

President's Newsletter



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



COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Contract Signed with Limoneira

A successful six week strike was ended recently when workers and company officials from the Limoneira Company signed a three year contract at a special ceremony at La Paz on August 12.

Limoneira, which employs 280 citrus workers, is the largest singly-owned citrus operation in the world. The ranch was the site of a UFW election on April 21, 1978, when workers voted overwhelmingly for the Union (see Newsletter, May 1, 1978). The Union was certified as the bargaining agent for the workers at the company on May 2 and the strike started shortly afterwards, when contract negotiations slowed down.

Throughout the strike, the workers remained strongly committed to winning a contract and received much help from other ranch communities in the Ventura County area.

At the signing ceremony we congratulated the workers and the negotiating committee for working out one of the best contracts we have in California. But we reminded them that a contract gives workers both benefits and responsibilities, and that both the company and the workers have a duty to make the contract work.

Representing the company at La Paz were Limoneira president *Jack Dickenson* and vice-president *Alfonso A. Guillin*.

The agreement provides for wages that start at \$3.34 an hour with a 5% increase that will bring the starting wage up to \$3.51. There will be another increase in July, 1979 which will raise the base rate to \$3.69 an hour. The contract also contains the Robert F. Kennedy Medical Plan, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Farmworker Fund, five paid holidays and Citizenship Participation Day Fund. The contract expires on July 31, 1981.

Congratulations to all the Limoneira workers who participated in getting this contract. Special credit should go to the members of the negotiating committee: Brothers *Jesus Lario*, *Vidal Alamillo*, *Tony Patiño*, *Rodolfo Gonzalez*, and *Natalio Alamillo*. Recognition should also go to Brother *David Burciaga*, UFW negotiator, who helped the committee negotiate the contract.

Members of the ranch committee have recently been elected and they are: Brothers *Vidal Alamillo*, president, *Jesus Larios*, secretary, *Carlos Rodriguez*, first vocal, *Rutilio Lozano*, second vocal and *Rafael Peña*, third vocal

Limoneira is the third Ventura County citrus grower to sign with the UFW since a Union organizing drive began earlier this year. We are bargaining for six other companies.

Contract Signed in Coachella

The Union recently signed a contract with E.T. Wall Company in the Coachella Valley. This company employs about 120 workers during their ten month peak season.

This company had the lowest wages in the Coachella Valley and some of the poorest working conditions, especially with the ladders that the workers used to climb into the citrus trees to pick the fruit. Many times there weren't enough ladders to go around for all the workers to do the job, and when there were, the ladders were not the size of the tree, or too dangerous to climb on.

The company also had a policy of making the workers over-fill a bin, but paying them only for a level bin. Our contract with the company states that the company must pay the worker for a level bin.

The Union had won an election at E.T. Wall in the spring of 1978, when the workers there voted UFW-25; no union-15; challenged-6. We were certified there on April 5, 1978.

The contract gives the workers such benefits as the Robert F. Kennedy Medical Plan, Martin Luther King, Jr. Farmworker Fund and Citizenship Participation Day Fund. The contract was negotiated by the workers on the negotiating committee, Brothers *Jose Torres*, *Jose Cruz Gonzalez*, *Leo Rocha* and *Santiago Orozco*. They were assisted by UFW negotiator, Sister *Ruth Shy*.

ORGANIZING

Victories in Salinas

Workers in the Salinas area won two more election victories at Hibino Farms and Huntington Farms.

Workers at Hibino Farms, which is owned by *Henry Hibino*, mayor of Salinas, voted UFW, 15; no union, 14; challenged, 4 on August 9. This elec-

tion was organized and run by the workers on the organizing committee, all of whom put a tremendous amount of time and energy into the election drive. Members of the organizing committee are Brothers *Juan Navarro*, president, *Daniel Mendez*, secretary, *Leopold Muñoz*, *Maciel Muñoz*, *Antonio Gil*, and *Alfonso Ortiz*. They were assisted by UFW organizers *Ramon Medina Medina* and *Pedro Valdez*.

At Huntington Farms the workers voted UFW, 46; no union, 14 on August 11. Huntington Farms employs close to 100 workers at peak season. The crops at this ranch are asparagus, tomatoes, and cucumbers. The workers on the organizing committee at Huntington Farms, like the workers at Hibino Farms, organized this election themselves. They are, from the thinning crew, Brothers *Enrique Esparza*, *Esteban Torres*, *Florentino Beltran* and Sisters *Erdina Beltran* and *Roselia Gonzalez*; and from the irrigation crew, Brothers *Raul Hernandez*, *Jaurio Esparza*, *Felix Hernandez* and *Jesus Ornelas*. They were assisted by Brother *Pedro Valdez* and Brother *Antonio Guevarra*, a worker from Salinas Marketing.

NATIONAL FARM WORKER SERVICE CENTER

NFWSA Receives \$804,786 Grant from Labor Dept.

