

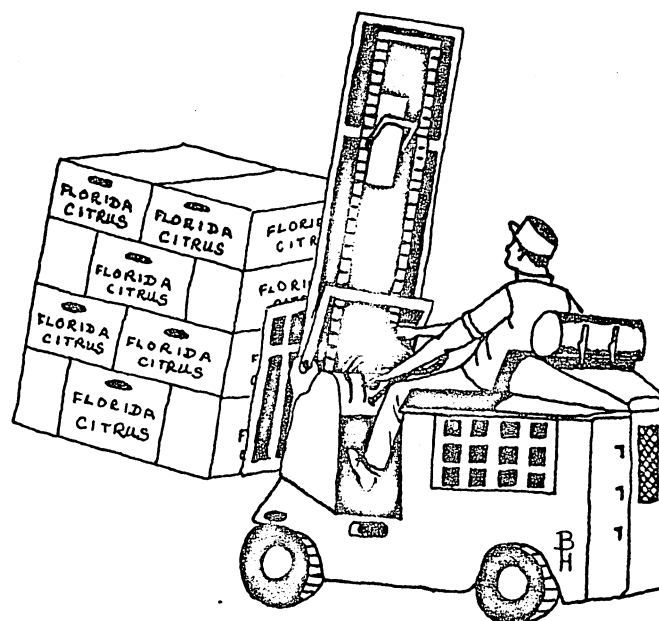
Editor: W. F. Wardowski
Harvesting and Handling Section
University of Florida
Agricultural Research and Education Center
P. O. Box 1088
Lake Alfred, Florida 33850

Packinghouse Newsletter

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

and

STATE OF FLORIDA, DEPARTMENT OF CITRUS



*Anyone wishing to receive this newsletter may send a dozen stamped, preaddressed envelopes to the above address.

Harvesting and Handling Section

P A C K I N G H O U S E

N E W S L E T T E R

YOU ARE LOOKING FOR WORKERS, WE ARE LOOKING FOR JOBS¹

First, let me express our sincere gratitude for having my fellow wordmasters and me on your program today. It is largely thru the efforts of men like Doctor Mohamed Ismail, Doctor Will Wardowski and Doctor William Grierson, who in their own right as members of Toastmaster International have made our organization what it is today. Without the help and encouragement of men like them, the inmate rehabilitation program in the Florida Division of Corrections would be far from achieving a goal of worthwhile employment of inmates while doing the remainder of their sentence imposed upon them by our courts, and thusly relieve some of the pressure upon the state and the communities where the families of these inmates live, help the inmate into a worthwhile self sustaining position in the community and thereby, relieve part of the ever mounting drain on the fiscal policy of the state welfare rolls which now support so many of our less fortunate citizens.

Ladies and gentlemen: I would like to introduce to you my fellow wordmasters from Avon Park Correctional Institute (APCI) at this time so that you may get to know us. Would you gentlemen please stand and introduce yourselves to the assembly telling them who you are and what you are presently doing at APCI. (Editors note: 3 inmates and the Gavel Club sponsor introduced themselves from the audience.) Thank you gentlemen. To each of you here today, I would simply say this. You have numerous jobs which you need qualified people to staff. We are not looking for sympathy or a handout. No, we are just convicts looking for a job. A job which offers a decent living wage, and a job with self-respect, a chance to straighten out our lives and once again to become a member of the free society as a self-sustaining member of the community.

It is the aim of the IMPACT TEAM of the Gavel Program at APCI, an affiliate of Toastmaster International that we are with you today to inform you of a situation that now exists in the citrus industry that I am sure you are all aware of. That is the problem of securing reliable and worthwhile employees, not on a seasonal level, but rather on a year around basis, and thereby relieving some of the anxiety of the individual grove owner, the packinghouse owner and operator, and lastly, the individual processor of the many citrus products on the market today. To put the problem in the proper prospective, ladies and gentlemen, you are engaged in the growing, selling, processing, and marketing of the State's multimillion dollar citrus industry. You have a responsibility to the individual grower to harvest his crop at the most opportune time, to insure that his crop receives the top dollar for his time and effort, and lastly to insure that he has the necessary labor to fulfill the rigid time schedule to insure that the packer and processor has the picked fruit at his place of operation on time and in good condition.

Up to now it has been the policy of the individual to recruit seasonal crop pickers and factory laborers from just about any one who applies for a fruit picker or laborer for plant employment. Some of you have employees who have worked for you for a long time, but the general rule is that some of them work only when they want to and here in lies the problem of continued expert and reliable labor in the field. It is not impossible to have a crew report one morning 90 strong and pick for a half a day, and in the afternoon discover that you have only 45 left who are still interested in picking

¹ Presentation at Twelfth Annual Citrus Packinghouse Day, Agricultural Research and Education Center, Lake Alfred, Florida, September 5, 1973.

your fruit. This only leads to uncertain probability that on the morrow, you will not have 30 willing and able men to pick fruit for your day's quota for the packer or processor. So where does that leave us. It is a problem that we are attempting to bring to your attention.

