Superior Farming Co., Marko Zaninovich, and V.B. Zaninovich and Sons.

"'More is better' is pretty much their philosophy," said Dr. Marion Moses, director of farm worker clinics in California and a leading specialist in environmental disease. In recent testimony before the Maryland State Legislature, Moses referred to the five pesticides the UFW wants banned from use in grape production: "These are not all of the pesticides we would like to see banned, but we realize the growers are 'pesticide junkies' and cannot withdraw from their habit all at once."

Moses cited staggering statistics regarding pesticides used on grapes. Approximately eight million pounds of more than 130 different pesticides are used annually in grape production in California. Of the approximately 10 million pounds of methyl bromide (one of the five the UFW wants banned) used in agriculture in California each year, 900,000 pounds are used in grape production. Methyl bromide is a fumigant responsible for more occupationally-related deaths than any other single pesticide in California.

Captan, another of the five pesticides Moses says should be banned in grape production, is a fungicide that causes cancer and birth defects. It is the pesticide most often found in the California residue testing of grapes on the market. Its biggest use is on California grapes -- 344,000 pounds annually.

But Captan residues have also been found on table grapes outside California. Last summer, after farm

labor leader Cesar Chavez made charges about pesticides on California table grapes during a boycott appearance in Cincinnati, the Ohio Department of Agriculture quickly began testing table grapes from California in several Ohio cities. They found residues of Captan on table grapes in markets in Columbus, Lima, Cleveland, and Cincinnati.

The pesticide residues of captan in those cities were under the "acceptable" tolerance level. However, Dr. Moses has repeatedly cautioned that there is no such thing as an "acceptable" or "safe" level for any cancer-causing pesticide like Captan: "Even though Captan is not acutely toxic, it may be the most hazardous of all in terms of chronic effects such as cancer and birth defects."

Companies selling table grapes in Ohio with residues of Captan were Tenneco West, Inc.; Marko Zaninovich; V. B. Zaninovich & Sons; Giumarra Vineyards; Superior Farming Co., and 17 others. In Lima, Tenneco West's Thompson Seedless grapes showed the highest level of Captan residues found in the state.

An earlier pesticide-residue investigation in California in 1983 was no more comforting to consumers than the Ohio tests on grapes. The San Francisco-based Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) conducted a survey of fresh produce sold in San Francisco markets. The investigation revealed that 44 percent of the 71 fruit and vegetable samples contained residues of 19 different pesticides. And 13 of the samples showed residues of more than one pesticide.

Pesticides Top EPA List

Even though pesticides, more than any other environmental problem, pose a greater threat to the lives and



Corporate grape growers like Tenneco and Giumarra Vineyards are the worst offenders in the reckless use of dangerous pesticides.

health of farm workers, townspeople, and consumers, the Environmental Protection Agency has moved at a snail's pace to face the pesticide problem. Lee M. Thomas, administrator of the EPA, recently announced that pesticides were now the agency's most urgent problem.

"It took 10 or 12 years before it (the EPA) figured out what it wanted to do about pesticides," said Dr. Jack A. Moore, assistant administrator of the EPA. "The problem is, we are 10 years behind where we should be."

California Control Worse

In California, where pesticide control is under the direction of the Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), the situation is grim. Growers and chemical manufacturers have

little to fear from the agency. Clare Berryhill, CDFA director and a San Joaquin Valley grower himself, lobbies enthusiastically for both. "That's not the CDFA anymore," said a disgusted legislative staff member some time ago. "Nowadays they ought to call it the Department of Chemicals."

Chavez has repeatedly attacked Berryhill for his callous attitude toward the human lives jeopardized by the CDFA. "Thousands of farm workers are being poisoned by pesticides, people in towns near fields are drinking well water contaminated by pesticides, and consumers are eating produce filled with pesticide residues," he said. "Rather than face the problem as the EPA has finally done, Berryhill keeps right on opposing pesticide control legislation to please growers

and pesticide producers."

