

NEWS from United Farm Workers' 18th Constitutional Convention

Board, staff and supporters of the National Farm Worker Ministry joined hundreds of United Farm Workers of America delegates and others at the UFW's August 22-24 Convention in Fresno, CA. The theme of the convention was "Organizing is the Solution."

Delegates represented members with UFW contracts in Oregon, California, Washington, Florida and Pennsylvania. First time attendees included workers celebrating recent contracts at D'Arrigo, Threemile Canyon Farms and Willow Creek Dairy, and H2-A guest workers from Thailand. Delegates attended training workshops, passed resolutions, elected new board members, shared reports and made plans for new organizing.

The convention included a tribute to this summer's heat death victims in California's fields. Despite heat regulations sponsored by the UFW and passed into law two years ago, six farm workers deaths since May 2008 have been attributed to or are being investigated as heat-related.

For farm workers everywhere, the real solution to ending the abuses and tragedies which they face is for workers to have a direct voice in the workplace.

The UFW continues to focus its efforts on organizing and on laws that would protect that right for farm workers, such as the Secret Ballot Election bill in California. And they continue critical work on immigration reform and the AgJOBS bill, which would provide farm workers with the opportunity to gain legal status, enabling them to work and speak up, without fear of deportation.

Convention attendees also heard about the importance of the election of labor-friendly candidates and heard from Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. speaking on behalf of the Obama campaign, Bruce Raynor, the International President of UNITE HERE, and Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton. The diversity of today's farm labor workforce was illustrated by the translation of the speeches into five different languages.

Photo by UFW



UFW members vote on a resolution.

Assembly Speaker Emeritus Fabian Núñez's statement in support of the "Secret Ballot Election for Farm Workers" bill in CA.

*"Another hot day and another farm worker dies. That shames California and it shows the truth that current laws aren't enough to protect the workers who bring us our food. That needs to change. Simply saying we need to enforce current law is a cop out. The minimum wage is current law. That hasn't stopped unfair piece-rate practices where workers may work for eleven hours but only get paid for eight. Current law has tough heat regulations. That didn't save Maria Vasquez Jimenez, Jose Macarena Hernandez, and Abdon Felix Garcia. **It is no coincidence that the worst practices are typically on farms that do not have a union.** It is past time that the realities of the field live up to the laws that are on the books. Giving farm workers a real voice is the only way to ensure that the laws of California are also the laws in the field. It is not enough to mourn tragedies."*

Governor Vetoes CA Bill

On October 1st, Gov. Schwarzenegger vetoed the Secret Ballot Election reform bill. UFW President Arturo Rodriguez's response to the veto included these words, "His so-called commitment to the farm workers is one that has been left to rot in a field of apathy where only the interests of agricultural employers are reaped."

A twenty minute documentary shown at the Convention by Fabian Núñez, "California's Harvest of Shame" can be viewed from the UFW's web site. Click on *Key Campaigns* and then *Secret Ballot Elections*.



Photo by Alexandria Jones

Suzanne Darweesh, Co-Chair of the Orange County Committee to Aid Farm Workers, and NFWM Board member, and Kathryn Franger, NFWM supporter from Mountain View, CA, cheer during Robert F. Kennedy Jr's speech at the UFW Convention.

More NEWS from the UFW

Charles Krug-Mondavi Boycott Ends !

Last April, nearly two years after being fired from the Charles Krug-Mondavi winery, the twenty-four employees were reinstated to their jobs and the UFW signed a four year contract between the company and the workers.

In addition to back-pay, under the new contract the workers will receive an 18 percent pay increase over the four-year contract and the workers will have the same seniority and classifications they did at the time they were discharged. The contract also covers sub-contracted employees, who are now paid wage rates equal to those of direct-hire employees and entitled to the grievance and arbitration procedure.

The UFW workers and NFWM thank everyone who supported the boycott.



The UFW has launched [Black Eagle Wines.com](http://BlackEagleWines.com) selling wine produced under UFW contract by farm workers who have decent wages, healthcare and a pension. The proceeds support the UFW's organizing.

Photo by UFW

One of Lucy Boutte's first duties on staff was to help organize the farm worker lobby day on August 18th in Sacramento to support the Secret Ballot Elections Bill. More than 700 farm workers participated in the day, which included the holding of a Rosary in the State Capitol.



Photo by Lariza Garzon



Lucy Boutte Joins NFWM Staff

Lucy Boutte joined the NFWM staff this summer. She is based in the Los Angeles area and has spent her first months focusing on securing support from religious leaders for the California Secret Ballot Elections reform bill.

