

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

Settlement

Monterey Mushroom

The Union recently won a settlement at Monterey Mushroom when the company agreed to pay 18 workers a total of \$29,995 for wages lost during the time that the workers were fired.

The company had fired the workers for union activities last spring when the UFW participated in an election at the ranch. The UFW won that election 147 - 49. The workers have not only been reimbursed for the money they lost, but were also reinstated at their jobs in September.

The workers who were involved in the settlement are Brothers *Juventino Ruiz, Arturo Rivas Ramirez, Victor Caballero, Francisco Cruz Ramirez, Miguel Letiz, Francisco Banuelos, Fernando Ureno, Adan Mendoza, Jose Bonilla, Jose Jimenez, Pablo Mejia, Javier Lona, Mario Rubalcaba, Emilio Perez Sandoval, Pedro Cruz, David Medina Vega, Alfredo Vega, and Jorge Mendoza*. They were assisted in this case by the staff from the UFW Field Office in Watsonville.

The reimbursement checks for the 18 workers came on September 26, the same day that two ranch committee members from the Limoneira ranch in Oxnard travelled to the area to present the strikers at the Pacific Mushroom ranch with a check for their strike fund (see Newsletter, Oct. 9, 1978).

On October 15, workers at Monterey Mushroom held a barbeque picnic to celebrate the return of the 18 workers to their jobs. Another decision at Monterey Mushroom is pending, regarding the company's refusal to pay unemployment compensation to workers it fired last spring.

AGRICULTURAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

Hemet Wholesale - Hemet

A settlement was recently reached with the Hemet Wholesale Company in which the company agreed to pay a total of \$192,500 to farm workers and the UFW after a decision by an administrative law officer of the Agricultural Labor Relations Board went against the company.

Of that amount, \$129,000 will go to some 350 farm workers to reimburse them for lost wages from the period between April 22, 1976 and September, 1977, the time during which Hemet Wholesale refused to bargain in good faith with the union. The UFW will receive \$63,500 for union dues that were lost during the same period, as well as legal, negotiating and boycott expenses.

This settlement marks the end of a long struggle with the company that began with the company's refusal to bargain in good faith after the UFW won an election at the nursery in September, 1975.

We testified at an ALRB hearing held in May, 1977 that contract negotiations, which began 2 1/2 months after the election was won, had broken down in January, 1977, due to bad faith bargaining on the part of the company. Union supporters in California helped boycott Hemet Wholesale products, participating in varied activities from picketing retailers who sold Hemet Wholesale products to collecting petitions to holding a demonstration at the Ramona Pageant, Hemet's principal community festival.

This settlement is the largest settlement in the history of the Agricultural Labor Relations Board. Special credit for the settlement should go to Brother *Alberto Cota*, member of the Hemet Wholesale Ranch committee, who performed the enormous task of locating workers to testify at the hearing and also consistently pushed the ALRB for a decision. Brothers *Guillermo Bernal* and *Manuel Corrales*, also from the Hemet Wholesale ranch committee were instrumental in reaching the settlement.

AS-H-NE - Santa Maria

The Agricultural Labor Relations Board recently decided that the AS-H-NE company in Santa Maria should pay \$5,500 to brothers *Isidro Robledo* and *Rodolfo Robledo*, both of whom were fired by the company in 1975.

The company fired Brothers *Isidro* and *Rodolfo Robledo* from their jobs for union activity prior to a union election held at the nursery. After their dismissal, the *Robledos* finally had to move back to Texas to find work, since they could not find other jobs in the Santa Maria area.

Brother *Pete Cohen* from the UFW

Field Office in Santa Maria brought the *Robledos* back from Texas to testify at the ALRB hearings into their case. Brother *Isidro Robledo* was awarded \$2,915 and Brother *Rodolfo Robledo* was awarded \$2,585 for wages they had lost during the time they were fired. The company also offered to reinstate both workers at their old jobs.

John Elmore (Robert Witt) Ranch - Santa Maria

A settlement was reached in September with the John Elmore (Robert Witt) ranch in Santa Maria during ALRB hearings regarding our charges that the company had unjustly fired Brothers *Ermilo* and *Maximiliano Gallegos* while these workers were on the UFW negotiating committee.

Brothers *Ermilo* and *Maximiliano Gallegos* became members of the negotiating committee shortly after the UFW had won an election at the ranch in 1975. After they took a leave of absence, they returned to work only to find the company had refused to reinstate them to their normal jobs. The company finally agreed to pay the *Gallegoses* \$2,250 each—a total of \$4,500—for lost wages during the time that the company refused to reinstate them. The company also offered the workers full reinstatement at their old jobs.

Brother *Pete Cohen* from the Santa Maria field office assisted the *Gallegoses* in reaching this settlement.

LABOR

FLOC Leaders Visit La Paz

On Saturday, October 28, we were visited by our brothers and sisters from the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), an Ohio-based farm worker group which led a massive strike last summer in Ohio tomato fields. Visiting were Brother *Baldemar Velasquez*, president of FLOC, and strike leaders *Rachel Tobar, Fernando Cuevas, Jose Cuevas, Roberto Ornelas, Lucy Sandoval, Pedro Pedroza, Sesario Duron, Sarita Rios* and *Jean Michelle*, and FLOC photographer *John Cantor*.

