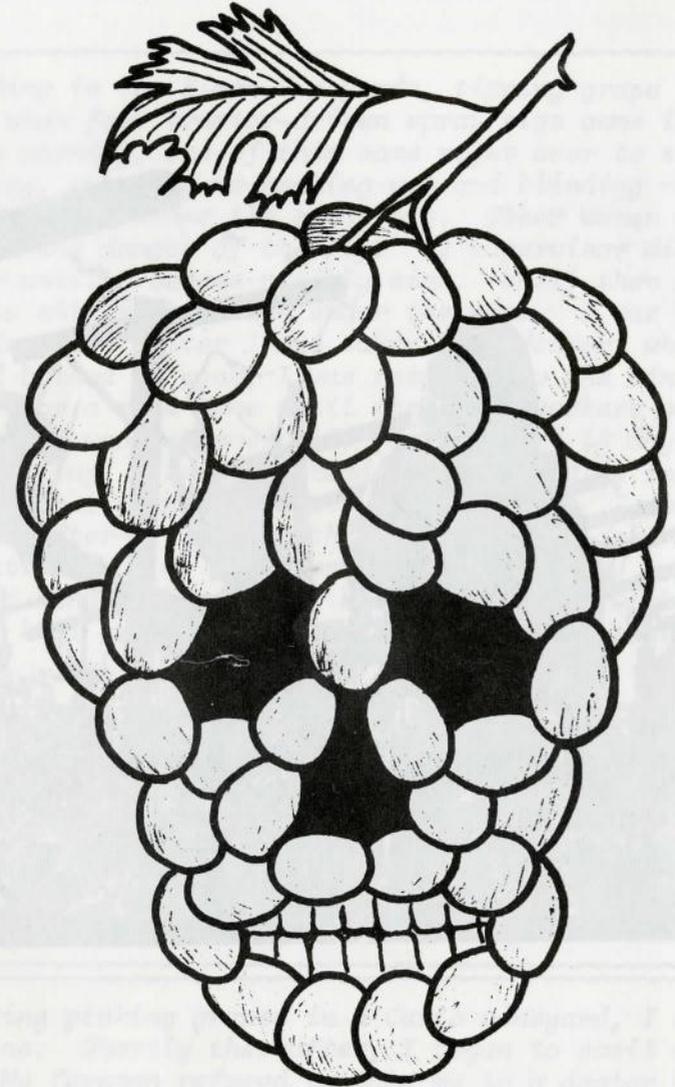


PESTICIDES



25¢

THE POISONS WE EAT

United Farm Workers Organizing
Committee, AFL-CIO
1300 S. Wabash Ave.
Chicago, Ill. 60605



right, 1969 by
ed Farm Workers Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO
Box 130, Delano, California 93215

**"WE WILL NO LONGER TOLERATE
THE SYSTEMATIC POISONING OF OUR PEOPLE"**

Cesar Chavez

I was working in the Elmco Vineyards, tipping grape bunches in May, 1969, when four tractor-driven spray rigs came into the field. Without any warning, one of them came right over to the spot where I was working, spraying me soaking wet and blinding me to the point that I almost fell under the spray rig. Other women workers dragged me away from the danger of the rig. My supervisor did not take me to a doctor until I became visibly sick. Until then I had merely been told to sit in the shade under the vine. I was vomiting a great deal by this time. After I was taken to a doctor, who gave me an injection and bathed my eyes, I was returned to the vineyards where I had to wait for a ride home until the other workers were finished for the day. I was extremely ill for the next 10 days with vomiting, nausea, trembling, dizziness, headache, difficulty in breathing, tightness of chest, and difficulty in sleeping. I am still suffering from the after-effects of this illness. To date I have received no compensation from my employer. When I asked my supervisor and foreman what kind of chemical I had been sprayed with, they claimed they didn't know and said it was not their fault that I had been sprayed.

About a month ago while I was working in Tulare County, the grower's tractor-driven spray rigs sprayed my car and the cars of other workers which were parked along the road nearby. My young child was in the car asleep, along with food for lunch for the entire family. The child was covered by a blanket, but her bottle was covered with spray. The entire car was white with the chemical spray.

