

## THREEMILE CANYON FARMS AND UFW SIGN COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT



UFW Photo

UFW President Arturo Rodriguez, Threemile Canyon Dairy worker Jesus Hernandez, UFW Northwest Director Steven Witte, Threemile Canyon Farms General Manager Marty Meyers, UFW Director Guestworker Membership Erik Nicholson, workers and supporters at the contract signing July 8th.

In the last NFWM *News & Views*, we reported that the dairy and farm workers at Threemile Canyon Farms (3MC) in Boardman, Oregon had won their right to have the United Farm Workers of America (UFW) represent them in contract negotiations with the company's management. This past July 8th, the collective bargaining agreement, the first of its kind in Oregon, was ratified.

The three-year contract gives the approximately 300 farm and dairy workers at the 93,000-acre complex a method to deal with future disputes, ensures them a safe working environment, and creates a formal process for employees to advance within the company. It also allows workers to participate in the UFW sponsored medical and pension plans and provides an extra week of vacation and an additional paid holiday.

UFW President Arturo Rodriguez said, "It's an excellent first step and an example for others in the state."

Oregon Farm Worker Ministry and NFWM supported the workers throughout their more than four and half year struggle.

In her statement celebrating the signing, NFWM Executive Director, Virginia Nesmith, said *"We applaud the workers for the courage, persistence and commitment that they have demonstrated these last several years in standing up for their rights and we applaud Threemile Canyon Farms for recognizing those rights. We are grateful for the trust which the farm workers placed in the faith communities to walk with them on the journey that resulted in this historic day. We look forward now to continuing on a road that leads to progress for all who contribute to the success of the agricultural industry in the Northwest."*

### Willow Creek Dairy

We had also reported that a similar agreement to negotiate had been reached with another dairy in Boardman, Willow Creek. As of this writing, a date to begin contract negotiations is being scheduled.

### New OFWM Director is Andrea Cano



Andrea Cano, OFWM's new Director, spoke at the event celebrating the UFW/Threemile Canyon contract signing. She came to the Oregon Farm Worker Ministry this past May, replacing Steve Witte.

Andrea brings a depth of experience in social justice issues, especially within ecumenical and interfaith arenas, and significant experience in communication and media work.

She has worked for the United Church Christ in several capacities, both in the U.S. and in Latin America. Andrea is currently a student in the Pacific School of Religion Masters of Divinity Program.

**Thank you to all NFWM supporters for helping in this campaign!**

## NFWM Board Visits Labor Camps in North Carolina



Photo by Rev. Phil Jones

Leonardo paid a coyote \$2,500 to bring him "door to door" from Chiapas, Mexico to a tobacco farm in North Carolina and a 'hollowed-out' trailer, where all the walls have been removed to accommodate rows of mattresses. He lives with 12 other men. Leonardo does not have documents. His pay is \$6.00 an hour for a 10 hour day. He made the trip to work in tobacco fields, where Green Tobacco Sickness is common and makes washing work clothes and yourself every day an absolute necessity. But there are no washing machines in Leonardo's camp.

During NFWM's July meeting in Raleigh, NC, Board members and staff met dozens of men with much the same story when we visited three labor camps: men from Chiapas, Oaxaca and Nayarit, Mexico and many from Guatemala. We went as part of NFWM-NC's program to organize delegations of people of faith to visit labor camps and document the conditions they find. We learned firsthand about some of the many problems undocumented workers face in that state, especially those who work in tobacco.

Nicotine is easily absorbed when workers handle wet leaves. Symptoms of Green Tobacco Sickness include nausea, vomiting, dizziness, abdominal cramps, headaches, shortness of breath, weakness and blood pressure and heart rate fluctuations. While the acute effects last only one or two days, workers may suffer longer term effects from prolonged exposure.

As well as the health risks of working in tobacco, there are the persistent problems of pesticide exposure, lack of available health care, substandard housing, low pay, long hours and harsh working conditions. As is the case with farm workers everywhere, the best remedy to the unrelentingly unjust treatment they face is the protections of a union contract.

