



HOW CAN WE CONTROL PESTICIDES?

by Carolyn Geiger

We, consumers, are feeling less and less safe about pesticides, and with good reason. A government report issued last October states that only about half the pesticides on fruits and vegetables can be detected by Food and Drug Administration tests. The multi-residue tests detect only 163 of the 316 pesticides registered with the Environmental Protection Agency according to a study done by the Office of Technology Assessment — a research arm of Congress.

The report also states that even though technology exists to improve tests, the FDA has been slow in adopting newer methods. Meanwhile new pesticides are being developed and registered for use even though the FDA has not developed new detection methods.

While this information may alarm consumers the FDA seems relatively unconcerned. Pasquale Lombardo, manager of the FDA's pesticide program says, "It's safe to say the FDA does not think pesticides in foods are a number one threat. But we care about pesticides."

Another frightening development is that our water is also being poisoned. In mid-December the EPA issued a grim interim report showing that the ground water in at least thirty-eight states is contaminated with 74 different chemicals. And many agricultural areas have not been sampled yet.

For years growers have assumed that pesticides will break down into harmless chemicals or bind to the soil. They don't.

Farmworkers are the first ones to be poisoned by pesticides. The number of poisonings went up by forty-one percent in California

last year. Ralph Lightstone, pesticide expert for the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation, stated, "In the 1980s pesticide poisonings should have decreased. Instead, huge worker poisonings continue to increase, and no one yet is even counting chronic, longterm diseases such as sterility, birth defects and cancer."

Since federal agencies are so slow to protect us, what can we do to protect ourselves?

One important step is to support the Boycott of California Table Grapes, organized by the United Farmworkers Union. This nationwide boycott is putting pressure on grape growers to allow their workers free union elections. Besides improving conditions for our nation's lowest paid workers, the union contract forbids the use of the five most dangerous pesticides used in growing grapes. Once the Grape Boycott is successful, the UFW will organize the workers in other fruits and vegetables. The farmworkers will be much more vigilant in regulating dangerous pesticides than the slow moving EPA.

Support the Grape Boycott in Astoria by participating in the Grape Boycott March on Saturday, June 24. Meet at the Post Office at 1:00 p.m.

For more information call 325-1209 after 7:30 p.m.

Carolyn Geiger is an organizer for the Grape Boycott in Clatsop County.

Old Town Framing Co.

922 COMMERCIAL
325-5221

FOOD FOR PEOPLE, NOT FOR PROFIT

1389 DUANE
ASTORIA

THE COMMUNITY STORE

Bikes & Beyond

1396 Duane Street
ASTORIA, OREGON

KMUN 91.9 FM

CHEERS YOUR EARS

**TURNAROUND
BOOKS
&
ESPRESSO BAR**



111 Broadway, #3
Seaside (in Sand Dollar Square)



**CANNON BEACH
BOOK COMPANY**

132 north hemlock
cannon beach
436-1301