

As a reformer, McCain pledges to reduce the ability of special interests to make unlimited campaign contributions. "It's corrupting America. It's corrupting the process," said McCain, who with Sen. Russell D. Feingold, D-Wis., sponsored failed legislation to reform campaign finance laws. "It's got to be stopped."

Besides vowing to build up the military and to preserve Social Security and Medicare, McCain tells audiences that he would focus on these foreign policy issues: the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and tribal and ethnic conflicts; and the rise of China as a superpower.

Already, 12 state legislators in South Carolina who earlier this year had urged Bush to run, have changed course, unequivocally endorsing McCain.

"The most dramatic contrast we have to the Clinton era is John McCain," said South Carolina House Speaker Pro Tem Terry Haskins. "He's a national hero known as a leader who tells the truth."

Still, courting the veterans, even in veteran-rich South Carolina, may not be enough to dislodge Bush.

Senate Stymied in Budget Negotiations

By Art Pine

Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON With the House already in danger of budgetary train-wreck later this year, the Senate began to veer off course Monday in its efforts to pass the big-ticket money bills that finance the government.

Unable to extricate themselves from a partisan stalemate over health care reform, Senate Republican leaders failed in attempts to end a Democratic filibuster and pave the way for action on four major appropriations measures.

The GOP leadership is now expected to regroup and decide what to do next, but outside analysts say it could easily be weeks before the political impasse is resolved. Until then, the appropriations process in the Senate has ground to a halt.

The budget snags in the two houses are different: The Senate's are primarily the product of a partisan fight. Democrats, unable to win a vote on their bill to force health insurers to cover more medical costs, have vowed to try to add it to every big-money measure.

The House is facing somewhat deeper difficulties: It has voted to spend far more than Congress' own budget blueprint permits for a variety of key programs, ranging from defense to transportation. But lawmakers don't want to cut elsewhere or to alter current spending limits.

As it stands now, budget experts and knowledgeable lawmakers predict there is almost no way to avoid an 11th-hour standoff on appropriations bills that could threaten to force a reprise of the 1995-96 government shutdown unless it is resolved.

"This is probably the most difficult appropriations situation in U.S. history," says Stanley E. Collender, director of the Federal Budgeting Consulting Group, a nonpartisan budget analysis firm.

Ticking off the elements that have resulted in the budget stalemate, he added: "Both houses have narrow majorities, there's no consensus about what to do with the surplus, and they're operating under budget rules that were written when we had an outsized deficit."

Fueling the budget crisis in both houses is that jockeying for political advantage in the 2000 election appears to have begun in earnest, making it even more difficult for serious negotiations between the two parties to proceed.

Carol Wait, director of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a nonpartisan budget-monitoring group, said that Senate Democrats, with their filibuster Monday, have made clear they intend to abandon any quest for bipartisanship in favor of blocking action on the money bills. Republicans need 60 votes to choke off the filibuster; GOP Senate seats number only 55.

At the same time, House Republicans have taken an unusually hard-line stance on the budget situation. They want to stay within the spending limits established when the budget was in deficit, even though all sides have acknowledged that is apt to prove impossible.

Although House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., has been pressuring Appropriations Committee chairmen to revamp some of the money bills, the measures have been trickling out at a snail's pace, prompting Hastert to threaten to cut short Congress' summer recess in August.

The revised budget estimates that President Clinton unveiled Monday which forecast an extra \$1 trillion in budget surpluses over the next 15 years may ease the problem in the long run, but are

before the start of the new federal fiscal year.

As a result, Republicans and many Democrats are engaged a political minuet, dancing closer and closer to the array of budgetary gimmicks that congressional strategists have assembled to enable lawmakers to circumvent the spending limits while still ostensibly leaving them intact.

Already the two houses have passed a supplemental appropriations bill that provides \$15 billion in "emergency" spending much of it regular defense projects that Republicans wanted to exempt from the regular spending limits.

Bureaucratic Wrangling Leaves Farm Workers Homeless

By Kim Murphy

Los Angeles Times

MATTAWA, Wash. The cherries are hanging plump and sweet, heralding the long eastern Washington summer that buds on these slopes above the Columbia River, blooms in the hot branches of the peaches and pears, and fades slowly as the apples chill to red. But on the outskirts of this idyllic town lies the harvest of four decades of American farm-housing policy: on the back seats of old cars, on plastic tarps spread out on the grass, in tents pitched haphazardly under the cherry trees next to sagging lines of laundry.

This year, an estimated 7,000 farm workers will roam homeless through the cherry orchards, victims of a collision between state and federal housing regulations that has shut down Washington's state-licensed tent camps on the eve of one of its busiest harvests ever, leaving virtually no sanctioned facilities for migrant workers.

Up to 30,000 people could go homeless as harvests for peaches, pears and apples get under way later in the year, farm worker advocates say.

Already, a state park on the Columbia River in Kennewick is turning away hundreds of families looking for a place to sleep. Cars and vans parked in orchards, with families nesting inside, have become a common sight. And in Mattawa, whose population is expected to double with the coming fruit harvests, makeshift campsites have sprung up all along the river.