Grape Growers Unconcerned

In spite of the crescendo of voices crying out for greater pesticide controls, grape growers demonstrate little concern about the problem. Bruce Obbink, president of the California Table Grape Commission, recently said no pesticide residues have been found in table grapes sampled under state and federal programs -- in spite of laboratory evidence to the contrary. Obbink called the UFW anti-pesticide campaign "a hoax on the public."

"Apparently Obbink would call the Ohio and San Francisco Laboratory results hoaxes on the public too," Chavez said.

Chavez said grape growers show no more concern about the lives of farm workers and consumers than the watermelon grower who couldn't understand all the fuss over the 2,000 (the latest revised figure) people poisoned by watermelons contaminated with aldicarb last summer. After all, the melon grower said, "Nobody died."

300,000 farm workers are poisoned by pesticides each year.



PESTICIDES

McFarland: Too Much Cancer

Something is very wrong in McFarland, California. Eleven children in the McFarland area have been diagnosed with cancer since 1981, and four have died. This has earned the rural community of 6200 the status of a "cancer cluster." Such clusters are generally found around toxic waste dumps, but McFarland is a small town surrounded by a variety of agricultural crops in the San Joaquin Valley.

The cancers -- and a steep rise in low-weight births, miscarriages, and fetal deaths -- are the subject of an investigation by the Kern County and State Health Departments. Health officials suspected the town's water of being contaminated by agricultural pesticides.

Dr. Beverly Paigen, the community's representative in the study, stated that investigators examined pesticides which had been in use in the McFarland area. Dr. Paigen said, "At one point there were 150 different pesticides in use there, including some pretty toxic ones."

Among the pesticides found were EDB and DBCP. EDB was banned in California in 1983, the same year that the number of birth-related problems returned to normal. DBCP is a powerful cancer-causing chemical which was banned in 1977.

Dr. Paigen, who was also an investigator at the Love Canal case, stated the cancers' cause must be linked to the agricultural industries which surround the town. "It could have been an (agricultural) spill or a spraying that saturated the soil and then it was

gone," Dr. Paigen said. She noted that pesticide spills and oversaturations are rarely reported.

Teresa Buenthello, the mother of a child with cancer who died at the age of 4, said she refuses to drink the town's water because she fears it is contaminated. "I am pregnant right now," Buenthello explained. "And I'm not taking any chances."

Connie Rosales, mother of Randy, 16, another cancer victim, shares Buenthello's skepticism. She believes there is a direct link between the cancer cases and the pesticides growers use. Rosales said, "We have so many different crops here, and they spray year 'round."

Rosales does not want to leave McFarland. "We wanted a home very badly for our children," she said. "What do we do now? Do we sell this house to another family and not tell them about the cancer?"

The parents of six of the cancer victims are so convinced that pesticides are to blame for their children's diseases that they have filed a law suit against twelve chemical companies.

Another mother of a child with cancer, Rosemary (who asked that her full name be withheld), also blames pesticides for her son's disease. She said she recently heard the helicopters which carry pesticides flying over her house. "I knew they were spraying," Rosemary said. "My little boy wanted to go to the park and play baseball, but I said no. They were spraying on the east side of the park."



David Gonzalez pauses at his brother Frankie's grave before leaving cemetery.

Another McFarland Child Dies

Ten-year-old Frankie Gonzalez died March 16 in McFarland, California, a small town located in the San Joaquin Valley. Eleven children have been diagnosed with cancer in the McFarland area since 1981. The parents of these children, and the United Farm Workers, believe the cancers may have been caused by the pesticides sprayed by growers in the fields which surround the town (see page 7). Frankie is the fourth of the eleven children with cancer to die.

Frankie was born September 4, 1975. At the age of seven he began experiencing pain in his lower leg and losing weight. In January 1983, Frankie's parents were told that their son had osteogenic sarcoma, a bone cancer. The same month his leg was amputated.

The Gonzalez family, still in mourning for their son, does not yet feel comfortable talking to the press. The mother of another McFarland child with cancer, Connie Rosales, recalls her first conversation with Frankie's

mother: "She said, 'My name is Sally Gonzalez, and my son just had his leg amputated. He's nine years old.'"

Rosales, whose son, Randy, has Non-Hodgkins lymphoma (cancer of the lymph glands), said she knew there was an unusually high number of cancer cases in the area and thought pesticides were to blame. She told Sally Gonzalez, "Well, that's it. Something is wrong here."

