

President's Newsletter



Vol. 1 No. 41
August 14, 1978

Office of the President
United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO
La Paz, Keene, California 93531



PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Program Underway to Create Uniform Rules and By-Laws

At the April, 1978 National Executive Board Meeting the Union leadership discussed a plan for developing Uniform Rules and By-laws which will operate on the ranch community level in accordance with the UFW Constitution.

The Uniform Rules and By-laws will be the official policies and procedures ranch committees and ranch communities use to govern the affairs of the Union. The first step in developing these laws is to meet soon with the ranch leadership to ask for their ideas and contributions. Such meetings will be very similar to the sessions conducted throughout the state this summer to gather information to help put together the Juan de la Cruz Pension Fund program.

Because Uniform Rules and By-laws really involve how the Union will be governed at the local level and because our Union is deeply committed to democratic trade unionism in agriculture, the presentation on the Rules and By-laws will summarize the history and concepts of democracy from ancient times to the present. It will trace the evolution of democratic principles from the time of *Moses* more than 3,400 years ago and explain the contributions made by many people through the ages to freedom and democracy. We will also examine the history of the labor movement in the U.S. and other nations and the major principles of the Union's own Constitution.

This historical presentation will use the same slide show format that was used for the pension program. Brother *Frank Ortiz* of the Contract Administration Department will lead and conduct the meetings. Brother *Marc Grossman*, my assistant, is helping research and prepare the presentation.

The development and adoption by the membership of the Uniform Rules and By-laws is very important to the continued growth of the Union. For without democratic rules and procedures to govern the operation of the Union at the ranch level, we can never expect to achieve the progress that we seek.

H-2 Workers Permitted in Western State

For the first time in 14 years, the U.S. Department of Labor has permitted growers in a western state to import foreign farm workers under the government's H-2 program.

On August 1, the Department of Labor's Seattle regional office admitted it had granted certification for 50 temporary foreign workers to labor in the pear harvest near Metford, Oregon from August 21 to October 7. Under the H-2 program, the Labor Department may allow growers to import workers from outside the country if they can prove there are not enough local workers to supply them with needed labor.

In an August 2 letter to Labor Secretary *Ray Marshall* we expressed our alarm and distress at this new development. It has been our experience, we told the secretary, that the H-2 program has been used as a trick by the growers who prefer to hire temporary foreign workers at the expense of resident farm workers. In nearly every case where H-2 workers have been imported, the program has resulted in flagrant exploitation of farm workers from both sides of the border: imported farm workers endure substandard wages and miserable living and working conditions, and local workers are denied jobs and a livelihood.

In June, for the second time in a year, growers in Presidio, Texas, succeeded in obtaining H-2 workers to pick local melon and onion crops. Some of these workers struck a melon ranch when the grower refused to provide promised wages and conditions (see Newsletter, July 10, 1978).

In our letter, we told Secretary *Marshall* that we see the latest action in Oregon as a serious encroachment on the job opportunities of our people on the Pacific coast. We fear it is only the start of a much more widespread effort by growers who see the H-2 program as an ideal way of solving their labor problems with an easily exploitable workforce of imported workers.

We view the steady expansion of the program under the Carter Administration as an attack on our Union. The Department of Labor action in Oregon, we believe, is a new bracero program in disguise.

On August 4 we received a report that

the Oregon growers had withdrawn their request for imported H-2 workers.

Pope Paul was Friend of the Farmworkers

The farm workers joined hundreds of millions of Christians and non-Christians around the world in mourning the death of *Pope Paul* on August 6.

Pope Paul was a true man of peace who led the church during a very difficult time. But he was also a man of compassion and love who lent his support and the support of the church to the cause of labor in general and to our farm workers' movement in particular.

We met His Holiness in 1974, during a whirlwind 16 nation tour of Europe to develop support for the boycotts of grapes and lettuce. On September 25, 1974, we were granted a private audience with *Pope Paul* at the Vatican in Rome, where he read an official statement of greeting to the farm workers:

"Our Welcome goes this morning to *Cesar Chavez* whom we are happy to receive as a loyal son of the Catholic Church and as a distinguished leader and representative of the Mexican American community in the United States.

"We wish to tell you of the real joy that is ours to be informed of the fidelity of the people of your culture and origin, our beloved sons and daughters, to the Church of Christ and to know of their generous endeavor to foster adherence to their glorious Catholic Spirit.

"In the spirit of our own predecessors in this See of Peter we renew the full measure of our solicitude for the human and Christian condition of labor and for the genuine good of all those who lend support to this lofty vocation...

"Our special affectionate greetings go to the Mexican American community in the United States..."

Pope Paul will be mourned by the poor of many nations. His loss is particularly felt by the farm workers and by all those who suffer poverty and injustice.

ORGANIZING

Three Election Victories

On August 2, the Union won three elections, one at Mayfair Packing Company in Poplar, one at Frank Manquero Packing in Fresno County and another at Arrow Lettuce Company in Salinas.

In an effort to get workers at Mayfair Packing to vote for no union, the company offered the workers medical and vacation benefits, but the workers, most of whom are Oklahomans, told the company that its offer came "too late." The workers at Mayfair Packing voted UFW-54, no union-32, challenged-14.