How to house migrant farm workers has been a problem for rural communities throughout the West. But nowhere has it reached such a crisis as in eastern Washington, where thousands of families will be without shelter this year, except for makeshift communities of workers and their tents, ice chests, barbecue grills and portable toilets.

"Most of these folks will end up by river beds, under trees. We're very concerned about (their) health and safety," said Maria Gardipee, agricultural employee program director for the state Department of Health.

Mattawa Mayor Judy Esser said her town has installed a sewer system that will for the first time prevent streams of raw sewage from running through a ramshackle trailer park rented mostly to farm workers.

The state also has converted several 8-by-40-foot shipping containers into clean and dry temporary housing, mostly for families, in a project named "Esperanza," Spanish for "hope."

"The sanitary facilities are a Porta Potti and a garbage can, and that's it. There's no potable water," Esser said. "Now, it'd be fine for a couple of days, when you're out roughing it. But for weeks on end?"

County officials say children are at risk of contracting tuberculosis, asthma and diseases caused by drinking and washing dishes in river water that is used for showers and toilets, as well as by eating food stored in lukewarm ice chests. Several children have worms and lice, and a special problem is exposure to pesticides from sleeping on chemical-tainted soil in the orchards.

"The conditions are horrible. They're Third World conditions," said Guadalupe Gamboa of the United Farm Workers union. "We're talking houses made of cardboard with plastic tarps on top, people bathing in the river, human feces everywhere, trash everywhere and you have probably 20,000 to 30,000 people living under these conditions."

The dilemma has hit hardest in the cherry industry, which has doubled in eastern Washington over the last two decades sprouting thousands of acres of new trees in remote communities with very little infrastructure to support the influx of workers. Because cherry-picking lasts only a week or so on any given orchard, growers have been reluctant to invest in permanent housing.

The current crisis developed when the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration, which sets standards for migrant farm worker housing, announced last month that it would not

sanction. Washington's transitional program, which had housed up to 1,600 people a year in grower-supplied camps.

Workers in those facilities had to provide their own pup tents, which were pitched on bare ground in the orchards. Showers were available, but they could be as far as five miles away. There were no requirements for beds, screened windows, ventilation, stoves, heating or cooling. Electricity and refrigeration for food were being phased in gradually.

Under pressure from farm worker advocates, OSHA ruled that the state program did not meet long-standing federal standards and threatened to sanction growers who opened such orchard tent camps this year. Since then, all but three of the 200 camps have been shut down.

The result is that the 1,600 workers formerly housed in these camps will join the thousands of others who for years have had no housing at all, except what they could find by the roadside.

Richard Terrill, OSHA's regional director, said federal authorities accepted the state-sanctioned tent camps in 1995 and 1996, based on assurances that they were transitional facilities until better housing could be provided. But the existence of the tent camps "wasn't providing any incentive for improving the level of housing," Terrill said.

"Last year we said to the state, this is not working, we want to enforce the regulations that are on the books," he said. "What we're trying to do is raise the standard of on-farm housing to something that's minimally acceptable."

Rich Nafziger, an adviser to Gov. Gary Locke, said the tent camps were intended to provide stopgap housing until the state could move forward with a \$40 million initiative to build permanent farm worker housing over the next 10 years.

The goal, he said, was to meet federal requirements for tent camps within the next three years and phase in the first permanent housing within five years. Then OSHA came in with its unexpected ruling.

"So we are a little frustrated," Nafziger said.

Growers say they cannot be expected to invest hundreds of thousands of dollars, or even millions, to house laborers who work at any one orchard for less than three weeks. (Many pickers, though, work the Washington orchards from June until November.)

Mike Gempler, spokesman for the Washington Growers League, said growers are throwing their support behind a plan to provide military-style tents on a shared rental basis that could be relocated as the harvest moves northward through the summer.

Those tents, with 7-foot-high walls erected over concrete or wooden foundations, comply with federal regulations, and OSHA has said it will support such a program for next year. This year, only 25 such tents, able to house six people each, are available.

Authorities Hold Suspected Smugglers, Chinese Migrants **By Ken Ellingwood** **Los Angeles Times**

SAN DIEGO Authorities in Ensenada, Mexico, held six suspected smugglers and 176 Chinese migrants who were discovered since Saturday along a coastal region sometimes used to ferry illegal immigrants from Asia to the United States.

One of those immigrants was detained Monday and a search was under way for remaining members of the group, believed to have set sail from China three weeks ago, officials said.

The immigrants, some of whom said they had not eaten in days, were found in separate groups in the countryside south of Ensenada and in a safe house in the port city.

Some of the immigrants told Ensenada police they had arranged to pay \$3,500 each to be smuggled into the United States and up to \$10,000 more upon arriving in New York, officials said.