The parents of the cancer victims became friends as time passed. Rosales said, "We were thrown together at the hospitals, and everyone became close."

Rosales' son has been in remission since September 1984. She said that Frankie "talked about my son a lot. He was going to beat it (cancer) like Randy did."

Frankie had been undergoing chemotherapy treatments after his diagnosis and surgery. But he suffered several bad reactions to the treatments, and on one occasion he stopped breathing. After receiving the treatments for over a year, Frankie decided to stop



Borjas and Sally Gonzalez and their son David leave the Church of Christ in McFarland after the burial service for their son, Frankie.

undergoing chemotherapy. His family honored his wishes.

"He is probably the bravest person I ever met," Rosales said. She also said that Frankie enjoyed sports. "To the end he believed he was going to play baseball again. He was so excited when he was fitted with his artificial leg, and the doctors told him he could play baseball if he had someone else run for him," Rosales said.

Approximately 250 people attended the funeral for Frankie Gonzalez on March 19 at the Church of Christ in McFarland. Frankie was buried in the North Kern Cemetery in Delano, California.

A relative of the family, Rosemary (who asked that her full name be withheld), also has a son with cancer. Rosemary's son, Adrian, has rhabdomyosarcoma (a malignant tumor in the eye).

Rosemary feels that pesticides are to blame for the children's diseases. She stated, "These are our children, and we are not going to stop fighting until we find out which pesticide caused the

cancers -- or which company."

Teresa Buenthello also attended Frankie's funeral and the burial ceremony. Teresa's daughter, Tresa, is buried in the same cemetery as Frankie. Her daughter died when she was four years old of neuroblastoma (cancer of nervous system tissue) in August 1984. Buenthello also has a son.

"I want to tell people to be concerned about the cancer in McFarland," Buenthello said. "It might still be out there. Whenever my little boy gets a cold, I rush him to the hospital. I get scared. I don't want anyone to go through what I did."

Rosales said, "Every time another child dies, we (the parents of the cancer victims) go through this grieving process all over again. All of us grieve."

Frankie's parents are Borjas and Sally Gonzalez. Borjas is a construction worker who, at the time of Frankie's death, was unemployed, according to Rosales. Sally Gonzalez works at a kiwi packing plant. Frankie is also survived by two brothers, David, 12, and twins Borjas Jr., and Christina, 8.

BOYCOTT



TV personality Geraldo Rivera emceed New York fundraiser to support the UFW table grape boycott. At right is State Congressman Robert Garcia.

Chavez Continues Boycott Trips

Farm labor leader Cesar Chavez took "The Wrath of Grapes" boycott message on two visits to New York City and Washington State in mid-March and early April.

Chavez spent more than a week in New York promoting the table grape boycott in a steady round of media interviews and meetings with labor, religious, and community leaders. He consulted with AFL-CIO officials, met with Pres. George Boncoraglio and the Executive Board of the Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA), and addressed 100 labor leaders of the Hispanic Labor Committee headed by President Enio Carrion.

In a special meeting with officials of the International Labor Organization, Chavez outlined the reasons for the new boycott and called for a formal condemnation of California growers

and Gov. George Deukmejian by the United Nations.

Chavez spoke to nearly 1,000 flight attendants on strike against TWA and encouraged them to continue their struggle against sex discrimination. "We in the farm worker movement know what you're suffering," he said. "Sexual harassment is one of the worst abuses committed against our women by growers, supervisors, and labor contractors."

On Sunday, March 16, Chavez attended Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral and then met with Cardinal John J. O'Connor. The next day he marched with the Irish-American Labor Coalition in New York's huge annual St. Patrick's Day Parade. Among other religious leaders he visited was Rabbi Joseph Glaser, executive vice-president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. 🍷

Chavez participated in two big fundraisers while in New York. The first was a benefit for the Sloan-Kettering Hospital, one of the nation's leading cancer-treatment centers. The second was a UFW boycott fund-raiser emceed by television personality Geraldo Rivera. Chavez was introduced by New York Congressman Robert Garcia to more than 100 supporters who contributed \$3,000 to the table grape boycott.