While working picking grapes in a Caric vineyard, I ate some grapes from the vine. Shortly thereafter, I began to vomit and bleed from the nose. My foreman refused to take me to a doctor until other workers finally convinced him to do so. The doctor who treated me said my illness was due to the grapes and the chemicals on them.

PESTICIDES

THE POISONS WE EAT

Why We Are Concerned

The issues of health and safety of farm workers, contamination of our environment, and long-range dangers of pesticides to consumer health are of major concern to the United Farm Workers Organising Committee, AFL-CIO.

In California the agricultural industry experiences the highest occupational disease rate — over 50% higher than the second place industry. Growers consistently use the wrong kinds of economic poisons in the wrong amounts in the wrong places in reckless disregard of the health of their workers in order to maximize profits. Advancing technological changes in agriculture have left the industry far behind in dealing with the occupational hazards of workers which arise from the use of economic poisons.

850 - 1,000 deaths and 80,000 - 90,000 injuries are caused by pesticides every year in the U.S., a Food and Drug Administration official testified before the Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Labor.

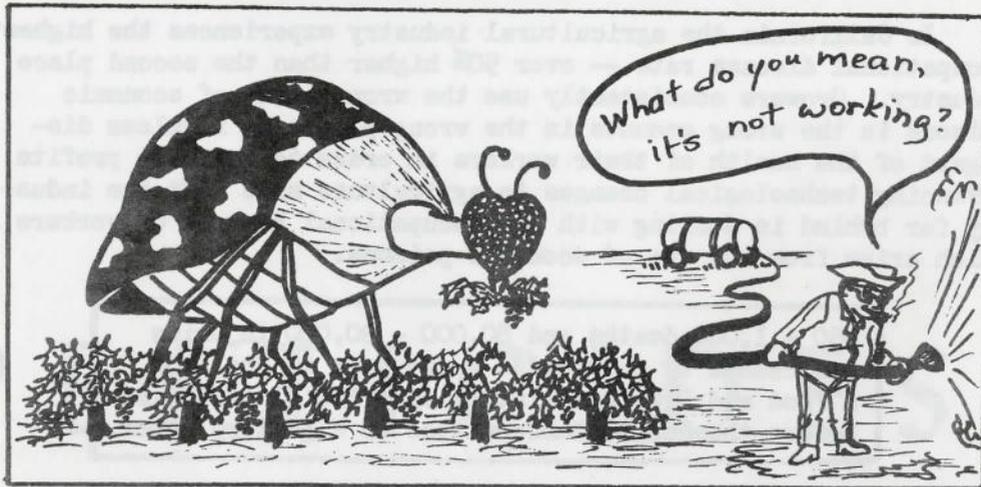
THESE ARE THE SAME CHEMICAL POISONS WHICH ARE USED ON GRAPES.

During the summer of 1968, many grape workers came to UFWOC's offices with symptoms of pesticide poisoning. Alarmed by dangers to workers and consumers, the Union began an investigation about economic poisons. It sought communication with the table grape industry and the pesticide companies in an effort to solve the problems resulting from pesticide misuse. Both industries continually refused to discuss the issue.

When the international boycott of table grapes finally brought the growers to the negotiating table, negotiations collapsed because of the growers' unwillingness to deal with the problem of economic poisons. Thus the Union has no choice but to seek the help of the American people through an intensification of the boycott until the table grape growers recognize their responsibility to both workers and consumers.

What Are Pesticides?

Pesticides are chemical dusts and liquid sprays which are used on crops to kill insects and other pests. The quantity of these economic poisons applied to crops is steadily increasing. As insects develop immunity, greater amounts or more powerful poisons are used to control them.



Since agricultural chemicals eradicate beneficial as well as harmful insects, the natural balance is destroyed, and agribusiness relies more and more on poisons. This massive use of pesticides, scientific studies show, contaminates our food, destroys our wildlife, and brings immeasurable harm to man and his environment.