Jesus Jaime Gonzalez Agundes, public-safety director in Ensenada, said officers on Saturday spotted three loaded vans in the hills near Ejido Uruapan, about 25 miles south of Ensenada. The smugglers and migrants fled, but most were subsequently caught. Gonzalez said about eight people were thought to be still at large.

Later that day, police found 96 other people, including several children, crammed into a filthy house in Ensenada that was used as a staging area.

On Sunday, authorities discovered more than 40 migrants on foot in the same rural zone south of town where the initial group was spotted, Gonzalez said.

The immigrants told a police interpreter that they were part of a group of 600 immigrants who left China aboard two vessels, according to Mexican news accounts. But Gonzalez said that could not be confirmed.

Six suspected smugglers five Mexican national residing legally in Mexico were held by Mexican federal authorities for possible prosecution.

The immigrants were expected to be repatriated to China. They were being temporarily housed and given medical attention at a municipal center in Ensenada. Though hungry, none was in grave medical condition.

"Some said they had not eaten in four days," Gonzalez said.

With long stretches of remote coastline and proximity to the United States, northern Baja California over the years has been the site of several high-profile attempts to smuggle immigrants from Asia.

Last year, a fishing boat carrying 156 illegal immigrants from China was stopped in international waters by the U.S. Coast Guard. Smuggling charges were filed in U.S. federal court against 18 people. The passengers remained in the United States and have been seeking political asylum.

In a similar case in 1994, more than 660 Chinese immigrants were repatriated after the Coast Guard stopped three smuggling vessels off the Baja coast. That incident produced a diplomatic stalemate, with the Chinese passengers waiting on board, until Mexico agreed to accept and send back the immigrants.

But U.S. Border Patrol officials say there appear to be few Chinese migrants crossing into Southern California illegally these days. Though 464 Chinese nationals were arrested crossing near San Diego in 1993, the number last year was just six, said Gloria Chavez, a Border Patrol spokeswoman.

Clergy Assails Global Community Over Serbian Exodus **By Julie Tamaki and Valerie Reitman** **Los Angeles Times**

GRACANICA, Yugoslavia Serbian Orthodox church leaders marked the anniversary of a mythic battle Monday by lighting candles, chanting prayers and condemning the international community for failing to stem a steady exodus of Serbs from Kosovo.

Fearing retribution at the hands of returning ethnic Albanian refugees, more than 70,000 Serbs are believed to have fled Kosovo since international peacekeepers replaced Serbian police forces here less than three weeks ago.

"We cannot allow uncontrolled and enraged crowds to bring justice," said Serbian Orthodox Bishop Artemije Radosavljevic told a news conference. "That would only be a new crime, and this time under the eyes of the international community."

Radosavljevic made his remarks on the 610th anniversary of the battle of Kosovo Polje, which Serbs lost to Turks. The battle ushered in centuries of domination by the Ottoman Empire.

Kosovo was the center of the Serbs' medieval kingdom, and centuries later it still holds a special place in the hearts of many Serbs.

The battleground is also the site of a now-famous speech given 10 years ago by Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, who used the event to exploit nationalist sentiments to cement his hold on power.

On Monday, however, only a few dozen Serbs, mostly Orthodox priests, showed up to mark the battle, and no mention was made of the vow that Milosevic made during his speech to preserve the Serb nation.

Instead, Milosevic came under criticism. Because of him, Radosavljevic said, Serbs previously had been driven from parts of Croatia and Bosnia, and had endured a NATO bombing campaign and years of economic sanctions.

Momcilo Trajkovic, a Milosevic critic and president of the Serbian Resistance Movement, said few Serbs attended the gathering at Kosovo Polje because of the risk they're living with. "They know it's not safe enough for them to be here," he said. "A lot of them are trying to save their cars and their apartments."

Members of the guerrilla Kosovo Liberation Army, meanwhile, began turning in their weapons and abandoning their former battle posts to meet a midnight deadline called for in a disarmament agreement with NATO.

"The impression is that everything has gone very smoothly so far," said Dutch Maj. Jan Joosten, a spokesman for the NATO-led force, which is known as KFOR. "A lot of people had decided to demilitarize already."

In the French sector, for example, half the KLA members there have demilitarized because they're mostly farmers and they needed to get back to their fields."

The first stage of the disarmament agreement called for the KLA to establish 17 weapon storage sites to be verified and registered by international peacekeepers. It also bans KLA members from

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ations say they are being denied services that those living in single-family homes traditionally receive. And they have formed coalitions, lobbied local officials and filed lawsuits to get equal treatment.

among the keys to getting housing projects approved by local officials. For that reason, developers often agree to have the residents of their projects shoulder the costs of services traditionally provided by the city or county.

venue, MD., where city officials are considering terminating garbage pickup at condominiums and apartments. "I consider myself a homeowner. We pay property taxes. . . . They treat us like we're second-class citizens."

chairs have avoided litigation. ▶ In Southgate, Mich., a condominium association convinced the city council last August to start collecting the complex's trash. ▶ In the unincorporated section of St. Louis County, Mo.,

ing cheated," says lawyer Richard Brooks, who met with local officials on behalf of the various condominium associations in Massachusetts. "It becomes obvious that if you pay the same (tax) rate, you should get the same service."