She comes to us having worked with the LA Catholic Archdiocese for nearly twenty years and, previously, as a UFW organizer for two years in Oxnard, Fresno and Delano grape fields. Lucy proudly says she has been a UFW supporter since her youth. Lucy can be reached by calling 951-634-8817 or at lboutte@nfwm.org.

Did you know ...

- ♦ Agricultural in the US is a \$ 313.2 billion industry.
- ♦ More than half of farm workers work in California with 50,000 employed in the grape industry alone. The next five states in order of farm worker payroll numbers are Florida, Washington, Texas, Oregon and North Carolina.
- ♦ The H2-A guest worker program is growing with 78,000 workers approved for jobs in 2007. H2-A workers come from 52 different countries.
- ♦ 67% of farm workers are employed through labor contractors who serve as intermediaries between growers and workers. Labor contractors keep part of the workers' pay for themselves.

Photo by UFW



Jeanne Giordano, long-time NFWM Board member and co-founder of the Orange County Interfaith Committee to Aid Farm Workers, was honored at the Convention by UFW President Arturo Rodriguez for her long and active support for farm worker organizing. With Jeanne is her husband, Roy.

Reynolds Tobacco Campaign & more News from North Carolina

About 1/2 of all farm worker households in North Carolina cannot afford enough food to adequately feed their families.

Tobacco workers do not have a guaranteed wage; depending on the weather many go weeks without work.

**AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME
for a Farm Worker in North Carolina
\$ 7,150**

**2007 TOTAL COMPENSATION
for Reynolds Management**

\$9,467,860 Susan Ivey, President & CEO

\$4,173,661 Jeffrey Eckmann, RAI Group Pres.

\$3,499,481 Daniel Delen, Pres. & CEO RJR

\$3,282,110 Diane Neal, Exec. VP & CFO

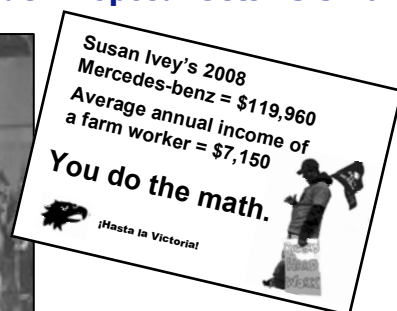
\$1,878,337 Tommy Payne, Exec. VP Public Affairs

from the Alternative Shareholder Report. To read the entire report, visit www.floc.com or contact the NC NFWM office.

Reynolds Shareholder Proposal Gets 13.5 %



Photo by Alexandria Jones



Demonstrators lined the streets outside; while inside, posters like this one were unveiled to speak the truth to assembled shareholders.

NFWM and FLOC staff organized an impressive presence at the Reynolds Tobacco Annual Shareholder meeting in Winston-Salem on May 6, 2008. Outside, 150 rallied and distributed alternative shareholder reports to meeting attendees. Inside, Fr. Michael Cosby presented a shareholder resolution calling on the company to respect workers' rights. NFWM Executive Director Virginia Nesmith spoke to second the resolution. As she spoke, farm workers and supporters stood and revealed a dozen 3'x4' posters documenting conditions tobacco workers face. The resolution gained 13.5% support, an unusually high level for this kind of resolution.

Workers to Deliver Postcards to Reynolds CEO

Throughout the spring & summer, NFWM helped collect signed postcards to Reynolds Tobacco CEO Susan Ivey calling on her to meet with FLOC to address the injustices farm workers endure in the company's supply chain. Farm workers will deliver the 5,000 postcards to Reynolds headquarters in Winston-Salem, NC.



Photo by Alexandria Jones

FLOC members in North Carolina held four leadership meetings around the state this September to discuss wages, safety, and housing, among other issues. During their September 7th meeting in Greensboro, workers held a "Walk to Remember Farm Workers" to honor farm workers across the country who have died in the fields in the past several years.

Call to the Fields

From July 27th through August 5th, Farm Labor Organizing Committee President Baldemar Velásquez lived in a labor camp in North Carolina and worked on

a tobacco crew to understand directly the concerns of tobacco field workers. Mr. Velásquez kept a daily journal of his experience. To read "Call to the Fields" visit <http://www.floc.com/CallToTheFields.htm>.

Photo by Christiana Velasquez



Mexican Human Rights Attorney Visits U.S.