The chemical poisons most widely used on grapes fall into two categories:

CHLORINATED HYDROCARBONS

Chlorinated hydrocarbons are "hard" pesticides or long-life poisons which do not break down for extremely long periods and are stored in the fatty tissues. The danger in this persistence is becoming apparent. Sweden has banned use of DDT, the best known of the chlorinated hydrocarbons, as have Michigan and Arizona. Besides DDT, other chlorinated hydrocarbons used by table grape growers include Aldrin, Dieldrin, Endrin, Kelthane, and Thiodan.

ORGANO PHOSPHATES

Organo phosphates are nerve gasses developed by the Nazis during World War II and currently used as pesticides. They short circuit the nerve processes of insects, animals, and men. While organo phosphates break down more rapidly than the chlorinated hydrocarbons, they are extremely toxic. A drop or two of Parathion, used widely by table grape growers, is fatal to a human being. Other organo phosphate poisons are Ethion, Malathion, Methyl Parathion, Phosdrin, and TEPP.

Pesticides and Farm Workers

Sixteen grape workers were hospitalized for Parathion poisoning several years ago. They had been sent into a field where Parathion residue still remained a full 33 days after it had been sprayed. The law claims that fields are safe 14 days after spraying. (Testimony of Allen Lemmon, Assistant Director of the California State Department of Agriculture, January 1969)

Agricultural workers are subjected to painful injury, permanent damage to health, and even death because of the extent and the negligence with which poisons are used. Growers do not provide farm workers with the essential safety equipment or the necessary training for work with pesticides.

Since directions and labels on pesticide cans are printed in English, many Spanish-speaking farm workers are unable to read them, unable to find specific first aid instruction. Workers are often sprayed as they work in the fields.



Forced to work in extremely hazardous conditions, farm workers suffer

from rashes, cramps, chest pains, diarrhea, nausea, impairment of vision, convulsions, and other symptoms of poisoning. Dr. Irma West of the California Department of Public Health has documented the many needless cases of pesticide poisoning among workers. She reports that the agricultural industry in California has the highest occupational disease rate. It is three times as high as the average rate of all industries. Farm workers have up to three times as much DDT stored in their body tissue as other citizens, according to Rachel Carson in Silent Spring.



Over 50 million pounds of Parathion are spread unchecked on fields and gardens in the U.S., Dr. Jerome Gordon testified before the Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Labor. "The result is that uncounted thousands of the nation's migrant farm workers, farmers, and suburban homeowners have been fatally overcome or seriously crippled."

Pesticide poisoning victimizes children as well. The largest number of children's deaths from poisoning result from contact with pesticides: ingestion of something with residue, direct exposure, or contact with clothing or other articles contaminated by agricultural poisons. Gross negligence with pesticide equipment and materials is common.

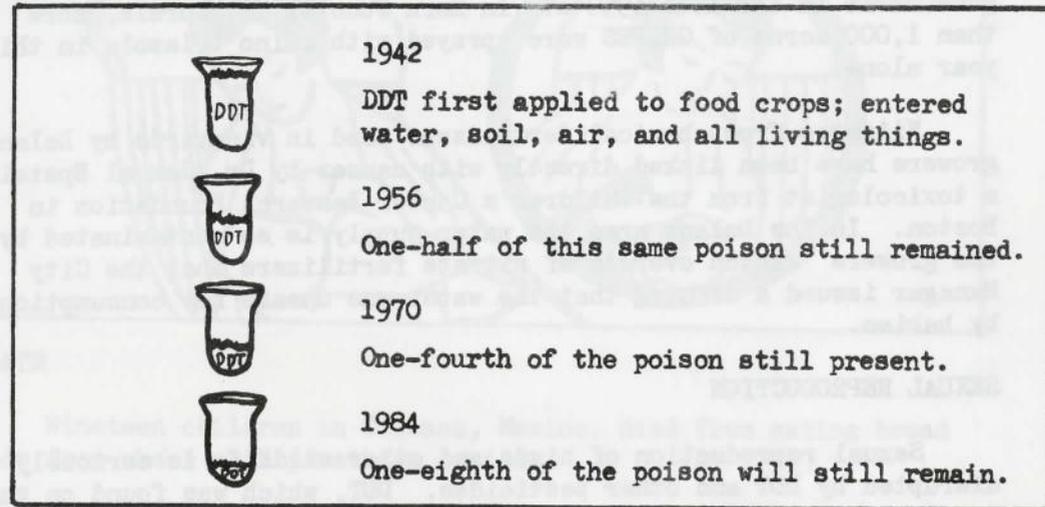
A three-year-old Mexican-American girl and her brother were playing near a spray rig where their mother was working. The boy took the cap off a gallon can of TEPP; his sister put her finger in the can and then in her mouth. She lost consciousness and died twenty minutes later.

