

English Dock Workers Refuse to Handle Grapes

LONDON, ENGLAND, February 30 -- English dock workers, long shoremen, and truck drivers have repeatedly refused to handle scab California grapes in England during the last month, and the result is an almost totally effective grape boycott in the British Isles, according to Donna Haber, grape boycott coordinator for England.

The grape boycott has had the enthusiastic backing of the Executive Board of the Transport and General Workers Union, and rank and file workers, acting on their own, have honored their pledges and resolutions with an unofficial refusal to handle grapes.

Workers had warned produce buyers during the fall that grapes were a "no-no." Then on January 23, workers in the Covent Garden market refused to handle scab grapes. On January 28, dockers refused to unload grapes from the liner S. S. Valangar, which was carrying 298,000 pounds of Emperor grapes destined for London, and another 10,000 pounds headed for Liverpool.

On February 2, dock workers and consumers pressured ship owners who had unloaded a large consignment of grapes on the Royal Group docks to reload them back on to the ships. Truck drivers refused to pick up grapes sitting on the Tibury Docks. Porters refused to handle grapes in the Borough and Brentford Markets of London and in the Birmingham market. The boycott also got a boost from an article in the London Sunday Times.

"We are very encouraged with the cooperation the grape boycott is getting in England," said Rev. James Drake, who stopped off in England after attending a World Council of Churches meeting in Switzerland

last week. "We are getting good publicity in London and other cities. Things are beginning to move."

Because of the chaos in European markets last year caused by the grape boycott, UFWOC estimates that growers sold considerably below the 245 million pounds of grapes which they normally sell per year in foreign markets. Orders were expected to be way below normal this year, though some markets, including the chain of Sainsbury Stores in England, are still ordering grapes. Through cooperation with the international union movements, UFWOC is especially hopeful of sustaining grape sales in England, Scandinavia, the Philippines, and certain other key markets. UFWOC is also studying the growing volume of grapes heading into Mexico, and plans to attempt to launch a boycott in Mexico in the near future.

SOURING GRAPES

DELANO, February 6 -- As of January 31, grape growers still had 3,302,950 boxes of grapes in cold storage, according to the "Grape Report #174 of the U. S. Department of Agriculture" released today. This compared to 1,990,460 bags in cold storage on January 31, 1969, and 542,000 bags in cold storage on January 31, 1968.

The main variety of unsold grape remains the Emperor, and growers were stuck with 2,380,970 boxes of Emperors this year, compared to 1,845,440 left in cold storage as of January 31, 1969. Growers still had almost 150,000 boxes of Almerias, and over 330,000 boxes of Calmerias this year. Both varieties were pretty much sold out by this time in all recent previous years. With

Grape Grower Notes Boycott Success

FRESNO, February 15 -- California Governor Ronald Reagan and California Farm Bureau Federation President Allan Grant opposed recently that the boycott of table grapes was "completely ineffective, a complete failure." Governor Reagan stated, as proof, that he had personally eaten more grapes this year than ever before.

But Sanger grape grower Virgil Rasmussen was quoted in the Fresno Bee this week as saying, "There are table grape growers who are broke now. We have one of the biggest crops on record. The warehouses are full, and you know what happens in a situation like this. We need every market we can get. Prices have gone from \$3.25 to \$2.25 to \$1.75..." Rasmussen put the entire blame for the disastrous situation on the grape boycott.

EL MALCRIADO SAYS: If you still have doubts about whether the boycott is going to work, Mr. Grower, we'll make a confession. We're just learning how to fight. You ain't seen nothing yet.



392,830 boxes of Ribiers still on hand, compared to only 115,190 at this time last year, Ribiers rank as the grape second hardest hit by the boycott.

Spokesmen for the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee boycott of table grapes point to the large holdings of unsold grapes as the major reason for a strong all-out push on the boycott this winter and spring. But boycott strategists are also doing in-depth studies to figure out how to stop the Thompson Seedless grapes from being sold. "It is the Thompsons which are the biggest variety, their biggest money maker," said boycott director Larry Illing. "If we can stop the sales of the Thompsons, we know they will sign."

RAIN OF DEATH AND SICKNESS

Sacramento, February 7 -- The State Department of Public Health admitted last week that pesticide poisoning is far more widespread than official records indicate.

"We have reason to believe that the reports of illness we receive do not accurately reflect the true magnitude of the problem," officials said in a report to the legislature.

Officials based this frightening conclusion on results of a door to door survey of 1,120 farm families in Tulare County; most of the families suffered symptoms of nausea, headache, dizziness and muscle weakness.

During the same 20 month period, the official health records showed only 40 recorded cases of pesticide poisoning among all the 18,000 farm workers in the county.

"The disparity clearly points to the hypothesis that there is something peculiar to the working environment in agriculture which is conducive to symptoms such as nausea and vertigo - and this factor may very well be organic phosphate pesticides," the report said.

The report also noted that the organic phosphate chemicals involved, such as parathion, were now being widely introduced as a replacement for DDT, the use of which is being restricted.

EL MALCRIADO SAYS: Cesar Chavez has charged that thousands of farm workers throughout the U.S. suffer from the "walking death," a state brought on by continual exposure to pesticides. The "walking death" is characterized by symptoms such as nausea, headache, dizziness and muscle weakness. Growers and right-wingers have scoffed at his charges. Yet



GROUND AND AERIAL
APPLICATION OF PESTICIDES

in the survey described above, most of the 1,120 families interviewed had suffered these symptoms. Public relations stunts like the "banning" of DDT are no substitute for a comprehensive program of regulation for all pesticides.

CALIFORNIA AG. DEPARTMENT APPROVES USE HERBICIDES BLAMED FOR BIRTH DEFECTS

SACRAMENTO, February 15 -- California Department of Agriculture officials admitted today that the herbicide known as 245-T and blamed for causing birth defects in Viet Nam and injuries to women in Arizona, is widely used in California. The herbicide, which is used as a "Defoliant" in Viet Nam, has been singled out by scientists as responsible for thousands of deformed and defective babies in areas of Viet Nam where it is used. Several women testifying before a Congressional Investigative Committee led by Rep. Richard McCarr-

thy in Globe, Arizona last week testified that it had damaged reproductive organs and, in one case, caused severe illness.

"We have never had any demonstrated human or animal injury here in California" stated James Kalstrom, acting head of the agricultural chemical branch of the department. "There has only been skin irritation."

Murray Pryor, weed control specialist for the Agriculture Department, said the state had conducted no laboratory tests of its own on 245-T, and follows the recommen-

dation of manufacturers covering uses in which it is potentially dangerous. It is the general practice of the State Department of Agriculture to accept findings and reports of the manufacturing companies of pesticides as to their dangers and effects on animals and humans. There is no program of independent testing.

The weed killer can be bought over the counter in garden supply stores. For use of large quantities of the poison, growers must secure a permit from their friendly county agricultural commissioner.