Leonel Rivero Rodríguez, the Mexican Human Rights Attorney handling the investigation into the murder of FLOC organizer Santiago Rafael Cruz at FLOC's office in Monterrey, Mexico in April of 2007, arrived in the U.S. in September to conduct interviews related to the case. During his stay, Mr. Rodriguez also spoke at various venues in Ohio and North Carolina, about the murder and about the corrupt recruiting system that feeds the U.S. agricultural industry. Santiago's case has still not been satisfactorily resolved.

Roots of Oaxacan Migration to the U.S. Southeast, a Witness for Peace delegation, is being planned for February, 2009. For more information, contact Gail Phares, 919-856-9468, gailphares@earthlink.net.

Beef Northwest Workers Continue their Campaign for Union Representation

NFWM and the Oregon Farm Worker Ministry are actively supporting the UFW's campaign with Beef Northwest (BNW) feedlots on behalf of the workers.

BNW workers approached the UFW in the fall of 2006 seeking representation because they were tired of worksite abuses and of being put down at every opportunity by supervisors. Without union representation the workers have had to resort to legal reparation. Two suits were filed by workers against the company; one for failure to pay overtime pay due and the other for consistently failing to hire women of color.

BNW responded by running an anti-union campaign, including activities such as company officials circulating an anti-union petition while on the clock and telling employees they better sign it if they wanted to keep their job and taking photos at a union barbeque and telling workers that anyone seen at the event would be disciplined.

In spite of the intimidation, a majority of the workers at BNW feedlots have voted through the majority sign-up method to be represented by the UFW and the outcome has been verified by an outside, neutral third party.

While the campaign progresses on several fronts, one continued focus has been on Whole Foods, the main purchaser of Country Natural Beef (CNB), whose cows are "finished" at BNW. The workers have asked Whole Foods, which prides itself on being a socially responsible company, to use its influence to ensure that BNW does right by its workers.

In April, Andrea Cano, OFWM Director, was part of a delegation, including two BNW workers, UFW staff, and key religious and justice leaders, which delivered a petition with 13,000 signatures to company representatives at the Whole Foods headquarters in Austin, TX. In mid-June, NFWM helped organize a Day of Action at Whole Foods stores throughout the West and, in July, we organized religious leaders to call John Wilson, BNW's CEO.

Workers got a boost when Presidential candidate Barak Obama sent a letter in support of their organizing campaign to Mr. Wilson. Another round of Whole Foods actions occurred in early August in Portland and again throughout the west coast on October 4th.

Whole Foods did step up to the plate to sign an agreement with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) in September. Whole Foods Market will support the CIW's "penny-per-pound" approach for tomatoes purchased from Florida with the goal of passing these additional funds on to the harvesters. Also as part of the agreement, Whole Foods will explore developing a program to help guarantee ethical sourcing and production in the U.S., similar to its Whole Trade Guarantee for production in developing countries.

In the meantime, we continue to urge Whole Foods to use its influence with Beef Northwest to ensure fair treatment of the workers who help produce the beef sold in their stores.



Photo by OFWM

Supporters vigil outside a Portland, OR Whole Foods and take a letter to the manager, as part of the Day of Action at WF markets on the west coast where Country Natural Beef is sold.

Whole Foods Should Give Beef Northwest a Minus 10

According to the magazine Fast Company, Whole Foods announced a 1 to 5 animal welfare rating system for its meat providers.

It's great that Whole Foods cares about making sure cows aren't abused. **But what about the workers who labor to produce this beef? Shouldn't they be protected from abuse too?**

ACTION:

LOG ON WWW.UFW.ORG TO SEND AN EMAIL TO WHOLE FOODS TO TELL THEM THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE; OR DOWNLOAD A FLYER TO TAKE TO YOUR WHOLE FOOD'S MANAGER.

*Excerpt from
Barak Obama's
letter to
BNW CEO,
John Wilson:*

In America, we should value the labor of every person and reward it with a few basic guarantees, such as fair wages and treatment, healthcare, and a dignified retirement. These aren't just the values of working folks or organized labor. They are American values and they are central to my campaign. I am committed to the ability of our nation's agricultural workers to organize, to receive a decent wage, and to have a safe working environment. All workers should be free to form a union, and if they choose to form a union, management should negotiate in good faith to reach first contract.

A handwritten signature of Barack Obama, with the name "Barack Obama" printed below it.

Kara Mollison Joins NFWM as Donor Development Coordinator

Dear Friends,

I want to introduce myself. I recently began working with the National Farm Worker Ministry in the St. Louis office as the Donor Development Coordinator. I have worked in the development field for several years and, although I have worked with immigrants previously, I have not had the chance to work with farm workers. I look forward to the opportunity to become more involved in the farm worker movement and contribute to increasing the Ministry's capacity to positively impact farm workers' lives.