Squeezed into Chavez' schedule were other appearances: a visit with Peter, Paul, and Mary to a center for homeless women and children called "Women in Need"; a party celebrating the 120th anniversary of "The Nation" magazine; a trip to the upper West Side of Manhattan to see a community organic garden operated by poor minority youths; and a personal visit with Alvena Seckar of Pompton Lakes, New Jersey, a 79-year-old wheel-chair bound artist, to thank her for a painting she contributed to the UFW.

March in Washington

At a reception on the first day of his April visit to Washington, Chavez was welcomed to Yakima City by Mayor Henry Beauchamp. The next day Chavez led nearly 2,000 farm workers and supporters on a two-day, 20-mile March for Just Wages. With Chavez on the second day of the march was Bishop William Skylstad of the Yakima Diocese.

At a rally at the end of the march, Chavez told the farm workers, who have not had a raise in five years, "This is a matter of justice. You feed this Valley and nation with your hard work, and yet growers don't want to pay you enough even to feed yourselves and your families."

Besides press conferences and interviews with Yakima, Pullman, and Spokane media, Chavez addressed supporters at Yakima Valley Community College, Central Washington University in Ellensburg, and Washington State University in Pullman. 🍷

Farm workers and supporters -- 2,000 strong -- marched for better wages and working conditions in Washington's Yakima Valley.



The Poisons in Our Food



Dr. Marion Moses

Virtually all of the American people are exposed to pesticides in their food.

Pesticides are so extensively used in agriculture that contamination of fruits, vegetables and other foods is very widespread. Most pesticides used on food crops are either known or suspected to cause cancer or birth defects in animals or have not been adequately tested for their toxic potential. Since everyone must eat, there is involuntary exposure of the entire population to potentially harmful pesticide residues. It is difficult -- and may be impossible -- for the consumer to find out what pesticide residues are in fruits, vegetables and other foods at the time of purchase.

Most people assume federal law assures safety of the food supply. On

the contrary, the laws regulating pesticides violate basic public health principles by allowing the entire population to be exposed to potentially harmful pesticide residues. A complex, and basically flawed, system is used by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to determine how much pesticide residue will be allowed on agricultural products at the time of sale to the consumer. This amount of residue allowed is called a *tolerance*. Tolerances are considered to be "safe" and are supposedly determined through the use of scientific methods.

A very good example of the failure to protect the public can be illustrated by the case of the widely used fungicide, Captan. The tolerance for Captan on grapes is 50 parts per

million (ppm). This means that 50 milligrams of Captan is allowed in one kilogram (2.2 pounds) of grapes. If the grapes are tested and the amount of residue of Captan found is less than

...the laws regulating pesticides violate basic public health principles by allowing the entire population to be exposed to potentially harmful pesticide residues.

50 ppm, then the residues are said to be "below tolerance" and therefore legal. Being legal and being safe are two entirely different concepts, and just because the residues are legal does *not* mean they are safe. If the pesticide is a carcinogen, as is Captan, then there is no such thing as a safe level of exposure. Any exposure to a carcinogen means that the risk of cancer is greater than if the individual had not been exposed.

In the tolerance-setting process, the EPA ignores the fact of exposures to multiple pesticides on the same and other products. Through synergism or other mechanisms, the risk to health from such multiple exposures may be even greater. The EPA also ignores so-called "inert" ingredients in the tolerance-setting process. These inert ingredients may be equally toxic or even more hazardous than the pesticide

itself and can comprise as much as 90% or more of a particular pesticide formulation.

Tolerances are set based on data supplied by the manufacturer of the pesticide. For the most part, the public has no access to these data because they are considered to be trade secrets. Also, much of the information submitted to the EPA has been found to be fraudulent, inadequate, or incomplete. Yet the EPA does absolutely nothing about the tolerance levels under these circumstances.

Furthermore, even when pesticides have been banned, their tolerances may not be revoked. For example, the following banned carcinogenic pesticides have the maximum permitted residues or tolerances on grapes: Aldrin, .1 ppm; Chlordane, .3 ppm; DDT, 7 ppm; Dieldrin, .1 ppm; Lead arsenate, 7 ppm; and Toxaphene, 1 ppm.

