

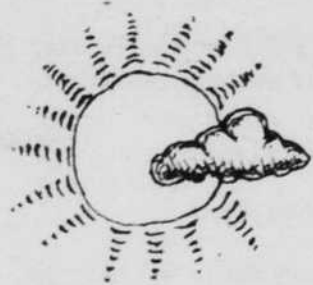
Shortage of help, food hinders boycott goal

By LES ZAITZ
Of the Emerald

Supporters of the United Farm Workers lettuce boycott say only a shortage of helpers and food is keeping them from having a strong impact on EMU food sales.

The Revolutionary Student Brigade (RSB) is operating a food sales table on the EMU terrace on a 30-day temporary restaurant license.

Herb Everett, a RSB member, said the group is selling the food to protest the EMU lettuce purchasing procedures and lack of student control of EMU policies.



Clear after morning hangover

Richard Reynolds, EMU director, said the terrace sales so far have not had a serious impact on food sales in the EMU restaurant. Last year, terrace sales in a similar boycott reduced EMU food sales 40 per cent. Kenneth Larsen, EMU food manager, said several organizations are selling food on the terrace, making it difficult to determine the impact of the boycott sales.

Everett said the protest was initiated this year because the EMU continues to purchase scab (Teamster) lettuce. The group supports a UFW boycott of Teamster lettuce. The UFW and Teamsters are involved in a membership struggle among California farm workers.

Last year, UFW lettuce was sold in an off-and-on manner at the EMU because of an inconsistent supply. A new produce company, however, has arranged for a steady supply. Steve Scherrer, a buyer for J.H.S. Produce Co., said his firm can provide the EMU with

a constant supply of UFW lettuce. "Anytime I need a 1,000 cases of lettuce and I order a day ahead, I can get the 1,000 cases," he said.

Outlining the EMU purchasing policy, Larsen said he purchases lettuce in quantity parallel to consumer demand. "If they buy more UFW lettuce, we'll get more UFW lettuce," he said.

In a referendum vote last year, 71.4 per cent of the students voted to request the university purchase only UFW lettuce. The university however did not adopt

a policy implementing referendum results.

Everett said the EMU boycott "is another step towards putting economic pressure on them to stop selling the scab lettuce." He said, however, "We haven't had enough food to have that much of an impact."

He said the boycott also protests lack of student control of the EMU. "Students pay for this building. The State Board of Higher Education doesn't pay for this building at all," he said. The RSB contends students should

have a stronger voice in what happens at the facility.

The two issues are tied together, Everett said, by last spring's referendum vote which showed students wanted only UFW lettuce.

Everett said the Brigade needs help in selling and making food. "We need all kinds of people to help. We need people just to support the cause," he said.

He said if the university adopted a policy to purchase only UFW lettuce, the issue would be resolved.

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Life in another logging town

Editor's note: Chuck Holzhauer [Sr. journalism] worked this past summer as an assistant to a forestry technician in Norway, and, on the way from Eugene to start the job, spent a few weeks in northern Spain.

The Town

The town of Biescas, Spain, nestles into the base of the Pyreneese Mountains at the head of the Gallego River valley, about 75 kilometers north from the provincial capital of Huesca.

Steep ridges, forested with oaks, pines and firs, rise to the east and west. Southwards, the valley flattens into irrigated fields of timothy, clover and grain. Northwards, the valley becomes too steep for much cultivation, and the slopes are forested right down to the banks of the tumbling, milky-clear stream.

In early May the town was cold. The mountainsides were grey — the oaks had not budded yet — and often at night a fierce wind roared down the valley, shaking the wooden shutters of my hotel room. Once a light snow dusted the streets.

The town, terra-cotta, was built of brick, stucco and red tile, with sharply contrasting doors and shutters of rich, varnished pine wood. Always and everywhere was the not unpleasant smell of animals — of grain, of damp hay, of manure.

The sawmill owner

Jesus Abos Labadio owns a small sawmill in the city of Zaragoza, about 145 kilometers away to the southwest. A man who seemed to consider communication with his fellow beings to be not only a necessity but an art, Abos could never simply speak, but demanded that speech be an argument, and when he talked to others whole legions of expressions would pass over his wrinkled brown face, and his arms would move in passionate gestures of incredulity, of exasperation, of supplication. Always though he would end an argument with a shy, sheepish grin and an offer of another "cafe." He wore the inevitable black beret, a great sheepskin coat, and drove a flashy new Peugeot.

Abos was in Biescas overseeing the logging and transport of trees which he had bought as standing timber to supply his mill in Zaragoza. He had about 10 men logging and driving for him, and he gave me "permiso" to go along with them for a day.

A day in the woods

We met at 6:30 on a damp morning in front of the hotel and crowded into a blue, Spanish-built Land Rover. Besides myself there were five loggers and the driver, Abos' nephew.

After following the main road north for a few hundred meters we turned off onto a steep dirt track that took us switch-backing up the west slope of the valley. We went about five kilometers, crossed the ridge, descended into a smaller, isolated valley and stopped, about a half hour after we left the hotel, at a silent, damp cluster of houses, surrounded by newly greening, stone-lined fields. Here we got out and Abos' nephew, having agreed to meet us at eight o'clock that night, piloted the rover off down the road and disappeared around a bend, leaving us alone in the silent misty morning.

By a wall, and unlocked, stood a rusty 25-gallon drum of gasoline.

Drawing by Chuck Lebo

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