

# DOLORES HUERTA FOUNDATION

7/02/2008

## **Dolores Huerta Foundation and Vecinos Unidos Agricultural Vision for 2030**

1) It is important to implement a program that allows for young people to work in agriculture during the summer. There is a shortage of jobs for young people in the valley and fieldwork is an honest and good way for them to earn a living that allows them to focus on something positive. It has become the practice of many Farmers not to employ native residents and that practice could be changed by having a formalized agricultural job corps, which benefits both the community and the employer. The community would benefit by having young people employed, which without this opportunity, could lean towards delinquent tendencies. The Employer could have more potential employees to carry out the seasonal work.

2) As we know farm workers can only work seasonally. It is extremely difficult for them to provide for their families when they are not working. It is essential that they be able to have access to food when they are not working and this can be achieved by the following.

- The funds for the food bank need to be expanded and provided to rural communities. When the funds ran out after the last citrus freeze, many farm workers had difficulty feeding their families.
- There should be assistance from the U.S Food and Agriculture to create community gardens, which would allow farm workers to keep the majority of the food they harvest.
- Also in collaboration with the U.S Food and Agriculture Farm Workers could be taught how to preserve food. For Example, Farm Workers could learn how to can, freeze, and dry food.

3) We all understand that it is extremely important to keep pests away from crops. It is also extremely important to make sure that farm workers are healthy. That is why instead of using pesticides, growers should be using an organic alternative. This will benefit the workers, the community, and society at large because organic food is much healthier than the harsh chemicals that pesticides have.

4) As we know, the air quality in the valley is one of the worst in the nation. CDAF could recommend to growers to change agricultural practices and implement new methods to improve the air quality.

5) Farm Workers need to have reliable and safe transportation that should be provided by the county or city, depending on where they live. This benefits the farm worker because he is able to consistently be at work and the employer because he or she has reliable workers.

# DOLORES HUERTA FOUNDATION

- 6) Farm Workers should know who their Employers are at all times. This should be posted on the work site. The Employer should be held responsible if any injuries occur while a farm worker is on their property. Right know it is difficult to get accountability from a labor contractor and most farm workers don't know who their employer is.
- 7) Many issues that are arising in the workplace are caused because workers lack a documentation status. If they were issued a work permit, they wouldn't have to live in fear of being deported, making them more productive in the work place.
- 8) Every year there are many farm worker deaths that are linked to the hot, scorching weather in the central valley. If farm workers were taken out of the fields when it got to be over 100 degrees, then deaths caused by heat related illnesses could be eliminated.