For the individual grove owner, the packinghouse operator, and the market in general there exists a labor force so great and diversified that you could handpick the kind of person who, if he could gain your trust and confidence, would make a better employee than most of the walk-in type of job applicants. This labor force contains most of the individual skills needed in the citrus industry today, and that to attempt to name them would be like reading the occupational manual of employee skills and trades. I would like to give you an example. In one of the correctional centers you could obtain the following employees who would, if they were given the chance, enrich your plant operation with any one of, or most of the skills you now have working for you. You could have an expert office worker skilled in any facet of office procedure and machine operation; you could have truck drivers from jeep type on up to the largest semi-truck and trailer type; you could have your pick of welders, farm machinery mechanics and operators, general labor and almost any type of skilled and unskilled individual you could ask for. You could, if..... If only you were to ask for them.

They, in turn, would give you an honest day's work for an honest day's pay. They in turn would use this wage to repay part of the upkeep by the State, in expenses incurred keeping them in prison, and the rest used for the support of their families and relieve the pressure of having their families on welfare rolls of the county. To qualify this statement, let me for just a moment go back into history and perhaps we can discover what has brought about this reversal in the treatment and punishment of our prison inmates.

Centuries ago, and it has lasted up to the 20th century, the policy has been lock them up in cells, often a dismal and unhealthy place and thereby isolate them away from the world, its people, and his family. In other words, forget about them. This has always been and still is in some parts of the country the accepted way of punishment and treatment of inmates by the penal systems and more so in some parts of the world. The policy of lock them up, forget about them ideas of yesteryear are almost forgotten, and in the last part of the 19th and this part of the 20th century has seen a slow moving away from these policies of crime and punishment. Today, the Florida Division of Corrections has corrective as well as educational programs that, if given the chance, will make the old cruel and inhumane policy of yesterday totally obsolete in the penal system as we know it today.

This policy is centered in the Community Release Work Centers throughout the State. This is where you will find your ready and willing to work labor force. Not by conscription of force, but by self volunteers of the State penal system who have asked for and been approved for a way to repay society for their transgressions of the law. They ask only that they get the one and only one chance to start their lives over again and this time in an atmosphere of complete trust and understanding by a sympathetic employer.

This is hard to understand in the presence of so many states having a rising crime rate today. But if you apply the principle of removing the cause, you also remove the temptation to violate the law. If these men are given a chance to return to society, return with a job to support themselves and their families, instead of being turned loose with \$75.00 and a bus ticket in their pocket, which in these days of inflation would last only one day, you have removed one of the newly released inmates temptations to return to a life of crime. You have given him something to work for. You have made him feel that he is welcome back into society as a useful member and a self-sustaining one. He is able to hold his head high in self-respect, and he will also give you his employer an honest day's work for an honest day's pay which you pay him. I ask you now,

isn't this a better way of treating the transgressors of the law, than just lock them up and forget about them?

Just remember, it costs \$5.81 per day or \$2,120.65 a year to keep a man locked up in prison doing nothing. If he is out working to support his family while serving his sentence, he is saving the Tax Rolls approximately \$3.50 per day, and also repaying society for his transgressions. Which would you rather see in this era of prison reform in the State of Florida? To answer my own question, I would prefer the latter.

To recap this talk on labor, and the State penal inmate, I would like to bring a few worthwhile ideas into focus.

ONE: What you as a potential employer can do to alleviate some of your labor problems.

FIRST: Locate the nearest correctional facility and make known a listing of jobs open in your plant facility or operations.

SECOND: Contact the Community Work Release Counselor there to find out just how many inmates are available for your employment.

THIRD: Go out and talk with these men and let them know just how interested you are. If you do these three things, then you have solved the major labor problems in your business.

TWO: After you hire these men, you will find out that the following will immediately become evident to you.

FIRST: The inmate will always be on time and sober.

SECOND: He will do his work as you have laid it out for him.

THIRD: Your production rate will increase and loss and spoilage will decrease.

Of course, you will now want to ask me the following questions. What about my family, my children, my home, my car, my business? With all these convicts running loose, I'm afraid for them. To this, I simply say, for an inmate to be considered for community work release, he has to undergo so thorough a screening and investigation, that you would think the FBI is conducting a major election scandal inquiry. Then, and only then, is he approved for work release and he can come and work for you.

