

In 1970, the Occupational Health and Safety Act directed the Secretary of Labor to set standards so that "no employee will suffer material impairment to health."

But three years later, standards banning pesticides had not yet been implemented. Repeated legal challenges by fruit and vegetable growers caused the delay.

EDUCATION AND CHILD LABOR DON'T MIX

A farmer in the West looked out over his fields where 60 young children were working in the hot sun.

"It don't hurt the kids to pick a few peppers," he said. "It's against the law, I realize, but hell, they been doin' it for years."

Child labor, outlawed in industry in 1938, thrives on the farm:

- 800,000 youngsters under 16 work in our nation's fields, legally or illegally;
- 80 per cent of farm workers' children never go to high school;
- 5 per cent stop at the fifth grade.

The National Safety Council rates farm labor as the third most dangerous occupation. In a 13-state study of tractor accidents, more than 90 of the 789 fatalities were youngsters between the ages of 5 and 14.

RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT IS PART OF THE ANSWER

In 1960, the Coca-Cola Company acquired the Minute Maid citrus groves in Florida.

Ten years later, J. Paul Austin, Coca-Cola's president, told the Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Labor about the condition of Coke's 1,300 orange pickers:

"In late 1968 I began to read more and more about the crusade of Cesar Chavez in California on behalf of migrant labor. I called Mr. Smith in Houston and asked him to make certain that workers in our groves were not living in the sub-standard conditions that Mr. Chavez described for the workers in California. Mr. Smith personally visited the groves in December, 1968. He was so upset by what he saw that he came immediately to Atlanta to talk to me. He told me that many of the migrants in our groves were living in conditions that 'could not in conscience be tolerated by The Coca-Cola Company.' . . . Our first instinct was to move promptly and change the physical situation in which the migrant worker found himself trapped. We soon realized, however, that merely to provide housing and trans-

portation, without facing up to the basic human problems involved, would do little more than temporarily ease the hardship of the migratory worker."

Coca-Cola embarked on a \$2 million program to change what it called "a culture of despair and poverty, vested by generations of neglect."

Coca-Cola also signed a contract with the United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO.

RESPONSIBLE LABOR IS THE OTHER

From 1965 to 1970, the United Farm Workers of America—a predominately Mexican-American and Filipino union—conducted a strike and a consumer boycott that resulted in the signing of contracts with wine and table grape growers in California.

These contracts provided for:

- Wage increases, overtime and rest periods, paid holidays and vacations;
- Job security based on seniority through a union hiring hall;
- Jointly administered health-care benefits and protection from pesticides;
- "No strike at harvest" clauses, grievance machinery and arbitration procedures.

All but two of the contracts won by the UFWA in 1970 with California table grape growers were lost in 1973 when the growers signed with the Teamsters Union. This meant the elimination of the hiring hall and a return to the labor contractor system, which discriminates against women and older workers.

The UFWA resumed picketing and the boycott of grapes. West coast lettuce growers have refused since 1970 to recognize UFWA contracts. And the union has urged a boycott of their products since that time.

WHY A BOYCOTT?

One food industry executive said: "If people don't buy a product, we'll get the message. Until then, we carry what our customers buy."

A consumer boycott of non-UFWA grapes and lettuce is the only means this small union has to compel the growers to recognize their workers' right to have secret ballot elections to determine which union—if any—they want to represent them.

The future of the farm workers will be decided in local food stores or supermarkets. And the decision is yours to make.

"Uphold the rights of the poor." (Proverbs 31:9)

EIGHT WAYS TO HELP THE FARM WORKERS

1. Do not buy or eat California grapes or iceberg (head) lettuce until the growers recognize their workers' right to choose by secret ballot which union representation they want.
2. Raise the issue of the boycott at supermarkets, restaurants and wherever else grapes or lettuce are served or sold.
3. Help your local boycott committee or organize one of your own.
4. Arrange for talks on farm worker conditions to your organizations, churches, schools, home meetings.
5. Support legislation that affords farm workers the protections that other workers have.
6. Read articles about farm workers in newspapers, magazines and books.
7. Write letters to the editor in support of farm workers' rights.
8. For further ways to become involved contact: United Farm Workers of America, P.O. Box 62, Keene, CA 93531; or the National Farm Worker Ministry, 1411 W. Olympic Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90015.

CHURCH SUPPORT OF THE BOYCOTT

The National Council of Catholic Bishops on Nov. 13, 1973, placed the Catholic Church squarely behind the boycott efforts of the United Farm Workers of America.

In an unprecedented action, the Bishops asked 50 million church members "to support the UFW's consumer boycott of table grapes and head lettuce until such time as secret ballot elections are held."

Protestant Church leaders, acting through the National Council of Churches, endorsed the farm workers' boycott on February 28, 1974.

TO EVERYONE



A CHANCE

TO EVERYONE A CHANCE . . .
REGARDLESS OF BIRTH
A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY
— THE RIGHT TO LIVE
TO WORK, TO BE ONESELF —
THIS IS THE PROMISE
OF AMERICA.

from THOMAS WOLFE

America's 2.6 million farm workers are the lowest paid income group in the country. Many of them are migrants. They follow the crops from the Mexican border to the State of Washington, from Texas to Michigan, from Florida to New England; or they travel widely within one state. They are of all colors. They are poor.

Constructive action is needed if migrant farm workers are:

- to live in dignity, with adequate food, shelter and privacy in which to raise their families;
- to receive a salary equal to their labors, under conditions that do not endanger their health and lives;
- to participate in decisions vitally affecting their future.

But if constructive action is needed, who can be expected to take that action?