On August 8 we announced that the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration and the National Farm Workers Service Center, Inc. (NFWSA) have signed a three part grant totalling \$804,786.

The grants will be administered by the Farm Worker Institute for Education and Leadership Development (FIELD), a department of NFWSA. It was signed on July 12 and took effect on August 1.

The first part of the grant deals with Apprenticeship Planning and Survey. About \$120,000 is earmarked for planning and research to create the first apprenticeship program in agriculture. The money will go to survey and analyze current jobs in the industry and survey and analyze the education and training needs of farm workers in agriculture.

This information will be used to develop programs by which skilled and semiskilled workers can upgrade their jobs. Apprenticeship has immense potential benefits to both workers and growers. Many farm labor jobs are highly skilled and require training and experience for a worker to be able to work profitably. Yet there is no system by which workers can train for higher skilled, better paying positions.

Apprenticeship offers workers a way to upgrade their jobs and obtain higher pay and promotions. It offers the growers a pool of trained, skilled workers.

The Language Training Grant will take place at the NFWSC facilities at La Paz. The grant allots \$347,529 to this activity. This program is designed to meet some of the special language problems confronting farm workers. It will consist of eight to 12 week intensive total immersion courses of about 12 students in each class. Students will speak, eat, and sleep the language they are learning. At least 75 students will be taught during the 18 month life of the grant.

A great deal of work is going into planning for the language training—seeing what will work best for farm workers—and in developing curriculum, evaluating and reevaluating progress in putting the program together and in obtaining needed equipment. At least four qualified instructors will be used.

The final section of the grant deals with Residential Skill Training and \$336,332 of the grant will support this program. Sixteen farm workers will receive training at La Paz in such areas as communication skills, print shop operations, auto-diesel mechanics, and building maintenance.

Sister *Ramona Holguin*, executive director of FIELD, will be in charge of administering the grant.

Predictably, the American Farm Bureau Federation issued outrageous press releases attacking the farm workers and the Labor Department. The Bureau charged the grant is a "swindle" of the taxpayer and accused the UFW of attempting to "trick" the public. The growers should know that the UFW has never received a cent from the taxpayers and it never will because we don't want any outside interference in the affairs of the Union. The Department of Labor grant was issued to the National Farm Worker Service Center, Inc., a separate legal entity from the UFW with its own board of directors, by-laws and staff.

The Labor Department is the workers' department in Washington D.C. This grant is an affirmation of the Department of Labor's goal and purpose of improving the lives of working men and women in America.

RFK MEDICAL PLAN

Volunteers Help Process Claims

On Saturday Aug. 5 and Monday Aug. 7, 45 volunteers from La Paz helped the RFK staff to process workers medical claims. In those two days, volunteers assisted the RFK staff in determining worker eligibility for RFK medical benefits. They also helped type checks. At the end of the two days, 3,000 checks were typed and over \$280,000 was paid out in medical benefits to workers covered under the RFK medical plan.

RFK Question

If you have any questions about the RFK Medical Plan, please send it to us at the President's Newsletter, P.O. Box 62, Keene, CA. 93531.



UFW photo

Excuse Me America—Famed Brazilian Archbishop *Dom Helder Camera* and *César Chávez* at La Paz meeting in August, 1976. Film of U.S. visit premiered at La Paz on Aug. 3.

In August, 1976, *Dom Helder* visited La Paz and presided over a Catholic mass in Delano at the Forty Acres attended by well over 1,000 farm workers. The film was sponsored by the Archdiocesan Communications Center, an office of the Catholic Church in San Francisco. Many of the scenes in the movie were filmed with *Dom Helder* and the farm workers in California.

OFFICIAL NOTICES

Dom Helder Camera Film Premieres At La Paz

"Excuse Me, America", a 45 minute color documentary about the 1976 U.S. visit of famed Brazilian Archbishop *Dom Helder Camera* was premiered at a well attended special showing before the La Paz community on August 3.

Brother *Tom Tyson*, the producer of the film, introduced the picture and presented a copy of it to the Union.

Dom Helder, Archbishop of Recife and Olinda in northeastern Brazil, is internationally known for his work among the poor and powerless in his country and his courageous opposition to the military dictatorship that rules the huge Latin American nation. He is considered one of the world's chief advocates for Third World peoples — those men, women and children who live in poor, underdeveloped nations in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

Latest Elections

Hibino Farms/Salinas/Aug. 9/UFW-15, no union-14, challenged-4.
Huntington Farms/Salinas/asparagus, tomatoes, cucumbers/Aug. 11/UFW-46, no union-14.

New Certifications

Oshita/Salinas/row crops/Aug. 2
Mike Yuosek/Salinas/row crops/Aug. 2.

New Contracts

Limoneira/Oxnard/lemons/Aug. 12.
E.T. Wall/Coachella/citrus.

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