Woman admits to infanticides



Photos by Greg Ely for USA TODAY.

Near Mattawa, Wash.: An illegal camp for migrant workers. Many state-licensed, grower-provided camps were not open this year.

Wash. growers fear OSHA could sour cherry harvest

Migrant pickers have

state's history," Locke wrote Labor Sec-

Light sentence gives access for medical study

By Jennifer Brown
The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — A 70-year-old woman who admitted Monday to smothering eight of her babies decades ago will not go to jail, so researchers can study her to learn more about why new mothers sometimes kill newborns.

Marie Noe pleaded guilty to killing the children from 1949 through 1968. She was sentenced to 20 years' probation, the first five of which must be served under home confinement.

Noe also must undergo mental health treatment sessions with a psychiatrist to determine the cause of her repeated infanticides.

"We needed to get this matter finalized more than we needed to put (her) behind bars," Philadelphia District Attorney Lynne Abraham said. "Is it perfect? We don't always get a perfect outcome."

At the sentencing, Deputy District Attorney Charles Gallagher said: "It's important for the medical community and the legal community that she admit these murders and . . . something good will come out of the analysis."

The light sentence Monday also had to do with "the unusual circumstances of the case" and the age of the case" and Noe's being the sole caretaker of her ailing 77-year-old

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Photos by Greg Ely for USA TODAY.

Near Mattawa, Wash.: An illegal camp for migrant workers. Many state-licensed, grower-provided camps were not open this year.

Wash. growers fear OSHA could sour cherry harvest

Migrant pickers have camped in orchards for decades in conditions regulators say are substandard

By Patrick McMahon
USA TODAY

BENTON CITY, Wash. — Less than three hours southeast of rainy Seattle, bright summer sun helps ready the state's deep-red cherry crop for harvest. But as migrant farm workers flock here from California and Mexico to help pick nearly half the nation's crop of sweet cherries, a clash between state and federal officials threatens to leave thousands of workers homeless.

Housing and working conditions of migrant workers have long been an issue in the nation's agricultural states. But the problem has come to a particular head here in Washington, a state that relies on thousands of migrant workers to help harvest its bountiful cherry, apple, pear and berry crops.

For years, the state's cherry growers have allowed workers to camp in their orchards. Last year, such state-licensed tent camps housed about 2,000 workers. But many growers are not reopening those camps, after the federal government insisted they be upgraded to meet federal minimum standards.

The Labor Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration, which sets standards for migrant farm worker housing, will no longer sanction camps provided by growers in which workers have to provide their own pup tents and there are no requirements for beds, ventilation, heating or cooling. Instead, OSHA wants growers to provide six-person, military-style tents with cots and electrical connections.

"There are few places in the nation where conditions for migrants are a pretty sight," Assistant Labor Secretary Charles Jeffress says. But conditions during the Washington cherry harvest are especially troublesome, he says. "From what I've seen and been told, they are worse there than almost anywhere else."

With few legal camps available this year, migrant workers are camping illegally along the Columbia River, or sleeping in public parking lots, sometimes 11 to a van.

"We go to sleep about 10, and we get up about 4 a.m. to pick cherries," Rogelio Herrejon, 43, of Fresno, Calif., says he sits crouched in the back of a van



At the Wilson orchard: A worker rests in an OSHA-approved, military-style tent.



Harvesting the crop: Worker Jose Ventura picks cherries in an orchard near Mattawa.

one evening with 10 other young and middle-aged men. "We all sleep in here."

The illegal camps, which lack access to potable water and basic sanitation, have raised public health concerns.

Lupe Gamboa, Washington director of the United Farm Workers union, calls the conditions here "terrible," as he tours camps along the river near Mattawa. "People can't even take baths because the water is so cold. There is no drinking water. There are no toilets."

Some workers say they come here despite the conditions because they can earn up to \$15 an hour if they work hard. Others say they barely make minimum wage and prefer Montana and Oregon, where many growers supply cabins.

The federal action is a blow to Washington Gov. Gary Locke, who is credited with making major improvements for the state's migrant laborers.

"The timing of this issue is ironic, as Washington state is in the process of implementing the most comprehensive farm worker housing strategy in our

state's history," Locke wrote Labor Secretary Alexis Herman.

This year, the state approved measures to provide community-based housing for 10,000 workers in the next decade, opened the first state-financed migrant housing project and doubled the staff enforcing labor-camp rules, he noted.

Locke spokesman David Chai insists that the state's approval of worker-supplied tents was a temporary measure. "We thought it would be the best solution this year."

In his letter to Herman, Locke asked OSHA to back off, warning that the new policy "could effectively shut down on-site housing for cherry workers (and) result in several thousand cherry workers living in unsafe and unsanitary conditions on riverbanks, under bridges and in the woods."

But the federal government remains firm.

