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Watsonville. The UFW found encouragement for this effort from the overwhelming victory it had won when workers at VCNM Farms, a large strawberry grower near Watsonville, asked the UFW to assist on a wildcat work stoppage they organized last summer. Within a few days, the ALRB conducted a representation election, and the VCNM workers voted overwhelmingly for the UFW. But just a few days later, the company plowed under one of its four major fields and announced that it was going out of business.

With strong financial backing from new AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, the UFW poured its resources into Watsonville, organizing dozens of house meetings as well as meeting workers in the fields. But the strawberry growers have fought back effectively, threatening workers with allusions to the laying off of strawberry workers at Oceanview Produce and VCNM Farms when they supported the UFW. In the middle of this year's strawberry season a food poison-

ing scare struck the industry when cyclospora contamination, causing severe diarrhea and cramps, was mistakenly attributed to California strawberries. Strawberry shipments declined in the wake of the scare, and some growers told workers that a possible UFW boycott would mean the loss of even more work. Growers also organized a "Pro-Worker Committee" and held a march on August 10, 1996, in which as many as 7,000 growers and workers participated, further illustrating the strength of the industry.

At its 13th Constitutional Convention, held in Fresno on August 31 and September 1, the union and AFL-CIO President Sweeney announced a major new initiative in the strawberry campaign: member unions of the federation would join with UFW staff members to conduct a campaign of consumer education in 50 U.S. cities about conditions in the strawberry industry. It is evident that the strawberry campaign will be a long and difficult struggle, but the UFW is back and plans to put up a strong fight.



#### UFW Contested Representation Elections, 1994-95

Company	Location	Crops	Date	UFW votes	Co./Non-UFW votes
Oceanview Produce Co.	Oxnard	vegetables	5/18/94	298	278
Cal Redi Date Co.	Coachella	dates	6/10/94	25	9
Warmerdam	Hanford	tree fruit	6/23/94	220	43
Theodore Jay Fish Co.	Coachella	dates	6/30/94	6	0-
Lewis Farms	Traver	fruit	7/19/94	80	9
Gallo	Santa Rosa	wine grapes	7/26/94	81	21
Ariel	Watsonville	mushrooms	9/2/94	30	4
Bear Creek Prod. Co.	Wasco	roses	12/16/94	648	433
Monterey Mushrooms	Watsonville	mushrooms	4/4/95	302	94
Sunrise Mushrooms Co.	Watsonville	mushrooms	4/28/95	115	10
Chateau Ste. Michelle	Washington	wine grapes	6/2/95	53	33
VCNM Farms	Salinas	strawberries	8/17/95	332	50
CP Meiland	Wasco	roses	12/22/95	175	114

## TIPP: Multi-Agency Effort to Enforce Labor Standards

by Merissa Wright, Rosario Ruiz-Dark, Don Villarejo, and Jennifer Sherman

**T**IPP—the Targeted Industries Partnership Program—began four years ago as a response to concerns about workplace injuries and labor law violations in the California agricultural and garment industries.

The program is a multi-agency effort involving the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), the state Departments of Industrial Relations and Employment Development (DIR and EDD), and the California Occupational Safety and Health Agency (Cal-OSHA). Working together, these agencies formed a task force to concentrate resources on enforcement of state and federal labor standards.

After working for more than a year to develop a labor contractor and farm labor violations database, several members of the California Institute for Rural Studies (CIRS) office staff were given the opportunity to join the inter-agency staff of TIPP for two days of enforcement sweeps in the San Joaquin Valley.

The first day began at 3:30 a.m., when representatives from agencies such as DOL, DIR, and Cal-OSHA, as well as State Labor Commissioner Roberta Mendonca, and Assistant Labor Commissioner Jose Millan, assembled at a hotel. The TIPP team then drove to a busy intersection in rural Fresno County, where it was met by several California Highway Patrol (CHP) officers. Together they set up a roadblock to stop traffic from all directions, and pulled over for inspection vehicles that appeared likely to be transporting multiple passengers.

From 4:45 a.m. until 6:15 a.m. when

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the roadblock ended, more than 20 *raitero* vans and trucks carrying farm workers (see "Rural Rush Hour," page 1) were diverted for inspection. The inspectors cited 11 vehicles and drivers for code violations and 11 drivers as unli-

were fined and cited by the agency with jurisdiction in each incident.

On the second afternoon of the enforcement sweep, TIPP members also visited several labor camps, where



TIPP team inspects a substandard labor camp

censed day haulers. Two vehicles were confiscated at the site for multiple violations—vehicles and drivers without proper licenses, lack of insurance, unsecured seating, and unregistered trailers without break or signal lights.

The TIPP team devoted the rest of the first day as well as most of the second day to surprise visits to plum, nectarine and peach orchards, and grape vineyards. Some of the sites TIPP representatives visited were those of growers and Farm Labor Contractors (FLCs) who had been identified in the earlier vehicle inspections.

At these field sites, inspectors looked for violations of the field sanitation, minimum wage, overtime, record-keeping and child labor laws. Both growers and FLCs were cited for violations such as lack of clean toilets at the job site, lack of easily accessible and/or cold drinking water, illegal forms of wage payments, and child labor. Violators

DOL and DIR officials found multiple violations. Among these was an unlicensed camp with particularly squalid conditions but no clues to indicate who was responsible for running the camp.

It is not uncommon for violators operating such camps to evade identification. Workers or the foremen are infrequently willing to divulge the name of the grower or FLC responsible; typically no one will speak up. Without this information, TIPP teams cannot issue citations.

Field inspection is one of the TIPP effort's most effective tools in catching labor law violators. Since 1992, the program has recovered \$7.5 million in unpaid agriculture and garment wages owed to workers, and has helped improve overall compliance with labor laws. Often inspections are based on referrals from local or state agencies.

Referrals are also generated by complaints from farmers who do abide by the laws and want to call attention to violators with unfair advantages. In areas where inspections are most prevalent, definite improvements have been witnessed.

TIPP focuses some of its efforts on education, conducting workshops in the fields to teach farmers and farm labor contractors about compliance with the laws. But enforcement is equally important as education, and TIPP makes substantial efforts in enforcing state and federal labor laws.

Overall, this multi-agency effort has been successful in making a dent in labor law violations. David Dorame of DIR says, the solution lies in increased and continued enforcement. Although the TIPP staff is currently too small to catch all violators, it looks forward to adding 23 more DIR enforcement staff members during the 1997 budget year. With a larger staff and technical improvements such as field computers, the TIPP program will be even more successful in preventing labor law violations.



TIPP Agricultural Inspections, 1992-95

Year	Total Inspections	Child Labor Citations	Civil Citations	Criminal Citations	Penalties Assessed	Wages Recovered
1992-93	647	153	282	144	\$2,044,755	\$529,042
1994	589	74	173	87	\$998,300	\$414,557
1995	362	64	111	28	\$897,855	\$583,178