The final irony in the sorry state of pesticide regulation is that the EPA has turned enforcement of pesticide regulations over to the agricultural industry. In no other area of worker

...just because the residues are legal does NOT mean they are safe.

and consumer protection and safety does the industry being regulated so dominate and control the regulatory process to the detriment of the public health. ❖

CONVENTION



UFW President Cesar Chavez greets Texas Supreme Court Justice Raul Gonzalez at convention. Applauding at right is UFW Texas State Director Rebecca Flores Harrington.

Texas UFW Celebrates 20th Anniversary

Texas farm workers gathered in McAllen on Sunday, March 9, to commemorate 20 years of struggle, success, and hope. UFW members were joined by numerous religious, labor, and political supporters in their resolve to boycott California non-union table grapes.

UFW President Cesar Chavez presided at the convention and reported on the current state of the union. Speaking of the UFW's international boycott of table grapes sprayed with deadly pesticides, Chavez said he expects even more support from consumers now than in the 1960s. "There is an overwhelming recognition that the issue of pesticide residues has had an enormous impact on consumers," he said. "That's why we're getting so much support."

Joining Chavez and the farm workers in their celebration and boycott were: Texas Supreme Court Justice Raul Gonzalez; State Treasurer Ann Richards; State Senators Hector Uribe and Oscar Mauzy; and State Representatives Alejandro Moreno, Juan Hinojosa, Tony Garcia, and Rene

Oliviera.

Bishop John Joseph Fitzpatrick of Brownsville and the Brownsville Diocesan Pastoral Council were among a large contingent of religious supporters who attended the convention.

Convention participants were told of the UFW's beginnings in Texas in 1966, when melon pickers struck the La Casita Farms. Some of the former strikers were recognized and applauded for enduring the brutality of those early years.

Conventioneers also heard about the many triumphs the farm workers have enjoyed in the past 20 years, such as the May 1974 Texas Supreme Court ruling that Texas Rangers could never again interfere with the farm workers' right to strike.

Looking to the future, farm workers resolved to lobby for more jobs and to raise the Texas minimum wage (currently \$1.40 an hour) to the federal standard of \$3.35 an hour.

The convention closed with resounding responses to "Viva la Causa" and the call to "Boycott Grapes!" 🍇

BOYCOTT



Paul Kerchum, leader of supporters of table grape boycott, joins Portland store owners in dumping grapes they will no longer sell until the boycott is ended.

Portland Grocers Dump Grapes

Ever since a group of American patriots dumped tea into Massachusetts Bay, consumer activism has been one of the means to reach legitimate political goals in this country. It is an entirely democratic way to achieve justice.

UFW boycotts are a significant part of this long-standing tradition and have always caught the spirit of supporters throughout the country.

That spirit was again demonstrated in early March when a group of grocers in Portland, Oregon called the boycott office at the United Farm Workers headquarters in La Paz and said they would no longer purchase and sell California non-union grapes.

On March 13, representatives from Food Front, Ross Island, and Peoples Food Co-op groceries gathered in front of one of the stores and publicly dumped the pesticide-tainted grapes. With them was Paul Kerchum, a member of a local group of concerned citizens called New Clear News.

Kerchum helped the grocers organize the event. He said later that it hadn't taken much effort to translate interest into action. "All the stores were really supportive," he said. "They wanted to help educate Portland citizens about the pesticides that endanger both workers and consumers."

Arturo Rodriguez, UFW boycott director said, "We are thankful for the concerned citizens of Portland. The grocer action has reminded us that many Americans share our own commitment to justice in the marketplace."

Rodriguez said the nice thing about a boycott like the current UFW table grape boycott and consumerism in general is that virtually everyone can participate in the process of real and significant change.

"We are grateful that Americans have always become united at the market whenever a product has posed a threat to farm workers or to the general public," Rodriguez said. 🍇

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**Adrian, also a
McFarland cancer
victim, says goodbye
to his cousin,
Frankie Gonzalez
(pages 8-9).**