

United Farm Workers

Again, La Causa

The Guimarra Vineyards in Delano are the largest in California's San Joaquin Valley, where 40 per cent of the table grapes in United States are grown. Three years ago, Guimarra, like most of California's grape growers, signed contracts with César Chavez's United Farm Workers, after the years of struggle to bring union representation to the migrant farm workers which became known as "La Causa," The Cause.

But at midnight tomorrow, the Guimarra contract expires, and it is by no means certain that Guimarra will renew with the U.F.W. Guimarra's alternative is one taken by the Coachella growers on the south and by some Arvin-Lamont vineyards—to sign with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, which on Friday sent a letter to the 29 growers in the Delano area notifying them that "we represent a majority of their farmworkers."

Despite the Teamster claim, the U.F.W. has been able to mass enormous worker support. In the last nine days, 2,700 U.F.W. picketers have been arrested disobeying injunctions obtained by growers in the Arvin-Lamont area limiting the placement of pickets and the use of bullhorns. Many are still in jail.

If the Guimarra Vineyards sign with the Teamsters, the smaller growers in the Delano area are expected to follow suit. William Kircher, spokesman for the A.F.L.-C.I.O., which has thrown its not inconsiderable weight behind César Chavez and the U.F.W. and against what A.F.L.-C.I.O. President George Meany has called Teamster "union-busting," said it would be "a very serious but by no stretch of the imagination a lethal blow."

Father John Banks, coordinator of U.F.W. strike activity in Lamont said "massive picketing and total boycott" of growers signing with the Teamsters will be called. "It will take a good year or more to get them back," he added.

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