"Tents providing adequate shelter, basic sanitation and available electric connections are not too much to ask for people who pick cherries in Washington State," Jeffress says. "There is still a lot of tolerance of substandard conditions in Washington state."

The United Farm Workers of America supports OSHA. The union wants Locke to declare a state of emergency and supply the military tents.

So far, the huge numbers of homeless workers predicted have yet to materialize here, Benton County Commissioner Max Benitz says. "We aren't seeing that much illegal camping going on so far."

Providing housing for cherry pickers is complicated by a short harvest — often 10 days to three weeks of intense picking.

"Camping lends itself to this situation," says Mike Gempler, head of the Washington Growers League in Yakima. "The pickers prefer camping. They've been camping in the fields for years."

While the growers were a major force behind the bring-your-own-tent approach, Gempler is now working with the state to find OSHA-approved tents, but so far they have been able to obtain only 25 of the six-person tents with 7-foot-high walls, he says.

The first two went to cherry growers Juanita and Ray Wilson, who have operated a small, state-licensed camp during cherry season for several years. It has approved sanitation, drinking water, hot showers and covered picnic tables.

The new "rent-a-tents" got high marks from workers such as Greg Viramontes, who has been coming to Washington for nearly three decades.

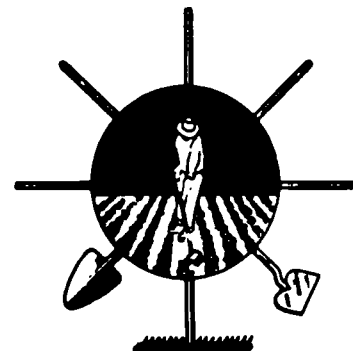
"Before, it was living in the trees," says Viramontes, 52, a resident of Lodi, Calif. "I year, he camped here in his own tent. This is much better."

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FARMWORKER JUSTICE FUND, INC.

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May 27, 1999

Ms. Irene Bueno
White House Domestic Policy Council
Executive Office Building, Room 217
Washington, D.C. 20502

Mr. Larry Matlack
Ms. Debra Bond
White House Office on Management and Budget
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Irene, Larry and Debra:

In response to agricultural employers' pressure to reduce farmworker housing, I have prepared the following report on the need to maintain and strengthen farmworker housing standards.

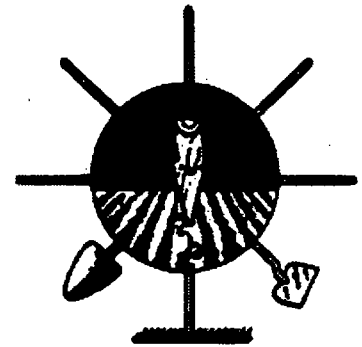
With agricultural employers claiming that they cannot find enough citizens and lawful resident immigrants willing to work in agriculture, despite high unemployment rates in farmworker communities around the country, it is especially important that decent housing be available to attract and retain workers. Yet, much of the housing that is approved under current standards is inadequate to this task and threatens the health and safety of farmworkers and their children. Housing standards should not be permitted to sink any lower.

We would appreciate the chance to speak with you further about the information in this report.

Sincerely,

BRUCE GOLDSTEIN
CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Farmworker Housing Standards Should Be Strengthened and Enforced

Inadequate Housing For Farmworkers Is Common

A *New York Times* article reporting on the farmworker housing crisis recognized an “economic imperative” that is “so powerful” that many agricultural workers have no choice but to “put up with living conditions and wages that few Americans would accept.”¹ The *Times*’s investigation of farmworker housing all over the United States found “one common thread: miserable living conditions.” Because farmworkers often lack the economic, political or legal power to do so, we, as a society, must use government to ensure farmworkers access to housing that it is decent and safe.

One answer to improving farmworkers’ living conditions is to maintain and enforce housing quality standards.

The Modest Nature of Existing Housing Standards

Many farmworkers live in temporary labor camps or other housing specifically maintained for them, such as individual houses, former motels, or trailers. The Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act of 1983 incorporates housing standards of the Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the Employment and Training Administration, as well as local standards, making them applicable to certain employers and housing providers.

Federal housing standards by the Department of Labor attempt to ensure some basic structural soundness and protections for health and safety. They require some barriers against the elements (rain, standing water, rodents, wind, sun, etc.). But they contain bare minimums which permit housing quality that is often rudimentary and unacceptable to many people who might otherwise accept seasonal agricultural jobs (as the attached photographs demonstrate). Some of these standards allow practices that are not only inconveniences and affronts to human dignity, but pose serious health risks. For example, flush toilets are not required. Labor camps often lack bathrooms and

¹ Steven Greenhouse, “As Economy Booms, Migrant Workers’ Housing Worsens,” *New York Times*, May 31, 1998, page 1.

instead supply outhouses or portable toilets, which may be separate from hand-washing facilities. Smoke detectors are not always required. And several aspects of federal housing standards are so vague that they need clarification to ensure that employers provide access to hot showers, electricity, first aid kits and other basic necessities.

