

## CESAR CHAVEZ' STATEMENT ON THE FAST

Delano, CA

7/19/88

The fast is first and foremost personal. It is something I feel compelled to do. It is directed at myself. It is a fast for the purification of my own body, mind and soul.

The fast is also a heartfelt prayer for purification and strengthening for all of us — for myself and for all those who work beside me in the farm workers movement. It is a fervent prayer that, together, we will confront and resist, with all our strength, the scourge of poisons that threatens our people and our land and our food.

There is no doubt that we work hard at the many tasks within our movement, but the times we face truly call for more ... Do we carry in our hearts the sufferings of farm workers and their children? Do we feel deeply enough the pain of those who must work in the fields every day with these poisons ... or the anguish of the many families who have lost their loved ones to cancer ... who fear for the lives of their children ... who have lost their babies through miscarriage ... who agonize over the outcome of their pregnancies ... who are raising their children with deformities ... who ask, with fear in their voices, "where will this deadly plague strike next?" Do we feel their pain deeply enough? I know I don't — and I am ashamed.

The fast is also an act of penance for those in positions of moral authority and for all men and women activists who know what is right and just, who know that they could or should do more, who have become bystanders and thus collaborators with an industry that does not care about its workers.

The fast is finally a declaration of non-cooperation with supermarkets who promote and sell and profit from California table grapes and who are just as culpable as those who manufacture the poisons and those who use them on workers, on our land and on our food. It is my fondest hope that our friends, everywhere, will begin a great movement of non-cooperation with supermarkets; that people will resist, in a myriad of nonviolent ways, the presence of grapes in the stores where they shop.

During the past few years I have been studying the plague of pesticides on our land and on our food. I have read the literature and I have met with the experts. I have talked to workers and to the families afflicted by poisonings. The evil is far greater than even I had thought. It will not be eradicated by more studies or by legislative hearings or executive power. It will take our combined energy and influence at the marketplace to change the cycle of poisons and destruction and death that threatens our people and our world.

The solution to this deadly crisis will not be found in the arrogance of the powerful but in solidarity with the weak and the helpless. I pray to God that this fast will be a preparation for a multitude of simple deeds for justice, carried out by men and women whose hearts are focused on the suffering of the poor and who yearn, with us, for a better world. Together, all things are possible.





**CESAR CHAVEZ**  
"Grapes contaminated"

# Union pushes grape boycott

By ANNE DAWSON  
Toronto Sun

Canadians are again being asked to boycott California grapes — this time because a union claims the fruit could cause cancer and birth defects.

The United Farm Workers of America say the grapes are contaminated with pesticides.

Environmentalists and labor and community leaders are to attend a press conference in Toronto Tuesday when final test results are presented.

★ THE TORONTO STAR, WEDNESDAY, JULY 27, 1988 /A7

## Groups call for grape boycott citing threat from pesticides

Labor and religious groups renewed their call yesterday for a boycott of California table grapes, saying the pesticides they blame for health problems in field workers could also reach consumers.

If spraying, residue which remained when the grapes arrived in Canada could threaten the health of consumers, said Danny Martinez, vice-president of the United Farm Workers union.

He said tests conducted by the union last weekend at Toronto-area supermarkets found that 62

of 72 samples contained pesticides above government guidelines.

Jim Silk, a spokesman for Health and Welfare Canada's food directorate, said some imports could be above the allowable level despite regular inspections. But he said it isn't accurate to link the relatively

mild exposure to consumers with that of farmworkers who are directly exposed to pesticides.

The department has tested 58 shipments of grapes over the past three years and found five samples that exceeded Canadian limits for pesticide residues.

### Tests positive

Grapes in more than half of 50 Metro supermarkets have tested positive for nerve gas-type pesticides, union spokesman David Martinez said yesterday. The tests are still under way, he added.

"This means Canadians are ingesting these chemicals without any body knowing what the long-term chronic effects are."

The grape boycott was first begun in the 1960s by union leader Cesar Chavez. He fought for improved pay and working conditions.

Chavez again is touring Canada and the U.S. to speak about the public health risk.

### 'No problem'

Knob Hill Farms president Steve Stavros said he isn't worried.

"Everything we sell is approved by the (federal) government. We have no problem with our grapes."

A & P official Roger Shannon said he hadn't heard of the union claim, but his company will investigate.

An Ontario environment ministry official said the information will be reviewed.

Gary Gallon said if the pesticide levels exceed guidelines, the grapes could be ordered off the market.

Federal agriculture department officials couldn't be reached for comment.

A18 THE GLOBE AND MAIL, WEDNESDAY, JULY 27, 1988

## Government denies farm union's charges on grape pesticides

BY LILA SARICK  
The Globe and Mail

California grapes are regularly tested by the Canadian Government and are safe for consumption, despite statements by a farm workers' union that tests indicate the fruit may be contaminated, officials with the federal Health and Welfare Department say.

"As far as Health and Welfare is concerned, we believe we've done appropriate testing. The results we have indicate that California grapes in large measure are in compliance with Canadian levels," Colin Broughton, director of the health protection branch's Ontario region, said yesterday.

The Health and Welfare Department has tested 58 shipments of grapes over the past three years and has found five samples that exceeded Canadian limits for pesticide residues, he said. Three of those five samples met U.S. standards, but failed to pass stricter Canadian tests.

The United Farm Workers said tests it conducted on grapes in 66 Toronto-area stores showed that 86 per cent of the 72 samples showed traces of the pesticides parathion and phosdrin.

The tests were conducted as part of the union's third international boycott campaign, called the Wrath of Grapes, highlighting safety concerns. The union is urging consumers to boycott California table grapes until growers ban the use of five pesticides, establish a joint grower-UFW testing program and permit free union elections.

Union vice-president David Martinez told a news conference that "the same pesticides which cause death and deformities among farm workers and their children are being eaten in grapes every day by Canadian consumers."

All the pesticides on the UFW's list — parathion, phosdrin, dinoseb methyl bromide and Captan — are used in Canada, said Roch Parisien, a spokesman for Agriculture Canada's pesticide directorate.

These particular chemicals are among the more toxic products, but not if used properly, he said. "There's always a level of risk. The key is whether they can be used safely."

Four or five farmers are prosecuted annually for violating safety standards, he said.

Dinoseb was banned by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 1986, but the ban was modified a year later and the herbicide is still being used on some crops until an alternative is found.

Some dinoseb preparations were outlawed by Agriculture Canada in 1985 and others are still under review, Mr. Parisien said.

The boycott has been endorsed by unions and labor groups, the Ontario New Democratic Party and the United Church of Canada.

But Bruce Obbink, president of the California Grape Growers' Commission in Fresno, said this boycott was having little success and growers were selling record numbers of grapes at good prices.

About 10 per cent of California grapes are exported to Canada, he said.

ACCORDING TO HEALTH & WELFARE CANADA,  
9% OF U.S. GRAPES ARE CONTAMINATED  
WITH ILLEGAL LEVELS OF PESTICIDES!