

# Apple: Union to persuade retailers to support fair trade

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removing some products from stores when they cause disputes between growers and workers, he said.

Johnson said the key will be proving to retailers that more products can be moved through a cooperative endeavor. With a grass-roots promotion pushing apples, retailers can sell more apples and generate community goodwill, he said.

Speaking at the news conference will be Gamboa; Rick Bender, president of the Wash-

ington State Labor Council; John Boonstra, director of the Washington Association of Churches; and Bob Gorman, regional director of the AFL-CIO.

Arturo Rodriguez, national president of the UFW, and Linda Chavez Thompson, executive secretary of the AFL-CIO, will speak at the Sunday rally in Yakima.

Other labor representatives and government officials from Mexico and Canada are expected to attend the rally in preparation for an Aug. 8 North American Free Trade Agreement hearing at Yakima Valley Community College.

The NAFTA hearing will address a complaint filed by Mexican trade unions in 1998 alleging that Washington's apple industry is guilty of numerous violations of minimum wage, health and safety and right-to-organize laws. The complaint was filed under the NAFTA labor side accords, which obligate the participating countries to enforce labor laws and promote the right to bargain collectively.

Growers, workers and government officials will make presentations at three separate panels: enforcement of labor standards, which includes issues such as

hourly wages, benefits, rest breaks, etc.; health and safety issues; and union organizational rights.

"This is the workers' opportunity to share concerns with all three governments," said Rebecca Smith, attorney and West Coast coordinator for the National Employment Law Project, an advocacy group for low-income workers. "We're hoping to create a model that ensures good working conditions for workers and fair prices for growers."

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