Even many immigrant farmworkers who come from communities with extremely limited resources express surprise at the primitive housing that they must accept in the United States, despite the fact that it may meet legal standards.

Certainly, recent demands by agricultural employers to lower such standards should be rejected for the sake of farmworkers, their children, and the communities in which they live and work.

The Importance of Housing Standards for Health and Safety

What benefits accrue from decent housing standards?

- Inadequate housing causes powerful impacts on farmworkers and their families, including serious consequences for their health and safety. Physical and psychological well-being of farmworkers and their children, as well as worker productivity, are affected by standards, including rules against over-crowding.
- Decent housing attracts workers to jobs, rewarding employers who modernize their businesses. The fruit and vegetable industry, enjoying rapidly expanding exports during the last ten years, often claims that it cannot find or retain sufficient workers in the United States to perform seasonal agricultural jobs. The U.S. General Accounting Office rejected this claim, concluding in December 1997 that there was no existing or impending agricultural labor shortage. Nonetheless, if the industry perceives a tightening labor market, it should seek to attract and retain its workforce in part by offering or facilitating the availability of better housing.
- Enforcing standards prevents law-abiding companies from suffering a competitive disadvantage from other businesses that attempt to cut costs by imposing unsanitary, crowded housing. Yet enforcement had declined during the dozen years.
- Improving housing standards reduces the burdens on local communities caused by the lack of adequate shelter and safety. In addition, improving the reputation of farmworker housing would reduce friction between suburban or exurban homeowners and nearby agricultural businesses.

The Washington State Department of Health recently issued a paper that discusses housing standards. The paper examines the prevention of communicable diseases (tuberculosis, pneumonia, etc.), non-infectious diseases, injuries (e.g., falls through unsafe floors), exposure to rodents and insects (which can transmit viral encephalitis, trichinosis, etc. or cause fires by gnawing on wire insulation), and motor vehicle accidents. It said in part:

Housing comes as a gestalt and while any one element may not be crucial, substandard housing across a number of elements combined with poor nutrition, poor access to preventive medical services, heavy physical labor involving exposure to potentially dangerous chemicals, lack of education regarding health practices, the sharing of living facilities by unrelated individuals, and the number of individuals served by the structure may change the picture. For example, while crowding in and of itself may not be too problematic, crowding combined with poor ventilation and altered host susceptibility, such as might occur with inadequate nutrition, can result in rapid spread of any number of communicable diseases.²

The poor economic status of migrant and seasonal farmworkers, language barriers, limited education, inadequate housing, and other causes mean that many of these factors are present, producing serious health problems for many farmworkers. For example, rates of tuberculosis and other illnesses among farmworkers often rival those of developing nations, and are exacerbated by the over-crowding in much farmworker housing. Senator Bob Graham of Florida, during a recent Immigration Subcommittee hearing, referred to an article about migrant workers' health that is illuminating. The St. Johns County, Florida Health Department tested 50 residents of a migrant labor camp and found nine who had positive skin tests for tuberculosis. The medical director of the Putnam County Health Department attributed the threat of such illness in large part to "the crowding of facilities and the hard physical labor" performed by farmworkers.³

Housing *quality* standards must ensure minimum *quantity* and *accessibility* of sanitary facilities, including toilets, water for hand-washing and drinking, areas for food storage and preparation. If sanitary facilities are inadequate in number or too distant or difficult to be useful, then workers will use less sanitary methods. For example,

- If food storage and preparation areas are too crowded, some workers may be forced to use food that has not been refrigerated, not cooked adequately, or exposed to flies, increasing the risk of the spread of disease. Or they may prepare food where there is no hand-washing water available, increasing the risk of transmitting disease.
- If access to hot running water and soap is inadequate, the risk is higher that contaminated hands will spread toxic pesticides or disease from human waste to others.
- If outhouses are unsanitary or too far away from housing, residents may use the fields to deposit human waste, which can be quite dangerous. (Human feces can contain parasites such as worms, which survive in soil and enter other human beings through

² Washington State Department of Health, "Public Health Basis for WACD 246-358, Temporary Worker Housing, Working Document (May 1996).

³ Marcia Matson, "The Migrants' Pain," *The Florida Times-Union*, Sunday, May 9, 1999 (www.jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/05099/met_1a1Migra.html).

their skin and cause severe illness). Pregnant workers are at increased risk for falls, which can injure the fetus, and frequent urinary tract infections, if they fear using latrines at night due to insufficient lighting.

- If housing is too crowded, ceilings too low, ventilation too restricted, privacy unavailable and the structure is offensive, some workers will opt to sleep in places that may be even less safe. Crowding also facilitates spread of disease.
- If lighting, electrical outlets, cooking facilities or other aspects of housing are inadequate, residents may feel compelled to create their own electrical or cooking systems, which can lead to fires and other dangers to themselves and the local community. In 1998, the North Carolina Department of Labor reported on several fires in migrant farmworker housing, one of which resulted in a fatality. The agency noted that mobile homes and the “white-washed, wooden frame homes that dot the countryside” are more susceptible to fires than other homes.⁴

Current Housing Standards Allow Poor Living Environments

Existing housing standards allow housing that is often primitive or very simple, as shown in the attached photographs and as described below.