Government? - Congress and state legislatures can help in a limited way through humane, remedial laws, strictly enforced. Agricultural workers were excluded from the National Labor Relations Act of 1935. This law, among other things, guarantees employees the right to accept or reject union representation, as well as the right to bargain collectively with employers.

Employers? - Some fruit and vegetable growers have treated their field workers well. Most, however, have resisted farm workers' demands for better wages, improved working conditions and their own association.

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IF YOU WERE A FARM WORKER

- You would be paid around \$1,500 a year. If everybody in your family worked, you might make \$2,700. Many days you would not work. None would be available.
- Your life expectancy would be 49.
- Your children would be more than twice as likely to die at birth; and your wife in giving birth.
- Your family's chance of catching influenza, pneumonia, tuberculosis or some

Wholesale and Retail Dealers? - While many admit that injustice exists, spokesmen for large and small food stores wish to remain neutral. They contend that any dispute that may exist should be settled by growers and migrants among themselves.

Migrant Workers? - In most parts of the country, migrants have been too weak and scattered to combine their efforts to gain their objectives. In California, during 1965, the first successful union of farm workers in history, the United Farm Workers of America (UFWA), was launched by Cesar Chavez.

Organized Labor? - The AFL-CIO has assisted the UFWA in recent years. But another union, the two-million member Teamsters, which had previously shown little interest in field workers, began negotiating with California growers several years ago. In 1973, when UFWA contracts with the table grape growers expired, all but two of the growers signed - without the knowledge or consent of the field workers - with the Western Conference of Teamsters. Teamster contracts, among other things, contained no protection for older or slower workers and placed few restrictions on the use of harmful pesticides.

Consumers? - Consumers were the indispensable allies of the UFWA in obtaining their historic contracts with growers in 1970. Their refusal to buy non-union grapes or to patronize stores handling them brought economic pressure on retailers and - through them - on growers. With the boycott in force again - on non-UFWA grapes and lettuce - the nation's consumers once more hold the balance

THE PURPOSE OF THE CHRISTOPHERS is summed up in the word "Christopher" which comes from the Greek "Christophoros," meaning "Christbearer" . . . Our aim is to encourage everyone to show a personal responsibility and individual initiative in raising the standards of all phases of human endeavor, especially 1) government, 2) education, 3) labor-management relations, 4) literature and 5) entertainment . . . Posi-

other infectious disease would be three times the national average.

- You would probably never have reached the eighth grade.
- You'd be lucky to have two rooms in which to lodge your family. You might have some electricity, but probably no toilet, sink, bathtub or shower.

"For the laborer deserves his wages." (Lk. 10:7)

of power. If sales of these products are reduced by only 15 per cent, the drop in profit will compel growers to let farm workers decide union representation by secret ballot.

FOR THE HARVESTER - HUNGER

Malnutrition is the number one cause of health problems among farm workers' children. This is the conviction of Dr. Ramiro Casso, who conducts a health clinic in the Rio Grande Valley, Texas.

"It affects almost everybody," said Dr. Casso. "If we could feed these people the protein they need, the medical problems would be virtually eliminated . . . A lot of migrant families don't eat meat but once every two or three weeks."

■ **California** - A study of 250 pre-school children of farm workers revealed that 49 per cent suffered from "functional anemia," caused by too little protein and vitamins.

■ **Colorado** - Serious malnutrition, growth retardation and rickets were discovered in a study of 300 migrant children by Dr. Peter Chase.

■ **South Carolina** - Farm workers' children aged three to six were getting only 800 calories a day. According to Dr. James P. Carter: "This caloric insufficiency (one-third of normal intake) is certainly not enough to support the patient and barely enough to support the worms."

"If you give your bread to the hungry, and relief to the oppressed, your light will rise in the darkness, and your shadows become like noon." (Isaiah 58:10)

tive, constructive action is essential. Little is accomplished by complaining or criticizing. "Better to light one candle than to curse the darkness" is the Christopher motto. St. Paul put it: "Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Rom. 12:21) All gifts are deductible from taxable income . . . Legal title for wells: The Christophers, Inc.

Father Richard Armstrong, M.M., Director

HOUSING IS FOUR BARE WALLS

■ **Michigan** - In one cherry orchard, 100 head of cattle occupy a barn in the winter - and migrant workers are quartered there in the picking season.

■ **New Jersey** - Abuses complained of by Puerto Rican migrants in South Jersey include failure by growers to provide hot water and laundry facilities at labor camps.

■ **Indiana** - After a tour of farm labor camps, State Senator Thomas Teague described conditions as "worse than anything I saw while serving in Vietnam."

One solution may be through government incentives for migrants to settle permanently in an area so that they can obtain year-round employment and decent housing.

"If I own a home," said one former migrant, "my kids will live decent and they'll be willing to work, because they'll see they're working for something."

Another solution could come from recognition by the growers that providing adequate housing is good business. As one grower in Wayne County, New York, said: "You get better workers if you offer good housing."

"Sow integrity for yourselves, reap a harvest of kindness." (Hosea 10:12)

PESTICIDES KILL MORE THAN INSECTS

Jimmy Brooks died in a Philadelphia hospital a week before his tenth birthday. He had been with his family in a New Jersey tomato field when an adjoining field was sprayed with pesticide by a crop-duster. Doctors, who worked 48 days to keep him alive, diagnosed cause of death as chemical pneumonitis.

The U.S. Department of Health estimates that 1,000 people die each year because of pesticide poisoning. And 90,000 are injured.

Frequent nosebleeds . . . headaches . . . sore lungs and painful breathing . . . nausea . . . skin eruptions . . . these are the signs of pesticide poisoning.

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