

10,000 IN PROTEST AT GALLO WINERY

Farm Workers on Coast End 110-Mile March to Focus Attention on Boycott

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MODESTO, Calif., March 1—About 10,000 members and supporters of the United Farm Workers converged today on the E. & J. Gallo winery here, ending a week-long, 110-mile march to focus attention on the union's nationwide boycott of Gallo products.

Looking at the crowd, Fred Ross, a 35-year veteran of farm labor struggles, beamed and said, "It was a bit premature for people to say Chavez is beaten," referring to Cesar Chavez, the union's president with whom Mr. Ross has worked with for more than 20 years.

His son, Fred Ross Jr., one of the march's organizers, was also smiling broadly. Although he had predicted a large turnout, it was clearly more than he had expected, stretching out more than a mile in this dusty town in California's agricultural heartland. The marchers carried the union's red flag with the black eagle insignia, and chanted: "Chavez si, teamsters no! Gallo wine has got to go!"

At a rally in Graceda Park here after the march, Mr. Chavez, referring to the size of the crowd, said that "this should make it clear to Gallo that we're not going away."

He also read telegrams of support from Senators Alan Cranston, Democrat of California, and Walter F. Mondale, Democrat of Minnesota, and from several members of Congress and a variety of unions, including the United Automobile Workers, which has been supporting the United Farm Workers for nearly two years.

Mr. Chavez contended that the boycott was gaining momentum and said that more than 540 liquor store owners in Los Angeles had taken Gallo wines off their shelves.

However, Ernesto Gallo, the company's chairman, said at a news conference this afternoon that the number of liquor stores in which Gallo wines had been removed was more than 100 but less than 200.

Mr. Gallo also described the boycott as "a total failure," and said the company had its "best December in history" last year, but did not disclose specific sales figures.

'Sweetheart' Deal

The farm workers' union has been boycotting Gallo since the summer of 1973, when Gallo, the nation's largest winery, decided not to renew its contract with the farm workers and signed instead with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Since then, Mr. Chavez has maintained that the teamsters' contract was a "sweetheart" deal that gave the workers less protection from pesticides and a diminished voice in the fields.

Gallo spokesmen said that the company had signature cards from its workers saying they wanted teamster representation. More than a hundred Gallo workers struck when the new contract was signed, saying they had not been consulted.

"The teamsters have never represented us," said Manuel Hernandez, one of the Gallo strikers, who had worked for the company since 1967, the first year Gallo signed a contract with the United Farm Workers.

A spokesman for Gallo said the company chose not to renew the contract because the farm workers' hiring hall was inefficiently administered, and made it difficult to service the contract.

Gallo also contends that the 200 permanent and 300 seasonal farm workers the company employs are the highest paid in the nation.

Their wages are high for the industry—up to \$3.40 an hour—but some farm worker contracts are comparable with the Gallo contract. And both the farm workers' contracts and the teamsters' contract are almost three times as high in terms of hourly wages as what the farm workers were making when Mr. Chavez started boycotting wineries and grape growers for contracts a decade ago.

Mr. Chavez has challenged Gallo to hold a secret ballot union representation election that would include both Gallo's current employees and the strikers. Gallo said it would do this if the farm workers and the teamsters could agree on a mechanism to hold an election, since farm workers are not covered under the National Labor Relations Act.

But the teamsters have made it clear that they will not talk about holding a new election until their contract with Gallo expires two years from now. Lawsuits brought by the farm workers challenging the validity of the 1973 contract are pending.

Gallo markets wine under more than 10 labels, including low-priced brands such as Ripple, Thunderbird, Boone's Farm Apple Wine and Madria-Madria Sangria.

According to industry sources, almost one of every three bottles of wine sold in the United States is produced by Gallo. These sources estimate that Gallo sold about 100 million of the 347.3 million gallons of wine distributed in the United States in 1973.

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