In some cases, farmworkers live in large barracks-style housing. The rule allowing only 50 square-foot living space per worker makes for extremely crowded living environments which can be oppressive, even if in good shape, over several weeks or months. The following description in Alec Wilkinson’s book, *Big Sugar*, describes the barracks housing which, until recently, was provided to Florida sugar cane workers under the H-2A temporary foreign worker program:

The majority of the larger barracks are built of cement from the simplest plans. They are flat roofed and have two or three stories; they look like shoeboxes. Usually they are painted tan. A number are in disrepair. Some look like slums. * * * Shade is unusual. The roofs take the full heat of the sky. The floors are divided into large open rooms. Within them the air is still. Heat collects. No provisions have been made for relieving the heat or for moving the air. * * * They look like something you would expect to see out near the airport in a country with a tropical climate and a faltering currency. * * * All lack the meanest embellishment.

The cutters sleep in double-decker bunk beds lined in rows, heads to the walls, with an aisle down the middle of the room. Between each bed is room enough for a man to stand and pull on his pants. * * *

The camps in the country are out among the fields and remote from any amusement.⁵

⁴ “Fire Safety Issues,” *The Cultivator*, Bulletin of the Agricultural Safety and Health Section, North Carolina Department of Labor, No. 14, Dec. 1998, p. 3.

⁵ Alec Wilkinson, *Big Sugar: Seasons in the Cane Fields of Florida* (Alfred A. Knopf 1989), pp. 13-17.

In addition to barracks, farmworkers often live in trailers and shacks that are permitted by law but do not constitute decent housing. It is difficult to imagine that anyone could conclude that farmworker housing standards are too high.

The photographs attached to this letter reveal that the housing permitted by existing federal housing standards should not be allowed to fall any lower despite the demands of agricultural employers. All of the pictures are believed to be of housing that complied with federal law according to federal or local housing officials.

One attachment is a brochure by the Temporary Quarters company from about ten years ago, advertising a floor plan for portable housing for farmworkers. The brochure assures that the housing complied with OSHA and state housing standards. As is evident, the claustrophobic setting for 7 workers in a single trailer would be far from luxurious and, for many, hardly bearable. Weakening these standards further would be unconscionable.

Conclusion

Some question the enforcement of housing standards because it can lead to removal of decrepit housing from the market in a context of a rural housing shortage. Housing standards should not be weakened further, however, because they are already set too low. The negative consequences of lowering housing standards still further include serious health and safety risks to farmworkers and their families, deterioration of rural communities, resistance to building more housing, shifting of traditional employer obligations (to pay wages high enough to stimulate housing development) to the public, and deterrence of potential job applicants from accepting agricultural jobs.

The building of desperately-needed housing for farmworkers is happening. One example is the Everglades Farmworker Villages in Dade County, Florida, developed by the Everglades Community Association. In Woodburn, Oregon, the Farmworker Housing Development Corporation has an apartment complex called Nuevo Amanecer ("New Dawn") and is developing a second project called Esperanza Court. In California, the Coachella Valley Housing Coalition established a "sweat equity" project called Vista del Sol that has enabled 500 families to own their own homes. Such new or renovated housing far exceeds the current labor camp housing standards. Unfortunately, the nonprofit groups' demand for government assistance in building these projects far exceeds the availability.

Until housing development reaches the point of serving all farmworkers who need housing, it is critically important to improve and enforce housing quality standards at the federal and state levels.

