

# Report on National Farmworker Awareness Week 2009

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*and much more!*

info: [www.farmworkerawareness.org](http://www.farmworkerawareness.org)



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- 2: Student gleaning cabbage in FL action.
- 3: Farmworkers and Reproductive Rights panel.
- 4: Post Cards and Bumper Stickers were available for participants this spring.

# Summary:

2009 marked the 10th annual National Farmworker Awareness Week, and it was a BIG one- well over 30,000 people across the continent took part in marches, film screenings, parties, demonstrations, and other actions in honor of farmworkers! In total, we saw over 300 events in 133 cities and 28 states, plus one action in Zacatecas, Mexico- see the highlights below!



**Top:** Students participate in a cabbage cleaning project. **Middle:** Bikes donated to farmworkers living in Apopka, Florida. **Bottom:** Civic Media Center and National Farm Worker Ministry Youth and Young Adult Network co-sponsor an event in Gainesville, FL.

## Highlights

**The Youth and Young Adult Network of the National Farm Worker Ministry** (Florida) worked with several other organizations to coordinate a total of 12 activities, involving more than 200 people in the cities of Gainesville, Orlando and Winter Park. These activities included gleaning cabbage, a presentation about women farm worker reproductive rights, a bicycle delivery for the community of Apopka (for farm workers who can't obtain licenses due to legal status and/or low wages), a Pre-Hispanic Fest, information tables, an event in support of the DREAM Act and other awareness events and presentations which used art, music and films in support of farm worker justice.

**National Farm Worker Ministry** (California) Around 3,000 people attended a mass in honor of Cesar Chavez presided over by Cardinal Roger Mahoney on March 29, 2009. National Farm Worker Ministry staff made presentations at 12 different churches during Farm Worker Awareness Week, reflecting on the sacredness of food, our direct connection to farmworkers, and why people of faith are called to stand in solidarity with farmworkers. Arturo Rodriguez, President of the United Farm Workers, spoke about the continuing struggle of farm workers for justice in the fields at Cal State Long Beach. NFWM supporters held a discussion at Loyola Marymount University Law School highlighting the struggles of the South Central Farmers and raising farmworker issues in honor of Cesar Chavez's birthday. Around 5,000 people gathered in Los Angeles to participate in the 11th Annual Cesar E. Chavez Walk and Festival.

### **National Farm Worker Ministry**

(Oregon) On March 28, farmworkers and their supporters held a "Gran Marcha" for justice in Hermiston, Oregon, organized by the United Farm Workers union. On Tuesday, March 31st, a Governor's Proclamation honoring Farmworker Awareness Week was presented at a noontime rally honoring César Chávez on the steps of the state capitol in Salem. The Multnomah County Commissioners presented their own proclamation honoring Farmworker Awareness Week and César Chávez at the County Building in Portland. The Portland State University MeCHA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán) group also sponsored a march for farmworker justice.

### **Student/Farmworker Alliance**

Around 500 students on several campuses worked SFA's "Dine with Dignity" foodservice/farmworker solidarity campaign into their FAW events. Many of these held exploratory meetings with campus-dining directors and also had letter-writing events and petitions. Some campuses collected dining hall "comment cards" and had students fill them out with messages about farmworkers rights

### **University of Minnesota-Twin**

**Cities** The Chicanos Studies Migrant Farmworker Class took a trip to Centro Campesino, which is an advocacy center for migrant farmworkers in southern Minnesota. Melody Gonzalez, hosted by Fair Food Across the Borders, presented a documentary about migrant farmworkers in Mexico. Students organized an evening program at the Parkway Theater featuring Eden Torres (reading a short piece from her unpublished novel) and Joe Minjares, (stand up comedy about the life of being a migrant farmworker and a Latino in Minnesota). Students raised over \$1,000 at a raffle that evening, which was donated to the Centro Campesino

### **Fair Food Across Borders**

At the University of Notre Dame, the event/presentation "Working for Social Justice from the fields of Immokalee to the fields of Sinaloa" was sponsored by the Higgins Labor Research Center. At the University of Wisconsin-Madison, MEChA sponsored a film screening of *Paying the Price: Migrant Workers in the Toxic Fields of Sinaloa*

### **Farmworker Association of Florida**

worked with National Farm Worker Ministry, Farmworkers Self-Help, Florida Catholic Conference, Hope Community Center, Jobs with Justice, Florida Immigrant Coalition, Democracia USA, ACLU of Central Florida, UFW in Quincy, FL and students at Rollins College, University of Central Florida, University of Florida, University of South Florida, New College, Full Sail University and Stetson University. In addition, they worked with the Civic Media Center in Gainesville and student groups at USF and UF. They gave presentations, helped organize events, supported students in making documentary shorts, YouTube videos, engaged students in making bandanas, attended public meetings, held a press conference in the state capitol, tabled on college campuses, and lobbied state legislators. Highlights include a Farmworker Forum at Stetson University with presentations by farmworkers and fern cutters in the Pierson/Volusia County area. On March 25th, Local Project Darfur: Project Music held a benefit concert to raise awareness about farmworkers and to collect donations of food and clothing for local community. FAWF and Farmworkers Self-Help organized two bus loads of farmworkers and community people to testify in Orlando for Comprehensive Immigration Reform. Finally, Full Sail University students engaged in the Bandana Project by watching a power point presentation, learning about farmworker women issues, and making bandanas.