While in North Carolina, we also heard from FLOC members who are now in the third year of their contract with the NC Growers Association. The 7,724 H2A workers protected by the FLOC contract make \$9.02 hour, have a

grievance procedure to deal with work-related problems, and their travel costs are born by the grower. But there are more than 140,000 non-unionized farm workers in the state, like Leonardo, who do not have these protections and benefits.

FLOC is developing a new, two-fold campaign in North Carolina to organize undocumented farm workers in the tobacco fields and to force the tobacco industry to take responsibility for the serious health issues which affect all tobacco farm workers.

One might think that the tobacco industry is in trouble. It is not. Researchers from the Center for Health Policy at Duke University have found that the four major tobacco companies involved in the 1998 settlement outperformed companies in related industries and that the tobacco industry now enjoys stable financial health. The study found that the settlements led to higher prices and profits and those profits gave the tobacco companies time to increase their overseas markets and to diversify into non-tobacco markets.

According to Baldemar Velazquez, FLOC President, twenty-five percent of tobacco grown for RJ Reynolds, one of the largest companies, comes from North Carolina. "Mt. Olive is currently the only company in North Carolina making an investment to better the conditions for workers. We need to ask the same of RJ Reynolds. It is not charity that we are interested in; it is self determination. We don't want food stamps or free migrant health clinics. We want to feed and provide the basic necessities for our families. The tobacco industry is powerful enough that they can afford to provide proper wages to make this possible."



Photo by Rev. Jim Burton

Tobacco workers, like Leonardo, need to wash their clothes daily to remove nicotine and pesticide residue, but many camps do not have washing machines.

## Murder of FLOC Organizer in Mexico

Photo by Joe Keesecker

Many of our supporters know through our email alerts the story of the murder of one of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee's (FLOC) organizers in Monterey, Mexico on April 9th. Santiago Rafael Cruz, 29, was found in the union's Mexico office, tied-up and beaten to death.

Santiago had previously worked for FLOC in Ohio and North Carolina and had moved to Mexico this past February. He was there to work with H2A farm workers coming to the U.S. and to investigate and resolve employment problems, especially those associated with abuses in the recruiting system.

To ensure a complete review of Santiago's murder, FLOC began a letter writing campaign to the Nuevo Leon Governor and to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). After receiving thousands of letters, phone calls, emails, and faxes, the IACHR pressed the Mexican government to "adopt the necessary measures to guarantee the life and physical security" of FLOC staff in Mexico."



The memorial for Santiago Rafael Cruz in FLOC's office in Dudley, NC.

However, FLOC has been dissatisfied with the Monterey police's investigation of the murder and is asking that the Federal Government of Mexico take over the investigation of the case, which it is entitled to do in a human rights case.

From the August 14th thank you from Baldemar Velasquez, President of FLOC ....

*"The perpetrators of this horrendous crime aimed to intimidate us, but they have only strengthened our resolve. FLOC sincerely thanks everyone who communicated their outrage on behalf of Santiago. Your solidarity encourages us. It is with your added strength that we promise to honor Santiago by carrying out the struggle which we shared for justice and peace."*

HASTA LA VICTORIA!

For updates and action alerts on Santiago's case visit [www.floc.com](http://www.floc.com)

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## Housing Victory in North Carolina

For the past two years, the Farmworker Advocacy Network (FAN), a coalition of groups in North Carolina of which NFWM is a founding member, have been working hard to get legislation passed in the state to improve conditions for farm workers. FAN is celebrating a victory now that the first revision in 17 years of the NC Migrant Housing Act was signed into law this September.

Highlights of the law include:

- Housing operators must provide clean and sanitary mattresses on all beds.
- The NC Department of Labor must give priority in its post-occupancy inspections to the worst housing violators.

- When migrant housing is determined to be uninhabitable, the housing operator must make repairs within 14 days or provide alternative housing at the same or lower cost.
- Detailed records of housing inspections and violations are to be made available to the public and the legislature each year.
- The NC Housing Finance Agency must study the need for the development and rehabilitation of farmworker housing.

