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Another B.C. farm goes union with UFCW Canada

LABOUR BOARD CONFIRMS MAJORITY OF WORKERS VOTE TO JOIN UNION AT ABBOTSFORD FARM

Attention: Agriculture Editor, Assignment Editor, City Editor, News Editor, Government/Political Affairs Editor

VANCOUVER, B.C.--(Marketwire - Oct. 14, 2008) -

Agriculture workers at Floralia Plant Growers Limited in Abbotsford, B.C., have formed the second UFCW Canada bargaining unit at a B.C. agricultural operation, after a majority of the workers voted to join the union. The vote was conducted by the British Columbia Labour Relations Board (BCLRB) which tallied the ballots and announced the results October 10.

The workers at Floralia are Mexican nationals working in Canada under the federal Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP). Agriculture workers at Greenaway Farms in Surrey became the first certified agriculture unit in B.C. comprised of seasonal offshore workers, after a majority of workers there voted to join UFCW Canada Local 1518 in August.

"We welcome our newest members at Floralia," said UFCW Canada Local 1518 President Ivan Limpricht, "and commend them on their courage and determination to make sure their rights were acknowledged by their employer. In spite of various challenges, they stood up for their rights to have a union. We're here for them to make sure their rights continue to be respected, under the laws of the land, and under the terms of a collective agreement."

An application for what could be a third B.C. farm unit is also pending before the BCLRB.

In June, agriculture workers represented by UFCW Canada Local 832 also ratified a first collective agreement at a farm in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.

"The days when farm workers had no rights are over. Fairness has to be part of the food system," says Wayne Hanley, the National President of UFCW Canada. "In 2007, Canada's Supreme Court ruled the Charter's Freedom of Association language guarantees, to all people working in Canada, the right to organize for the purposes of collective bargaining."

"The right to unionize, and have a voice in the workplace, applies to both domestic as well as temporary agriculture workers. UFCW Canada is there for them, as we have been for more than a decade," said Hanley.

UFCW Canada in association with the Agricultural Workers Alliance operates eight support centres across Canada for agriculture workers. UFCW Canada is also one of Canada's largest private sector unions with over 240,000 members across the country working in every sector of the food industry from field to table.

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