### **El Comité de Apoyo a los Trabajadores Agrícolas**

CATA hosted an Alternative Spring Break trip with seven students from Ohio State University as well as a summit from March 22-27, 2009. Students spent the week with the farmworker community in southern New Jersey and Pennsylvania. CATA co-sponsored an event with Rutgers University on Thursday, March 26, 2009 where author Randy Shaw talked about his book - *Beyond the Fields: Cesar Chavez, the UFW and the Struggle for Justice in the 21st Century*. CATA also presented on a Farmworker Justice Panel hosted by St. Joseph's University - Students for Workers' Rights. CATA took part in immigrant community meetings held across the country with Representative Luis Gutierrez in Philadelphia, PA on April 4th and in New Brunswick, NJ on April 25th.



**Top:** Got Food?

*Thank a Farmworker* slogan appears on Farmworker Housing demonstration in Florida. **Bottom:** Ohio State students visit CATA on their Alternative Spring Break to learn about the lives of undocumented workers.

### **Student Action with Farmworkers**

Local students and SAF supporters organized over 20 events in Central North Carolina for the national week of action, including a "People, Power, Poultry" cookout and educational panel combining the struggles of NC poultry processing workers with the importance of local organic food for consumers. UNC-Chapel Hill students demonstrated for access to higher education for undocumented students; the Alliance for Farmworker Opportunity Programs held a screening of their new film, *Children in the Fields*; local agencies held a training on farmworkers and sexual assault as part of the Bandana Project; and the National Pesticide Forum came to Carrboro, NC during the final weekend of Farmworker Awareness Week. In all, over 500 people participated in local actions and events!

### **Farmworker Justice**

Distributed information and promoted FAW events and campaigns on our blog and through social networks. They also provided information/resources/materials for other groups participating in FAW.

# Sponsor Organizations

The Farmworkers Support Committee (CATA)  
Centro de los Derechos del Migrante (CDM)  
Cesar E. Chavez Foundation  
Comunidad a Comunidad  
Domestic Fair Trade Association  
Fair Food Across Borders  
Farm Labor Organizing Committee  
Farmworker Association of Florida  
Farmworker Justice  
Farmworkers Self-Help, Inc.  
Labor Education and Research Center  
National Farm Worker Ministry/Youth and Young Adult Network  
Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN)  
Southern Poverty Law Center  
Student Action with Farmworkers  
Student/Farmworker Alliance  
Student Labor Action Project  
United Farm Workers  
University of MN- Chicano Studies Program



**Top:** Students and workers standing together at bike donation event in Apopka, FL.



**Bottom:** Cabbage gleaning project

## In partnership with the Student Labor Week of Action

Student Action with Farmworkers and the Student Labor Action Project each coordinate 2 large national weeks of action: Farmworker Awareness Week and the Student Labor Week of Action. Over the past several years, we have co-hosted our national weeks of action and have jointly promoted what we see as a collective effort to raise awareness and drive actions that support a national movement for worker justice. As a result, each year Farmworker Awareness Week and the Student Labor Week of Action will happen at the same time, to coincide with the anniversary of Cesar Chavez Birthday (March 31) and the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (April 4).

Farmworker Awareness Week began in 1999 and has grown each year since then. In 2009, FAW had 19 national co-sponsors in the US and Mexico, and accounted for over 300 actions in 133 cities and 28 states. The Student Labor Week of Action began in 2000, and in 2009 was made up over over 250 actions in more than 29 states. With its partnering organization such as United States Student Association and Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan, the Student Labor week of Action has become a pivotal time for student activism.

## Why do we have Farmworker Awareness Week?

**Because farmworkers feed the world.** We demand just living and working conditions for farmworkers and an end to unfair treatment under the law. We demand fairly harvested food.

**Farm work is the third most dangerous job in the U.S.,** yet the people who plant and harvest our fruits and vegetables lack many of the basic worker protections that most of us take for granted. Things like overtime, unemployment insurance, even protection when joining a union are not guaranteed under federal law.

**We are connected to farmworkers everyday** because we all consume food— much of it planted and harvested by farmworkers, yet farmworkers remain largely invisible and continue to live and work in unacceptable conditions.

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**Mark your calendar for the next FAW/SLWoA!**

**March 28-April 4, 2010**

Find out more about the week of action and about how you can get involved! [www.farmworkerawareness.org](http://www.farmworkerawareness.org)

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