In addition, funding for two additional housing inspectors for the NC Department of Labor was approved.

Great work FAN – NC !



**SUPPORT THE  
UFW BOYCOTT OF**

**Charles Krug, CK Mondavi & CR Cellars wines**

Go to [www.ufw.org](http://www.ufw.org) to sign the boycott petition.





## Farm Worker Leaders Meet at La Paz in June



Pictured at La Paz (left to right):

Melody Gonzalez, *Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW)*; Arturo Rodriguez, *United Farm Workers (UFW)*; Richard Chavez; Virginia Nesmith, *NFWM*; Tirso Moreno, *Farm Worker Association of Florida (FWAF)*; Lupe Gamboa, *Oxfam America*; Ernesto Bustos, *Centro Campesino* in Minnesota; Rob Williams, *Florida Legal Services*; Ami Kadar, *Centro Independiente Trabajadores Agrícolas (CITA)* in New York; Diana Tellefson, *UFW Foundation*; Baldemar Velasquez, *Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC)*; Bruce Goldstein, *Farmworker Justice*; Nelson Carrasquillo, *El Comité de Apoyo a los Trabajadores Agrícolas (CATA)* in New Jersey; Ramon Ramirez, *Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN)* in Oregon; Manuel Guzman, *CATA*; Elvira Carvajal (*FWAF*) took the photo.

Virginia Nesmith, NFWM's Executive Director, and the UFW Foundation convened a meeting of eight farm worker organizations at La Paz, CA in June. A major focus of the meeting was AgJOBS and comprehensive immigration reform. The farm worker leaders issued a joint statement that reads, in part, "If our broken immigration system isn't fixed, then farm workers will continue to be abused, the agricultural industry will be without a stable workforce, and the safety of the nation's food supply will be in jeopardy."

The first action that came out of that meeting was a major press conference in Washington, DC on June 21 to call on Congress to pass AgJOBS. In attendance were farm worker leaders, Senators Dianne Feinstein and Edward Kennedy, and 50 farm workers and representatives of farm worker organizations from New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, North Carolina, Florida, Texas, Ohio, Missouri, Minnesota, Oregon, and California.

### AgJOBS Still Needs Your Support

While no agreement could be reached on how to move comprehensive immigration reform forward this year, due to the urgency of the labor crisis in agriculture, the Agricultural Jobs, Opportunity, Benefits and Security (AgJOBS) bill is likely to be considered in some form this fall.

NFWM staff are joining farm workers and growers across the country in meeting with congresspersons to ask for their help in passing this long-overdue measure. Plans are being made for one hundred workers to go to Washington, DC for a week in October. **You can help by phoning or emailing your Senators and Representatives and urging them to support AgJOBS**, the immigration reform bill that is critical to a safe and secure food supply. The Capitol switchboard is 202-224-3121.

### Myths about Farmworkers & Immigration

(excerpted from "Farmworkers and Immigration Fact Sheet" published by the NC Farmworker Institute)

**Myth:** Immigrant farmworkers do not pay taxes.

**Fact:** Immigrant farmworkers pay the same sales, real estate, and consumer taxes as all the United States residents. The US Social Security Administration has estimated that three out of four undocumented immigrants pay payroll taxes, and that they contribute six to seven billion dollars in Social Security funds that they are not able to claim.<sup>3</sup> During their lifetime, immigrants will pay an average of \$80,000 more per capita in taxes than they will use in government services.<sup>4</sup>

**Myth:** Immigrant farmworkers come to the United States to get welfare.

**Fact:** Undocumented immigrants are not eligible for welfare, food stamps, Medicaid, and most other public benefits.<sup>1</sup> Even though farmworker families in the U.S. only earn around \$16,000 per year and over 30% live in poverty, less than ten percent use food stamps and under one percent use general assistance welfare.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rothenberg, D. 1998; <sup>2</sup> US Dept. of Labor National Agricultural Workers Survey, 2005; <sup>3</sup> Porter, E. New York Times, 2005; <sup>4</sup> National Council of La Raza, 2006



Photo by Jocelyn Sherman

Hundreds of farm workers rally at CA Capitol Sept. 5, 2007

### New Staff in California

Dan Parziale joined NFWM in late August and immediately began mobilizing for the *Fair Treatment for Farm Workers Act*. Dan graduated from Notre Dame in 2005 and has had a variety of experience working with immigrants and students. He recently returned from four months in Central America. Here he is helping at the Capitol rally.