I attended my first NFWM Board meeting in August and was thoroughly impressed by the individuals that I met who are impassioned activists in the farm worker movement. I have learned a lot from our staff and board about farm workers across the country, and the convention was a great opportunity to learn about the farm worker movement in California. I was greatly saddened to hear that six farm workers died due to heat related causes in California fields since May. I am eager to do our part to help farm workers organize and stop these atrocities from happening.

As you can see from this newsletter, NFWM is busy from coast to coast with many different initiatives, ranging from shareholder and supermarket actions to legislative

efforts and even a bicycle drive. And there is much more to be done. My goal is to help NFWM strengthen our work for farm worker justice by increasing support from individual donors. As we strive to fulfill the mission of the Ministry, we are limited only by our finances.

Photo by Alexandria Jones



Kara Mollison, NFWM's new Donor Development Coordinator, meets Dolores Huerta, UFW co-founder and farm worker & civil rights activist during the NFWM Board meeting in Fresno, CA.

The Ministry is funded entirely by grants and donations. This year, my first goal is to meet our 2008 budgetary goals for individual donations. As an organization we still need to raise \$52,000 by December 31st in order to meet our budget.

I know that many of you have already given and many of you also normally make a year end contribution. We greatly appreciate your generosity. Please consider helping us reach our goal by increasing your annual donation. An increase of just a few dollars can help us reach our 2008 goals.

Thank you again for all of your support. I am excited to be working with NFWM and each of you and look forward to growing and strengthening the Ministry!

Peace,

Kara Mollison

Photo by Alexandria Jones



Interns Elise Francisco & Sandy Preiss during a delegation visit to labor camps.

Interns & Volunteers Key to NFWM's Success

N F W M is fortunate to be able expand the scope of our work because of the commitment and time contributed by wonderful volunteers and interns.

This past summer, NFWM-NC hosted Alexander (Sandy) Preiss through Student Action with Farmworkers, and Elise Francisco through the United Methodist Church's Summer Intern

Program. In addition to assisting with the daily work of NFWM, Sandy & Elise visited with and documented stories of tobacco farm workers. Their publication "Stories from the Fields: A Collection from Workers of North Carolina Tobacco Fields" will be available soon.

Starting this October and throughout the school year, Kevin Todd will intern in our NC office through the Duke Divinity School. Kevin is in his final year in his Masters of Divinity program and has previously been in mission in Argentina and worked with Cristo Vive Hispanic Ministry in Durham, NC.

NFWM-NC will also host a high school student from Youth Opportunities, an initiative of Durham Congregations In Action, to intern through this school year.

NFWM's Youth & Young Adult Network on the GO ...

YAYA's Cycle Drive



The hard lives of migrant farm workers are made even harder by the lack of available transportation. Many farm workers do not own vehicles or cannot get a driver's license and often live in remote, rural areas. They are dependent on crew leaders, growers, or others to shop, go to church, visit with friends and family, and even to get to the place where they are picked up for work.



To help farm workers with this problem in a sustainable manner, YAYA has undertaken a new project -- **Cycle Drive**.

YAYA is gathering, repairing, and delivering bicycles to farm workers around Florida. The project is generating a lot of enthusiasm both from workers excited to have "freedom of mobility" and young people and church folks.

In July, the first set of 10 bicycles were delivered to Haitian, African American and Latino farm workers in the community of Belle Glade, Florida with the help of the Lake Worth Bike Co-Op. Another 10 bicycles were delivered in Immokalee. And the effort is growing!

To learn more about YAYA projects like the Cycle Drive and to participate in any YAYA activities, visit <http://nfwm-yaya.org> or call Lariza Garzon, YAYA Coordinator, at 386-801-1232.



UCC Encuentro in Immokalee

This past summer, youth and staff members of the United Church of Christ, along with NFWM staff members Bert Perry and Lariza Garzon, traveled to Immokalee, Florida for a mission trip focused on disaster response and social justice.

During the weekend emersion experience, missionaries met local organizers and farm workers during a "fiesta." They played "Farm Worker Jeopardy" and a group of teenagers performed a play about what they thought an immigration raid was like. Afterwards, a farm worker who had been arrested in a raid shared her experience.

There was learning about the issues of pesticides and farm workers by focusing on what has happened to Lake Apopka. And the Farmworker Association of Florida (FWAF) and NFWM staff organized different interactive stations in order to share with the group what life in Immokalee is like for a farm worker.

