

# *Las Moscas y Los Pesticidas*

An EPA Region 6 *Beyond Translation* Production



“[Farmworkers] stoop among long rows of vegetables, filling buckets with produce under the stark heat of the summer sun and the bitter cold of late autumn. They climb ladders in orchards, piling fruit into sacks slung across their shoulders. They prune vines, tie plants, remove weeds, sort, pack, spray, clean, and irrigate.”

- Daniel Rothenberg, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, University of Michigan and Author, *With These Hands: The Hidden World of Migrant Farmworkers Today*

# Farmworkers

It is estimated that there are over 3 million migrant and seasonal farmworkers in the US. These farmworkers travel throughout the U.S. serving as the backbone for a multi-billion dollar agricultural industry

According to the 1997-1998 findings of the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS),

- average age is 31;
- 80% are men,
- 84% speak Spanish;
- 12% are able to speak English;
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade - median level of education



# The agriculture industry is one of the most dangerous occupations in the United States

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has found that agricultural workers suffer from the highest rate of chemically related illness of any occupational group.

Pesticides can injure field workers through direct spray, drift, or the residue left by pesticides. Workers who mix, load, and apply pesticides suffer illnesses from spills, splashes, or inadequate protective equipment.

# Children's Health

children frequently come into contact with significant amounts of pesticide substances through residues unwittingly brought home by their parents from residues left on their bodies and clothing

take-home and in-home exposures put children at risk for acute and chronic illness



2009 National Center For Farmworker Health  
commemorative artwork created by Ramiro Rodriguez

EPA's responsibilities include protecting consumers, pesticide users, and workers who may be exposed to pesticides.



# EPA's Worker Protection Standard (WPS)

regulation aimed at reducing the risk of pesticide poisonings and injuries among agricultural workers and pesticide handlers

contains requirements for pesticide safety training, notification of pesticide applications, use of personal protective equipment, restricted-entry intervals after pesticide application, decontamination supplies, and emergency medical assistance

# Summary of WPS Requirements

- **Protection during applications** -- Applicators are prohibited from applying a pesticide in a way that will expose workers or other persons. Workers are excluded from areas while pesticides are being applied.
- **Restricted-entry intervals** -- Restricted-entry intervals must be specified on all agricultural plant pesticide product labels. Workers are excluded from entering a pesticide-treated area during the restricted-entry interval, with only narrow exceptions.
- **Personal protective equipment** -- Personal protective equipment must be provided and maintained for handlers and early-entry workers.
- **Notification to workers** -- Workers must be notified about treated areas so they may avoid inadvertent exposures.



# Summary of WPS Requirements

- **Decontamination supplies** -- Handlers and workers must have an ample supply of water, soap, and towels for routine washing and emergency decontamination.
- **Emergency assistance** -- Transportation must be made available to a medical care facility if a worker or handler may have been poisoned or injured. Information must be provided about the pesticide to which the person may have been exposed.
- **Pesticide safety training and safety posters** -- Training is required for all workers and handlers, and a pesticide safety poster must be displayed.
- **Access to labeling and site-specific information** -- Handlers and workers must be informed of pesticide label requirements. Central posting of recent pesticide applications is required.

# Training is essential for the proper use of pesticides and is key to the success of the WPS

- EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs has created or funded the distribution of over 1 million compliance manuals for growers;
- nearly 3 million safety training booklets;
- 700,000 safety posters; 20,000 safety training videos;
- and 8,000 grower compliance video/slide sets.

# Beyond Field Training...



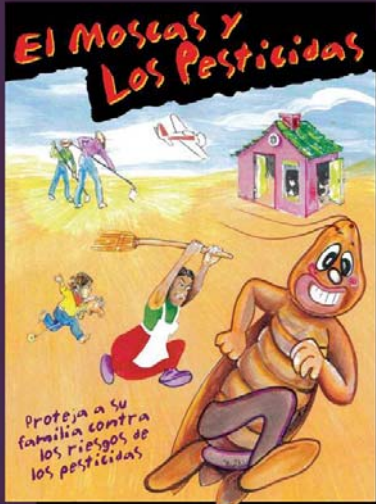


# Why not theater?

Inspired by *El Teatro Campesino* - a theatrical troupe founded in 1965 by Luis Valdez – cultural arm of the United Farm Workers




# El Moscas y Los Pesticidas



**El Moscas y Los Pesticidas**  
by Nephtali De León

Proteja a su familia contra los riesgos de los pesticidas.

**El Moscas y los Pesticidas** is a comical, interactive community play created to increase safety awareness for individuals who work in areas that are treated with pesticides, and the "take home" risks they may be bringing to their families. While this information could be viewed as dull or not very interesting in a typical presentation, "El Moscas" and his friends, deliver a dialogue that is clever, funny, and most important, gets the key messages across.



An EPA Region 6 - Beyond Translation Production  
[www.epa.gov/region6/beyondtranslation](http://www.epa.gov/region6/beyondtranslation)

*"El Moscas" y Los Pesticidas* is an interactive, humorous play designed to increase safety awareness for individuals who work in areas that are treated with pesticides, and the "take-home" risks they may be bringing to their families.

# *Pilot Performances*

The theater concept was tested in El Paso, San Elizario, and San Juan, Texas in 2009

Over 300 farmworkers and community members viewed the presentations and evaluated its content



# Messages

- Warnings and Precautions
- Workers' Rights
- Take-Home Risks
- Other Pesticides in the Home
- Tips for Minimizing the Need for House-Hold Pesticides



# Nuestra Cultura

- Written by Nephtalí De León, a former migrant worker, with help from the target audience
- Dialogue goes beyond translation - filled with colloquial terms, humor, and references





# *It Takes A Pueblo*



# Student Involvement



# Low-Tech / High-Art



# *The Wealth Within*





# *Opening Night*



# *Lessons Learned*



- It's about shared responsibility
- Be intentional & specific
- Get to know the people
- Ask and listen
- Find the "wealth" within
- Start small – maintain – elevate
- Build trust by delivering
- Incorporate fun
- Create together – implement together
- Value relationships - stay connected
- Change takes time



*change takes time*

# *Accomplishments*

- Provided information for minimizing pesticide risks to 300 families
- Made regulatory agencies think creatively
- Raised awareness of communication and training gaps
- Served as an effective non-threatening entry vehicle



True success will be determined on how we proceed as an agency.





*The End?*



*so much yet to be done*