Photo by Jocelyn Sherman

## UFW Urges CA Governor to Sign *Fair Treatment for Farm Workers Act*

While California has passed numerous laws protecting farm workers, enforcement in the fields is still poor. This summer alone the United Farm Workers documented hundreds of violations, including the denial of clean water, shade or heat breaks. Through years of experience with farm workers, NFWM shares the unions' belief that labor agreements provide the best mechanism to ensure enforcement of regulations. But even where workers have the right to vote for a union, they are often faced with threats from the company of housing eviction, job loss or deportation if they do so.

The *Fair Treatment for Farm Workers Act* was introduced last spring by the UFW to provide a more fair process for workers to seek union representation, giving them a choice on how to vote – either through a majority sign-up process or election. The bill was passed by both the CA Senate & Assembly. But as of this writing, it is still awaiting the Governor's signature.

NFWM's Dan Parziale helped prepare for the hundreds of farm workers from throughout the state who traveled to Sacramento on September 5<sup>th</sup> to urge the Governor to sign the bill. Dan is also helping organize vigils and speaking engagements for some of the workers who will stay in Sacramento throughout the week.

*California's Broken Promises: The Laws on the Books Are Not the Laws in the Fields*, the first book published by the UFW in two decades, introduces its readers to the farm workers' voice. The 48 page book provides a glimpse into the daily life of farm workers through photographs and personal narratives. The book can be purchased by going to [www.ufw.org](http://www.ufw.org).

**NFWM**  
  
**Together with  
 farm workers,  
 harvesting justice.**



For more than 30 years, the staff, board members, allies and supporters of the National Farm Worker Ministry have been making a difference in the lives of farm workers, working to bring about the day that farm workers are treated with the dignity and justice their labor deserves.

We count on you as partners with us in this ministry.

Please use the enclosed envelope and continue to support NFWM's work with a financial contribution today.

**Thank you.**

## Staff in Florida Grows



NFWM Staff in Florida:

Jeanette Smith, Roberta Perry, Lariza Garzón

In March, **Jeanette Smith** began work as NFWM's staff in Miami/south Florida. A former Immigration Attorney, she comes with years of experience in the immigrant, social justice, and church communities in south Florida. She also serves as the Coordinator for Education & Social Justice for the *Quaker Center for Peace* and is on the Board of Directors of *South Florida Interfaith Worker Justice*.

Jeanette is currently focusing on: CIW's campaign with Burger King, whose headquarters are in Miami, on immigration issues, including AgJOBS, on the new sanctuary movement, and on developing a Community Response Team with the Homestead office of the Farm Worker Association of Florida.

Jeanette was the guest speaker at the Sarasota-Manatee Farm Worker Support Committee's public forum in September. She spoke on immigration issues and reform.

**Lariza Garzón** graduated from Stetson University (DeLand, Florida) last December after emigrating from Colombia. As a student, she directed the computer center Stetson sponsors at the Farm Worker Association of Florida office in Pierson. This center makes it possible for people to earn, online, the Mexican equivalent of a GED.

Lariza began working part-time in March in the Deland office with Bert Perry. Lariza has been coordinating NFWM's Florida Enforcement Project's Community Response Team (CRT) in Pierson and the Drift Catcher Project. Since August she has been full-time developing new CRTs elsewhere in the state.

## NFWM Organized New Student Groups in Florida

The third *Encuentro* in Immokalee, Florida took place from October 30th to September 3rd. It was organized by the Student/Farm Worker Alliance and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers to discuss ways in which students can support the Burger King campaign. This campaign seeks to pressure BK to sign a contract with agricultural workers so that they can receive an additional one penny per pound of tomatoes (an agreement already made with Taco Bell and McDonald's).

