A man with dark hair, wearing a red t-shirt, is smiling and holding a white sign with both hands. The sign has the words "JUSTICE" in large blue letters, "for" in smaller blue letters, and "FARMWORKERS" in large blue letters. The background is a bright blue sky with some green foliage on the right side.

JUSTICE  
for  
FARMWORKERS

National Farm Worker Ministry's  
**HARVEST OF JUSTICE**

Giving thanks and  
working for justice  
alongside immigrant  
& migrant farm workers

**WEEK 6**

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**2018**

# LEARN

The great paradox of our food system is that the people who work to feed the U.S. struggle to feed their own families. U.S. agriculture is a \$200 billion dollar industry yet farm worker families only earn around \$16,000 per year and twenty-five percent live below the federal poverty line. Less than ten percent of farm workers use food stamps (SNAP). Undocumented immigrants are not eligible for government assistance (like Food Stamps or Medicaid or CHIP (Children's health Insurance Program)). Many non-profit agencies even require proof of citizenship in order to benefit from food banks or emergency assistance with utility bills. As Baldemar Velasquez, founder and president of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee put it, "Farm workers do not want charity. They want fair wages so they can feed their own families."

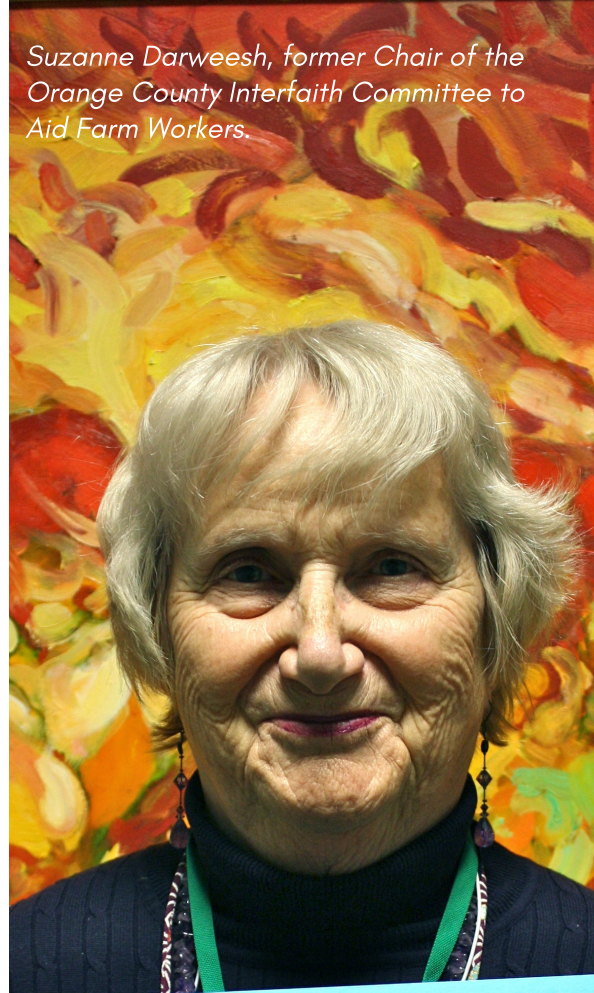
# REFLECT

The use of pesticides is a reality that many farm workers must endure. Three women Francisca, Sostenes, and Maria were all pregnant while working for the same produce company picking tomatoes in Florida where they suffered from pesticide exposure in a field where more than two dozen different pesticides and herbicides were used. After the harvest, the women and their co-workers moved to fields in North Carolina, continuing to work for the same employer. There they were again exposed to agricultural chemicals. They weren't provided with protective equipment and two of them worked until they were seven months pregnant. When Francisca's baby Carlitos was born, he had no arms or legs. Six weeks later, Sostenes's son Jesus was born with significant physical birth defects. A couple of days later Maria gave birth to Violeta who lived only three days. Though the grower denied any responsibility, the Florida and North Carolina farms were inspected by regulatory agencies, and in each state a large number of violations were identified and record fines were levied.

# ACT

Struggling with low wages and exposure to chemicals are endemic problems with agricultural labor and one of the best ways to counter both is through programs where the workers have a role in correcting the problems. So buy farm worker certified products in your local stores and encourage others to do it also! Go to the Equitable Foods Initiative at [nfwm.org/current-campaigns](http://nfwm.org/current-campaigns) to learn more about the EFI label and see where you can "shop certified." Also, download NFWM's Shopping Guide for a list of products that are under union labor contracts or covered by the Equitable Food Initiative or the Fair Food Program.

*Suzanne Darweesh, former Chair of the Orange County Interfaith Committee to Aid Farm Workers.*



God  
doesn't  
recognize  
borders!

*National Farm Worker Ministry educates and mobilizes people of faith and conscience to support farm worker led campaigns to improve farm workers' working and living conditions.*

*To learn more, visit [nfwm.org](http://nfwm.org)  
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