(Dr. Irma West)

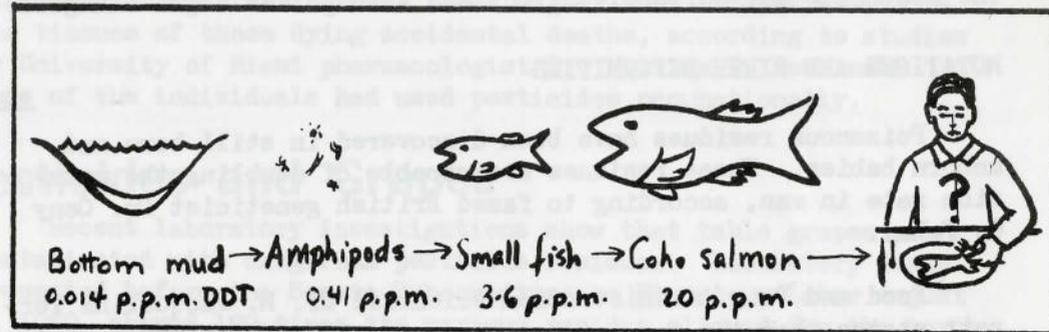
Pesticides and Consumers

We all carry significant concentrations of DDT and other chemical residues in our tissues. We continue to be the guinea pigs in a vast poison experiment motivated by profit. Scientists are becoming gravely concerned as research reveals the dangers to consumers of economic poisons.

Since the mid 1940's, when large scale use of the "hard" pesticides began, "something of the order of a million metric tons of DDT have been distributed on the Earth," according to Dr. Göran Löfroth, Institute of Biochemistry, Stockholm, Sweden. Because of its persistence, much of this poison remains in the environment and in the tissues of living things.



The concentration of poison increases on the way up the natural food chain.



When the accumulated poison reaches high proportions, damage to the organism results.

Pesticide residues present serious hazards to consumers. The residues of persistent pesticides do not deteriorate or disappear from our food. Neither washing nor cooking destroys them. They are taken into our bodies and stored in our fatty tissue. Evidence of the danger to man continues to mount:

CANCER

A National Cancer Institute study recently disclosed a link between pesticides and cancer.

Cancer-causing amino triazole is still in use, although cranberries contaminated with its residue were confiscated by the U.S. government in the late 1950's. In Kern County, California, more than 1,000 acres of GRAPES were sprayed with amino triazole in this year alone.

Nitrates from chemical fertilizers used in vineyards by Delano growers have been linked directly with cancer by Dr. Samuel Epstein, a toxicologist from the Children's Cancer Research Foundation in Boston. In the Delano area the water supply is so contaminated by the growers' wanton overuse of nitrate fertilizers that the City Manager issued a warning that the water was unsafe for consumption by babies.

SEXUAL REPRODUCTION

Sexual reproduction of birds and other wildlife is seriously disrupted by DDT and other pesticides. DDT, which was found on this year's grape crop, has been termed a "peril to the sex organs" by biochemical pharmacologist Dr. Richard M. Welch, who maintains that the pesticide may seriously affect man through sex organ changes.

MUTATIONS AND BIRTH DEFORMITIES

Poisonous residues have been discovered in still born and unborn babies. These residues are capable of doubling the mutation rate in man, according to famed British geneticist Dr. Osny G. Fahmy.

Food and Drug Administration scientist Dr. M. Jacqueline Verrett states that the fungicide captan, widely used on table grapes, causes a high rate of birth deformities: Its chemical structure is "similar to that of thalidomide, the sedative that resulted in the birth of thousands of deformed babies a few years ago."