For the first time, students from Stetson University, Daytona Beach Community College and graduate students from Colombia, South America, attended an Encuentro. Lariza Garzón brought together this group and attended the gathering with them. The Encuentro served to inspire, train and provide these students with the opportunity of networking with other students and organizations. They also participated in the rally at the Burger King headquarters.

Lariza will assist these newly energized students as they organize support groups in their schools. These new groups will hold events in their communities to support the BK campaign as well as focus on other local, state-wide and national campaigns that support farm workers.



NFWM's Lariza Garzón, students & farm workers at the *Encuentro*.



Support tomato pickers in Florida and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' campaign to get Burger King to follow the lead of Taco Bell & McDonald's and negotiate with CIW. For a sample manager letter to take to your local BK and other actions, visit [www.nfwm.org](http://www.nfwm.org).

**TAKE  
ACTION**





## CIW Puts Pressure on Burger King



CIW Photo

Over 100 people, many from St. Maurice Catholic Church, joined in a Burger King march and picket Saturday, August 25th in Ft. Lauderdale to send a message that BK needs to work with the CIW to improve wages and conditions in its tomato supply chain.

Shortly after that successful event, attendees at the *Encuentro* in Immokalee joined workers and local supporters for a rally in front of the BK headquarters in Miami on Friday, August 31st. BK executives were presented with two "over-sized" letters: one from the Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ and one from the Student/Farmworker Alliance.

NFWM's Jeanette Smith has helped to mobilize support from local faith communities and media throughout the summer and things are definitely heating up.

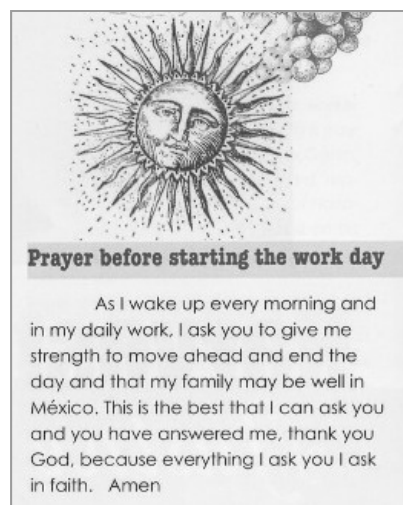
This September 29th - October 7th, CIW will conduct a BK campaign "truth tour" up and down the state of Florida. And on November 30th - December 2nd, there will be a major 3-day rally in Miami at the BK headquarters. Check the CIW web site ([www.ciw-online.org](http://www.ciw-online.org)) for details of these events.

## Doug Still, Long-time Farm Worker Advocate Dies

The Rev. Doug Still served the National Council of Churches as the Executive Director of the California Migrant Ministry (CMM) from 1956 to 1960. He initiated the year-round rural fringe ministries that drew state and national denominational bodies into a working relationship with the CMM--relationships that were critical in the days following the 1965 Delano Grape Strike. Doug also initiated community organization training with Fred Ross & Cesar Chavez for every CMM staff person, helping to prepare the staff for the unionizing struggles ahead. Doug died at his home in Oregon on July 1, 2007 at the age of 83.

## NFWM DVD Presentation Updated

*From the 2007 Harvest of Justice  
Table Prayers*



NFWM' Powerpoint Presentation on DVD "Farm Workers' Lives and the Work of NFWM" is being updated. The update will be available early October for download from our website or as a disc mailed to you. The DVD is about 20 minutes and is a great tool to use at a *Feast for Justice* event along with our Harvest of Justice Table Prayers.

***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 2007 version, "The Prayers of Farm Workers," the prayers and narrative are from farm workers themselves (see sample above).

✂ **To order *Harvest of Justice* mail in this form, go to [www.nfwm.org](http://www.nfwm.org) or call 314-726-6470.**

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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](http://www.nfwm.org)***

*or contact Ginnie at [ginnie@nfwm.org](mailto:ginnie@nfwm.org) or 314-726-6470.*

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**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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