In the history of the work release program at APCI, there has never been a molesting or a theft or assault by any of our community work release workers.

I have discussed with you your problems, and I have given you, I hope, a solution. To drive my point home, I would like to give you some statistics for Ben Hill Griffin, Flo-Cal, and The Davis Fruit Company in Avon Park. These three companies have hired a total of 595 inmates year around with a gross annual payroll of \$650,649.00. Of this \$161,451.00 was paid back to the State for care and upkeep of the inmates. \$89,554.88 was paid in income and social security taxes. But still more impressive \$81,216.87 went to the support of the inmate's families and they still saved \$191,851.46 in the bank for their eventual release from prison.

These are facts. I hold in my hand supporting documents and letters from personnel managers of the respective companies and financial statements of the Division of Corrections.

And, so ladies and gentlemen: Don't take my word for this, or for anything I have said. Call any one of these companies and verify these facts for yourself.

Remember: We're just inmates looking for a job. A job with a responsibility, a self-sustaining job, and a job you will be glad you gave an inmate of our institutions. A job which will return us to society a better man, a self-supporting member of the community in this, the land of free enterprise.

Mike Burns
IMPACT
The Gavel Program, APCI
c/o H. C. Kelley, Superintendent
P. O. Box 1100
Avon Park, Florida 33825

Editors Comment

Having employed inmates, I know the type of program Mr. Burns so eloquently described can benefit inmates, employers and society. Similar programs are available in other states and other countries. If you are not in Florida check with your local prison authorities.

The problems of released prisoners alluded to by Mr. Burns are indeed large. These men (and women) have a great incentive to excel in their jobs. They do not want to go back to prison.

Since Packinghouse Day, I have been asked, "Did Burns mean pickers and laborers?" Yes, he meant laborers and accountants and business managers and salesmen and mechanics and truck drivers, and any other skill you can name. If you have unfilled jobs in Florida get the list of Community Correctional Centers (see Available Publications) and contact your nearest Center.

RECYCLING EMPTY PESTICIDE DRUMS

Evans Cooperage Co., Inc., P. O. Drawer 68, Harvey, Louisiana 70058, telephone 504, 366-8571 will recycle empty pesticide drums. They have the equipment to clean the drums and are always in the market for them. A letter from Robert Evans, President, said in part:

"We are able to pick up and process 55 gallon drums ranging in gauges between 16 and 20 which covers most of the 55 gallon drums that are used for pesticides.

"Our large trucks hold 392 - 55 gallon drums, and it is necessary in most instances that we pick up full loads in a place as far away as Florida. The only exception to this would be in instances where we may have a load moving into Florida returning empty.

"It, however, is not necessary that we pick up a load at one location, merely, that we are able to pick up a full load by accumulating from several locations within a general area. At times we are able to pick up the 30 gallon drums depending again upon the demand and whether or not we have a load moving into a particular area."

Will Wardowski
Extension Service

AVAILABLE PUBLICATIONS

Available from Dr. W. F. Wardowski, AREC, Lake Alfred, P. O. Box 1088, Lake Alfred, Florida 33850.

"Twelfth Annual Citrus Packinghouse Day" September 5, 1973 Program and Abstracts.

"Chilling injury of stored limes and grapefruit as affected by differentially permeable packaging films." By W. F. Wardowski, W. Grierson, and G. J. Edwards. HortScience 8(3): 173-175. 1973.

List of Community Correctional Centers, Florida Division of Corrections. See article by Mike Burns and editorial comment for details.

Available from Earl Bowman, ARS, USDA, 102 Agricultural Engineering Building, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida 32611.

"Automatic produce-bagging machine that uses factory-roll polyethylene net tubing." By Earl K. Bowman and John C. Teele. ARS-S-18. July 1973.

Available from Dr. Virgil Wodicka, Head, Bureau of Foods, Food and Drug Administration, 200 C Street, SW, Washington, D. C. 20204.

"Food Safety in 1973" By Virgil O. Wodicka. Address to 64th Annual Convention of the Flavor and Extract Manufacturers Association, White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. May 14, 1973 and published in Food Product Development, July-August, 1973.

Available from USDA, 2120 Camden Road, Orlando, Florida 32803.

"Exporting Florida grapefruit to Japan--an evaluation of new shipping containers and decay-control treatments" By Philip W. Hale and John J. Smoot. Citrus Packinghouse Day, Lake Alfred, Florida, September 5, 1973.

This public document was promulgated at an annual cost of \$201.60, or two and one-half cents per copy to inform county agricultural directors, ranchers, and growers of research results in harvesting and fresh fruit handling and marketing.