The group also visited the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' office where they learned about the struggle of the tomato pickers for better wages and for the end of modern day slavery and had a tour of Immokalee.

Thanks to all the folks who helped Bert & Lariza organize this Encuentro.



The UCC group spent the first days fixing homes that were damaged by the 2005 hurricanes and, though still needing major repair, were occupied by farm workers.

There will be a **Florida YAYA Summit in the Hope Community Center Apopka, FL starting Friday, November 21 through Sunday, November 23rd** to bring together young adults so that they can meet with farm workers and farm worker advocates, share experiences and resources and further their work for farm worker justice. There will be panels and workshops about pesticides, immigration, human trafficking, farm worker campaigns and more. For more information or to sign up, visit the YAYA web site or call Lariza Garzon.

Coalition of Immokalee Workers Moves On to Chipotle & Subway

Following it's success with Whole Foods, CIW continues it's *Campaign for Fair Food* by calling on Chipotle and Subway to join Taco Bell, McDonald's & Burger King in working with CIW for fair wages and humane labor treatment for the Florida farm workers in their tomato supply chain.

Chipotle considers itself to be a sustainable food leader that *"didn't want Chipotle's success to be tied to the exploitation of animals, farmers, or the environment."* But it has not yet been willing to agree to participate with CIW in any plan to address the exploitation of those who pick the tomatoes they use.

Subway's high volume purchasing practices for it's 22,000 franchisee-owned restaurants gives it the power to negotiate "the lowest cost for purchased goods." But it is not yet willing to use it's power for the good of farm workers.

For postcards to the corporate headquarters of Chipotle and Subway & to download the Chipotle manager letter, visit www.ciw-online.org.

Human Trafficking of Farm Workers

NFWM Director Virginia Nesmith was a speaker last month at a Conference on Human Trafficking sponsored by the National Council of Churches Justice for Women Working Group and the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries' Womens Division. She spoke about the continued existence of slavery in our agricultural industry.

Among the cases she cited was that of the Navarette brothers who were recently convicted of keeping more than a dozen workers in boxes, trucks and shacks, chaining and beating them and forcing them to work the fields in Florida, and North and South Carolina. The Department of Justice was assisted by CIW in its prosecution of the case after one worker finally escaped.

Ms. Nesmith stressed the importance of supporting farm worker empowerment through organizing and legalization in combating the horrendous practice, and of vigilance and outreach by concerned citizens to farm workers in their communities.

2008 Harvest of Justice Table Prayers AVAILABLE NOW

Harvest of Justice Table Prayers is a colorful pamphlet with farm worker related prayers and a brief narrative for use by congregations, study groups, families or individuals. In the 2008 version, "Seeking a Harvest of Justice," we share with you the privilege of knowing the people who labor to produce our food. (see sample below).



Skilled *"The people we hire -- most people don't think much of them, but they're skilled labor. I grow sweet corn, peppers, tomatoes and melons, and a person who doesn't know what they're doing can ruin you in a day." Phil Prutch, Colorado vegetable farmer*

God, bless the farm worker, and move our hearts to remember and bless them as well. The farm worker shares in your power as midwife to creation. Help us to serve as midwife to the living wage they deserve for their labor. Amen.

✕ **To order *Harvest of Justice* mail in this form, go to www.nfwm.org or call 314-726-6470.**

Name: _____ Organization: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

	<i>Cost per</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Sub total</i>
English	\$ 0.15 X		=
Spanish	\$ 0.15 X		=

Total = _____

An invoice will accompany your order, or you may send payment along with this order form.
Make checks payable to:

National Farm Worker Ministry
438 N. Skinker Blvd. St. Louis, MO 63130



*Celebrate the Harvest of Justice Season
with the National Farm Worker Ministry
and Host
A Feast for Justice*

***NFWM encourages our supporters to participate in a tradition of
the farm worker movement -- host a sacrificial meal
honoring the hands that harvest our food.***

The basic idea is simple: gather friends, family or your faith community to eat a humble meal together and to pray and reflect on farm workers' lives, perhaps during the fall harvest season. You might use Harvest of Justice Table Prayers (order form on page 7). And you might offer the money that you would have spent on a dinner out to support the farm worker struggle and the work of NFWM.

NFWM has materials available to help you plan your event.

Visit www.nfwm.org

or contact Susan Alan at nfwm@nfwm.org or 314-726-6470.

NFWM has state offices in Central & South
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News & Views Editor: Susan Alan

**The National Farm Worker Ministry
(NFWM)**

*is an interfaith organization whose
purpose is to support farm workers
as they organize for
justice, empowerment and equality.*

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