

What is NFWM?

(Background information or can be read aloud as part of your program in about 2 minutes)

Nearly two-thirds of all crops in the United States are still hand-harvested. This means most of the fruits and vegetables that we eat: the juice we have for breakfast, the salads we have for lunch, the vegetables we have at dinner, or the grapes and hops in the wine or beer we might have in the evening are STILL picked by the hands of men, women and yes, even children.

Farm workers today are among the lowest paid and least protected workers in the country. AND THIS HAS BEEN TRUE FOR GENERATIONS.

BUT, more than 50 years ago Mexican and Filipino farm workers came together and started organizing. They went on strike and demanded better living and working conditions and thus the farm worker movement began.

At that time they called upon the Church for help. The farm workers knew they needed a broad coalition to bring more power to their struggle. So they called upon the religious community to be in solidarity with the farm workers. Church folks were quite literally alongside the striking farm workers at marches, pickets, and vigils. They honored the boycotts called by the farm workers and spread the word to their families, friends and church communities.

The National Farm Worker Ministry became the vehicle for people of faith and conscience to be in solidarity and act at the farm workers' request. NFWM began with a set of principles that are still adhered to today; the first of which is working toward farm worker self-determination.

The National Farm Worker Ministry partners with every major farm worker-led Union and association across the country. NFWM's supporters have positively impacted every major farm worker campaign since the grape strikes in California that began this movement in the early 1970's; to the Mount Olive Pickle boycott that led to the first-ever labor contract with farm workers in the state of North Carolina in 2005; to most recently in 2014, supporting berry pickers originally from indigenous communities in southern Mexico, who after suffering years of indignities in Washington state, walked out of the fields and called for a boycott of Sakuma (& Driscoll) berries. And NFWM will be there with farm workers in struggles to come.

The farm worker organizations depend on NFWM so they can spend their time, energy and resources organizing the workers. And the National Farm Worker Ministry spends our time, energy and resources organizing farm worker supporters who vote with their wallets and bring leverage to the farm workers' campaigns and solidarity to their struggles. For decades NFWM supporters have helped farm worker organizations win campaigns against powerful global corporations. We are committed to continuing to do so until all farm workers have justice in the fields and dignity in their work.

At NFWM, it is not a question of whether or not the farm workers' campaigns will succeed. It is only a question of when.

Did you eat today? Thank a farm worker!