On August 20, close to 700 farmworkers gathered in Leipsic, Ohio and voted to strike because tomato canneries owned by Libby's and Campbell Soup company had failed to respond to messages and meeting invitations from FLOC. A series of meetings were held over the summer to attempt to bring growers, cannery officials, and farm workers together to discuss the workers' demands for better wages, working and living conditions. These meetings took place in Fremont, Bowling Green, and Leipsic, Ohio with strong attendance by the workers but very poor attendance by the growers and cannery officials.

During the summer, the strike grew to include almost 2,000 workers. Although the harvest has come to an

end for this year, the workers' struggle continues, Brother *Velasquez* told a special meeting of the La Paz community. Brother *Velasquez* also presented a slide show about the strike to our community. Included in the show were pictures of FLOC's 100 mile march to Columbus, Ohio on Labor Day of this year.

In a telegram sent to FLOC this past summer, we said that the membership and leadership of our union stands in solidarity and support of FLOC's strike action in Ohio. "Your struggle symbolizes the determination and resolve of farm workers everywhere to be free from poverty and exploitation. The courage and sacrifices of the Ohio farm workers are a real source of inspiration to us all," we said.

RFK MEDICAL PLAN

Do I need a Green Form from my doctor for my claim?

If your doctor has an insurance form that contains the information RFK needs, that form can be used in place of the Green Form. What is especially needed is the name and birthdate of the patient, the date of medical attention, a description of the medical care provided and the cost of the medical care provided.

A receipt just showing the amount you paid the doctor that is not itemized and doesn't give the name of the patient will not be accepted.

If you have a question about the Robert F. Kennedy Medical Plan, please send it to us at the President's Newsletter, La Paz, Keene, CA. 93531.

CITIZENSHIP PARTICIPATION DEPARTMENT

Farm Workers Endorse Two More Candidates in Nov. 7 General Election Campaign

The UFW National Executive Board acted last week to endorse the reelection of California State Treasurer *Jess Unruh* and the candidacy of San Jose

Vice Mayor *Susanne Wilson* for Santa Clara County supervisor.

Unruh is running for a second term as treasurer. *Wilson*, who is running in the county's First District, is opposed by a wealthy real estate developer with ties to grower interests. The First District covers the southern part of the county and includes many farm workers.

Both *Unruh* and *Wilson* are also supported by the rest of the labor movement, including the AFL-CIO and the United Auto Workers.

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Farm Bureau Self-Interest Prompts Attacks on U.S. Aid For Apprenticeship Study

Farm Bureau criticism of a recent Labor Department grant to help begin an apprenticeship program in agriculture is prompted by their fear that growers and farm workers will work together to bring cooperation and stability to farm labor relations.

Officials of the American Farm Bureau Federation in Washington, D.C. told United Press International on October 31 that they have challenged the grant in federal court.

Last August we announced that the Department of Labor had issued a \$120,000 Apprenticeship Planning and Survey Grant to the National Farm Workers Service Center, Inc. (see Newsletter, August 21, 1978). The money will be used to survey and analyze jobs in the industry and survey the education and training needs of farm workers. This information will go to help start an apprenticeship program in agriculture—the first of its kind in the nation.

Apprenticeship promises immense benefits to both growers and farm workers. Workers can upgrade their job skills to qualify for better and higher paying jobs. Growers will be guaranteed trained and experienced workers.

Through our press secretary, Brother *Marc Grossman*, we stated that the Farm Bureau's motives for opposing the Department of Labor's grant are personal self-interest. These

Farm Bureau executives have made a career out of preventing growers and farm workers from settling their differences. If the workers and growers start working together for their mutual benefit through apprenticeship, the Farm Bureau bureaucrats will be out of a job.

OFFICIAL NOTICES

UFW First Vice President Receives Award

On October 19, UFW First Vice President *Dolores Huerta* travelled to Washington, D.C. to accept two awards from the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW).

CLUW gave out 4 awards at their first award dinner. Of the 4 awards, one was presented to Sister *Huerta* in appreciation of her dedication and commitment in organizing the unorganized. Sister *Huerta* also accepted an award certificate on behalf of the UFW. This award commended the Union for "outstanding work in promoting equality for women in the work place and in society."

CLUW was organized in the early 1970's and is composed of women from the trade union movement.

Historical Dates In November

November 4, 1966 - DiGiorgio elections at the Arvin, California ranch. Fifty-nine percent of the workers voted for a union to represent them.

November 15, 1966 - Elections were held at the Goldberg ranch in Delano. Two hundred and eighty-five voters (out of 377 ballots cast) said "yes" to the question "Do you want to be represented by the United Farm Workers Association?"

November 15, 1969 - UFWOC made a public appeal to California and Arizona grape growers to open negotiations to end the four-year grape strike.



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