Credit for this victory goes to organiz-

ing committee members *Freddie Gomez, Manuel Antonio Venegas, Benjamin Taylor, Merced Mesa, Victor Manuel Renteria, Miguel Balderas, Alvin Hunt, Charles Crowder, Lidia Martinez, Leslie Damron, and C.W. McGuire*. The committee was assisted by UFW organizers Brothers *Ben Maddock, Humberto Gomez* and the Delano Field Office. Recognition should also go to *Cleo Gomez and Pablo Espinoza*, members of the ranch community who visited and encouraged the workers to vote.

Mayfair Packing employs about 150 workers at peak season, which lasts approximately the whole year. These workers harvest plums, prunes, grapes and walnuts, in addition to other fruits and grains.

At Frank Manquero Packing, which has its ranches in Tulare and Fresno Counties, the workers voted UFW-89, no union-23, and challenged-8. This company also employs about 150 workers for its year round peak season. The main crops are pole tomatoes, plums, nectarines and oranges.

The election at Frank Manquero Packing was organized by workers on the organizing committee-*Maria Castillo, Santos Encina, Elijo Guillen, Ramon Longoria, Ismael Mesa, and Jesus Morales*. These workers were assisted by *Mr. and Mrs. Garza*, from the Town Committee and by UFW organizer *Pat Sigala*.

Our third victory of the day took place at Arrow Lettuce Company in Salinas when workers there voted UFW-110, no union-44, challenged-0. The company employs approximately 175 workers during its peak season to harvest cauliflower and broccoli.

Congratulations to the members of the organizing committees at Arrow Lettuce and to UFW organizer *Saul Martinez*, who assisted them. The members of the committee are *Bertha Batres, Javier Contreras, Mayolo Cruz, Amelia Dentendicio, Sergio Garcia, Luis C. Gonzalez, Lionel Guzman, Juana Jimenez, Hernando Perez, Lino M. Perez, Jose Luis Rubio, Manuel Sanchez, Manuel Santillan, Manuel Si-queirol and Loretto Vazquez*.

AGRICULTURAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

Decisions

Kawano Brothers (San Luis Rey)

Brother *Felix Hernandez*, a former employee of Kawano Brothers' ranch in San Luis Rey, has been awarded \$6,318.52 for loss of wages. Brother *Hernandez* was fired from his job at Kawano Brothers for union organizing right before an election was held there in September, 1975. The Union won that election by an almost two to one majority.

Brother *Hernandez* was paid the \$6,318.52 on May 24, 1978. He is awaiting another hearing to see if he will be re-instated at his old job. Brother *Hernandez* was assisted in this case by Brother *Javier Acosta*, UFW staff.

In another similar case, Brother *Jose Sandoval* was fired in March 1978 for union organizing before an election at International Decorative in Escondido. The UFW won that election on April 10, 1978. A few months later, Brother *Sandoval* was awarded \$500.00 for his loss of wages during the time he was fired. The company has also offered to re-instate Brother *Sandoval* at his old job. Assisting Brother *Sandoval* in this case was Brother *Michael Heuman*.

CITIZENSHIP PARTICIPATION DEPARTMENT

State Hearings to Reconsider Poison Use

The California Food and Agriculture Agency has scheduled hearings this month on whether to issue a new regulation to once again permit the use of the fumigant DBCP in California fields.

Several years ago workers in a Manteca, California chemical plant were found to have been seriously effected by the chemical which causes sterility in men. Similar results were discovered among chemical workers on the east coast.

As a result of the sterility danger to workers posed by the chemical, the federal government banned its use.

But recently, the federal government has permitted DBCP to be used in agriculture on the theory that it is applied through the irrigation water and is so diffused that it is safe.

But there is no evidence at all on how much or how little of the chemical it takes to make men sterile. It took 20 years for scientists to find out that asbestos in factories kills people. We do not want farm workers to be used as guinea pigs.

DBCP is widely used in the roses and grapes. In most of the Health and Safety sections of our rose contracts in the Delano-McFarland area we specifically outlaw the use of banned chemicals such as DBCP.

The hearings are set for August 10 in Stockton and August 29 in Redlands. The Union's Citizenship Participation Department will be testifying in opposition to any regulation permitting the use of DBCP in California.

OFFICIAL NOTICES

Latest Elections

Mayfair Packing/Poplar/plums, prunes, grapes, walnuts, persimmons, wheat, milo, cotton, alfalfa, black-eyed peas/Aug.2/UFW-54, no union-32, challenged 14.

Frank Manquero Packing/Fresno County/pole tomatoes, plums, nectarines, oranges/Aug.2/UFW-89, no union-23, challenged-8.

Arrow Lettuce Company/Salinas/cauliflower, broccoli/Aug.2/UFW-110, no union-44, challenged-0.

Correction

Waller Flower Seeds, a company that has recently been ordered by the Agricultural Labor Relations Board to pay a "make-whole" remedy to their workers, is located in Santa Maria, not Santa Monica (see Newsletter, July 31, 1978).



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