MOTHERS' MILK

Mothers' milk is laced with about four times more DDT pesticide than is permitted in milk sold to the public, testified con-

servationist leader David Brower, who said, "Some wit even suggested that if it were packaged in some other container, we wouldn't allow it across state lines."



DEATH

Nineteen children in Tijuana, Mexico, died from eating bread made from wheat with parathion residue.

Victims of carcinoma, leukemia, hypertension, arteriosclerosis, and portal cirrhosis of the liver had concentrations of DDT and other pesticides two to three times higher than concentrations in the tissues of those dying accidental deaths, according to studies by University of Miami pharmacologist Dr. William B. Deichmann. None of the individuals had used pesticides occupationally.

Pesticides and Grapes

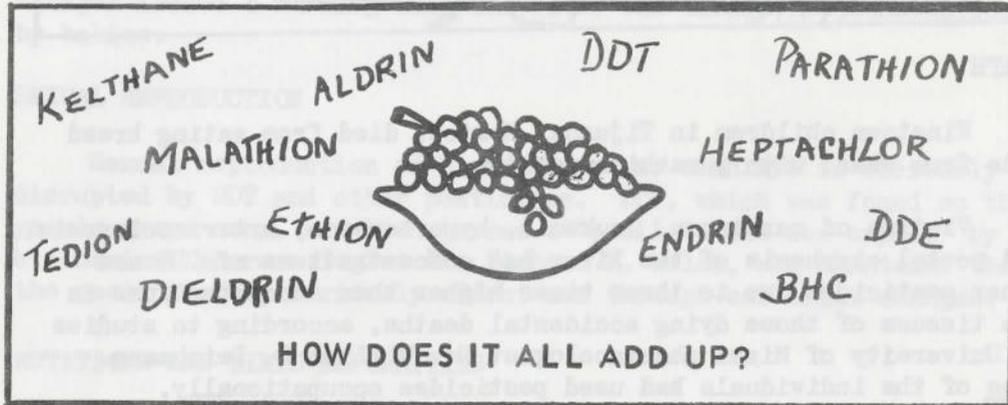
Recent laboratory investigations show that table grapes are contaminated with dangerous pesticide residues. Laboratory tests presented before the Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Labor August 1, 1969, showed 180 times the maximum residue allowed for the toxic poison Aldrin on grapes purchased from a Safeway Store in Washington, D.C.

U.S. Senator George Murphy has introduced before Congress laboratory tests which showed the following poisonous residues on this year's grape crop: Aldrin, DDT, DDE, DDD, Dieldrin, Endrin, Parathion, Sulphur, Kelthane, and Toxaphene.
(Congressional Record, August 12, 1969)

In deference to powerful chemical company and agribusiness lobbies and to existing conditions of contamination, federal agencies set so-called "safe" limits of poisonous residue which remains on our food. But toxic chemicals interact with one another, and their effects are cumulative.

"Because these small amounts of pesticides are cumulatively stored and only slowly excreted, the threat of chronic poisoning and degenerative changes of the liver and other organs is very real." (Silent Spring) The dangerous cumulative effects of these pesticide residues were affirmed by Dr. Osny G. Fahmy. "As with radiation," he warned, "a series of small doses is as dangerous as one large dose."

Delano area grapes, tested this summer, bore these residues:



In spite of laboratory findings and alarming medical evidence, grapes containing the residues of economic poisons are allowed to be marketed.

Pesticides and the Failure of Agencies and Regulations

Laws claiming to protect consumers from pesticide dangers are few and weak. According to their own admission, agencies trusted with enforcing these laws are unable to shield us from harmful poisonous residues on our food.

"The American public's principal consumer protection is provided by the Food and Drug Administration, and we are currently not equipped to cope with the challenge," confessed top FDA officials in a confidential report. The report added, "The FDA is in a position of re-

and knowledge for adequate action."

Another danger to the consumer is that the FDA can seize only contaminated products which are destined for interstate commerce. The power over products within the state rests with the various state agencies. Charles Johnson, a Department of Health, Education, and Welfare administrator, maintains that "most states are not doing enough to protect their consumers against ingesting toxic pesticide residues on food."

