

Farmworkers

Forty-five years after the documentary *Harvest of Shame* exposed the barbaric living and working conditions of agricultural workers in America, farm workers still toil for inadequate pay with few to no benefits and few worker protections. Agricultural work exposes employees to dangerous levels of pesticides, carcinogens and pollution. Substandard wage rates discourage all but the most desperate workers, attracting undocumented workers who are vulnerable to exploitation.

This system is morally unacceptable. The agriculture industry has humane alternatives. We don't need to exploit poor people to grow our nation's food.

The Sierra Club therefore calls for a living wage for farm workers, a wage commensurate with the hard work and physical risks that agricultural work involves;

We call for strong, effective and enforced worker safety protection laws, including protection against exposure to unacceptable and dangerous levels of pesticides, carcinogens and pollution;

We call for effective protections for employee collective bargaining;

Finally, we call upon both industry and government officials to secure for these workers – and for all U.S. workers – adequate health care, dental care and other basic human needs that the citizens of most leading democracies take for granted.

Board of Directors, May 20-21, 2005