

# POISON LETTUCE

March 3, 1973

## The PRODUCE NEWS

### FDA Confirms that Contaminated Lettuce Was Shipped from Calif.

LOS ANGELES—Cesar Chavez' claim that poisoned lettuce from the Imperial Valley had been shipped out across the country took on new credence last week with the disclosure by the U. S. Food & Drug Administration that three shipments of lettuce contaminated with a pesticide in the nerve gas family apparently reached East Coast consumers before the Federal agency could destroy the lettuce.

The agency also said a fourth lot had been discovered but before it was seized, it was shipped to parts unknown. John R. Weatherwax, acting FDA director here, said the lettuce was tainted with residues of Monitor 4, a new pesticide produced by the Chevron Chemical Co.

Weatherwax said the shipments went to Buffalo and Rochester, N.Y., and Chelsea, Mass. in mid-January. Shipments usually contain several hundred cases, he said.

A fourth lot had been discovered to be contaminated while still in the field in the Imperial Valley, he said, but by the time the agency had made its tests on the shipments, there was "none available for seizure."

#### 8,000 Cases Destroyed

The contamination was first observed in the Imperial Valley last December. Since then, the California Dept of Agriculture says, it has destroyed more than 8,000 cases of lettuce.

The California Dept of Agriculture also announced that it had allowed lettuce from some contaminated shipments to be passed on to consumers after being "reconditioned." According to a department pesticide specialist, that means the lettuce had been rendered safe by removing the outer wrapper leaves. He said that later testing proved that the lettuce was safe after "reconditioning."

In large doses, the chemical causes dizziness, coma and eventually death. In smaller doses Monitor 4 produces flu-like symptoms, a spokesman said.

The FDA considers an acceptable residue of Monitor 4 to be one part per million. Weatherwax said residues on the contaminated shipments were: Rochester, 6.5 parts per million; Buffalo, 4.7 parts; Chelsea, 3.6 parts, and on the Imperial Valley lot, 2.5 parts.

Misuse of pesticides injures both farm workers and consumers.

The United Farm Workers are trying to win union contracts with strong health and safety provisions, including a ban on some of the most dangerous chemicals.

FARM WORKERS AND CONSUMERS CAN GET PROTECTION AND JUSTICE IF YOU:

1. Ask your grocer to remove non-UFW lettuce from his shelves
2. Help us spread the word on the Lettuce Boycott



Only a small part of the lettuce industry has signed contracts with UFW. Lettuce from these companies is identified by this union label. If you don't see this label on the cellophane wrapper, don't buy the lettuce.

TO AMERICA'S LETTUCE WORKERS:

\_\_\_ I support your non-violent struggle for justice. I pledge not to buy or eat iceberg (head) lettuce. I will tell my family and friends about the lettuce boycott.

\_\_\_ Please send me \_\_\_ leaflets for me to distribute.

\_\_\_ Contact me to arrange a film or speaker at my church, school, or organization.

\_\_\_ I enclose a donation.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_



UNITED FARM WORKERS  
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## BOYCOTT LETTUCE