While the FDA can set tolerances, or residue limits, on toxic pesticides, it is powerless to prevent the use even of a known cancer-producing poison. This power rests with the industry-controlled Department of Agriculture. This Department, charged with registering pesticides for agricultural use, has also abdicated its responsibility to the American public. The Director of the Pesticide Registration Division, Harry W. Hays, has stated that rather than conduct its own studies, "the Department takes the word of the chemical industry if it shows there is no residue from chemicals on farm or field crop

The University of California, whose research is financed by the chemical and agricultural industries and whose decisions are often shadowed by political influence, has released a list of 50 food crops on which it recommends DDT should not be used. The list does not include cotton and grapes. This recommendation is consistent with the California government's continued opposition to the farm workers' struggle and the boycott of table grapes.



Grape Industry: What Are They Hiding?

While UFWOC attempted several times to discuss the issue of pesticides with the table grape industry, no progress has been made. Letters requesting meetings have been either ignored or refused. Because of the Union's desire to assure proper medical treatment for poisoned workers, the UFWOC attorney asked to see public records concerning pesticide applications. He was refused by the Kern County Commissioner of Agriculture, and a court case ensued. The testimony during the case showed that the industry was more concerned with profit than with the workers' welfare.

In January, 1969, Cesar Chavez wrote a letter to the table grape industry, saying: "If we cannot get together on other problems we will be damned — and we should be — if we permit human beings to sustain permanent damage to their health from economic poisons...We are willing to meet with your representatives on the sole issue of pesticides, even if you are not prepared to begin full scale collective bargaining at present." No reply was received.

Finally in June, 1969, the international boycott of table grapes was so effective that ten growers came to the negotiating table. The negotiations failed over the pesticide issue. The growers avoided confronting the problems and refused to discuss solutions. They wanted no contractual protections against the misuse of economic poisons. They wished to prevent the Union from embarking "upon any program regarding pesticides that can in any way be detrimental or harmful to the industry in which the employer belongs."

The table grape growers wanted to muzzle the Union. They hoped to prevent UFWOC from informing workers and the public about the dangers of pesticides.

By contrast the Union sought to win from table grape growers the same kind of health and safety protections for workers and consumers which now exist in UFWOC's most recently negotiated wine grape contract. This contract contains extensive provisions protecting workers and consumers from the hazards of economic poisons. The contract completely eliminates use of DDT and other "hard" pesticides. It assures safe working conditions, provides protective

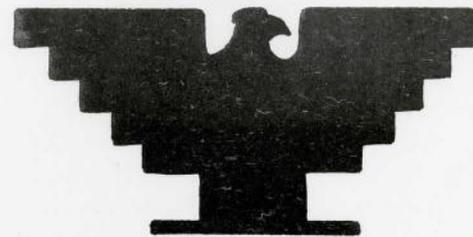
clothing and equipment for workers, and establishes a Health and Safety Committee, composed of farm worker and company representatives

Support for the Grape Boycott is also Support for the Safe Use of Pesticides

It is not surprising that the table grape industry continues to sell contaminated grapes. Growers have shown their irresponsibility in various ways throughout the farm workers' four year struggle to unionize the industry. They have persistently illegally recruited workers from Mexico to break the strikes of American residents. They have used illegal wetback labor extensively. They have repeatedly violated health and sanitation codes, child labor laws, and industrial safety orders relating to safe use of pesticides. Motivated by profit, they continue to subject our people to systematic poisoning.

Had the table grape industry discussed the problem of economic poisons with the farm workers and worked out a comprehensive Health and Safety agreement, the pesticide issue could have been well on its way to solution. However, the growers' intransigence prevented this. Therefore we must now take our case to the public. Only by farm workers and consumers joining together can we protect ourselves from the misuse of pesticides. Only with Union contracts can our welfare be assured.

Together we must intensify the grape boycott until the table grape growers realize their responsibility to protect the health of farm workers and consumers alike.



DON'T EAT GRAPES!

United Farm Workers Organizing Committee, Box 130, Delano, California