Bruce Goldstein
Farmworker Justice Fund, Inc.
May 1999

**Some Examples of
Farmworker Housing
in Immokalee, Florida**

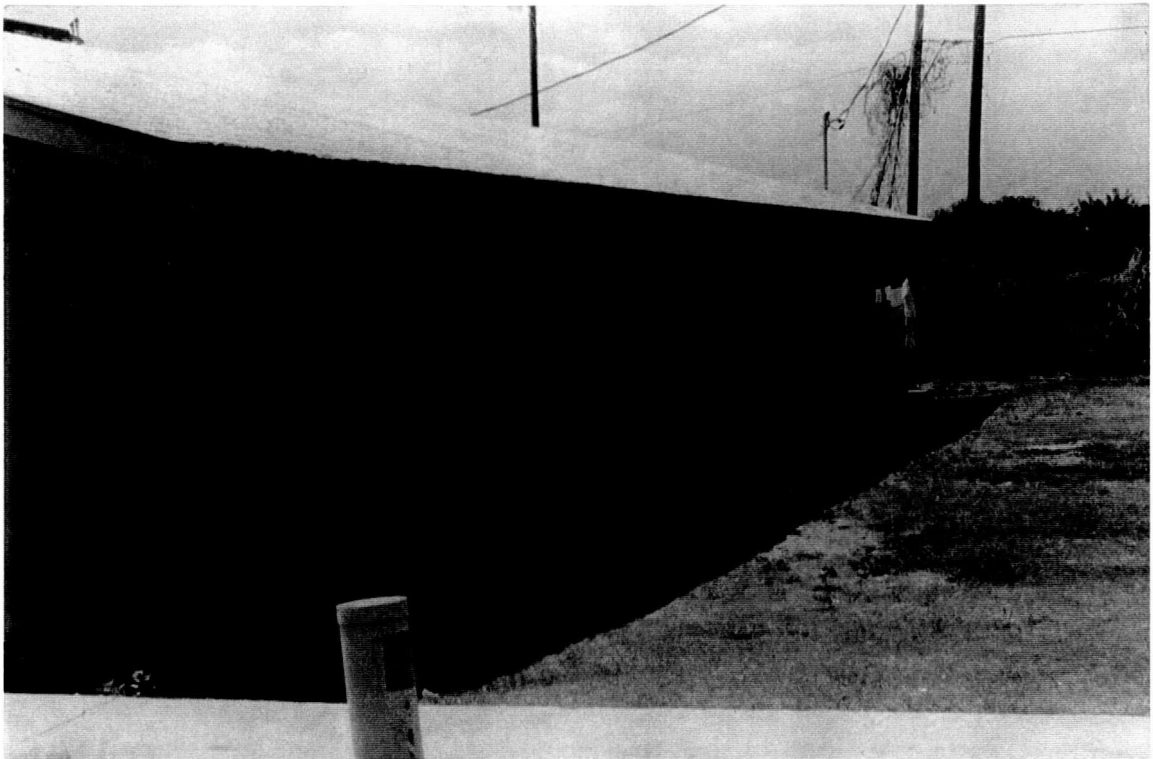
(All are believed to have been inspected and approved under state and federal housing standards.)

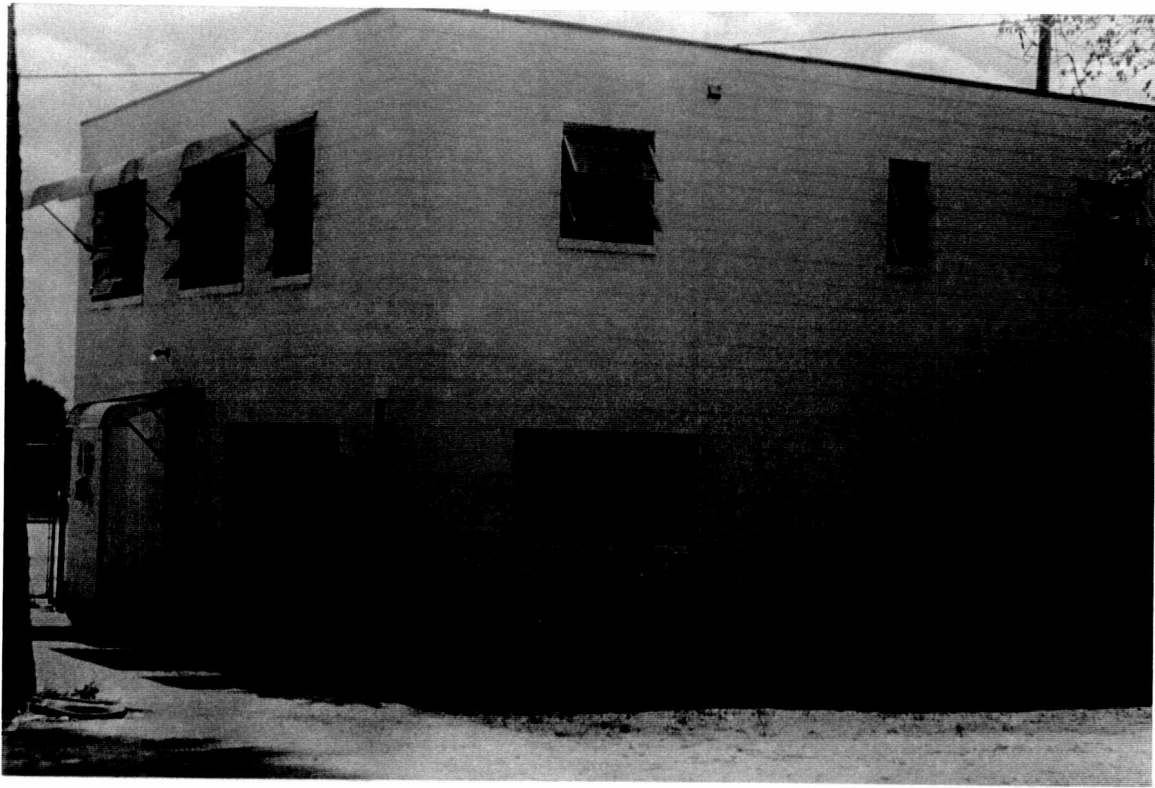




**Some Examples of
Farmworker Housing
in Lake Placid, Florida
“Los Amarillos”**

**(All are believed to have been inspected and approved under state and federal
housing standards.)**

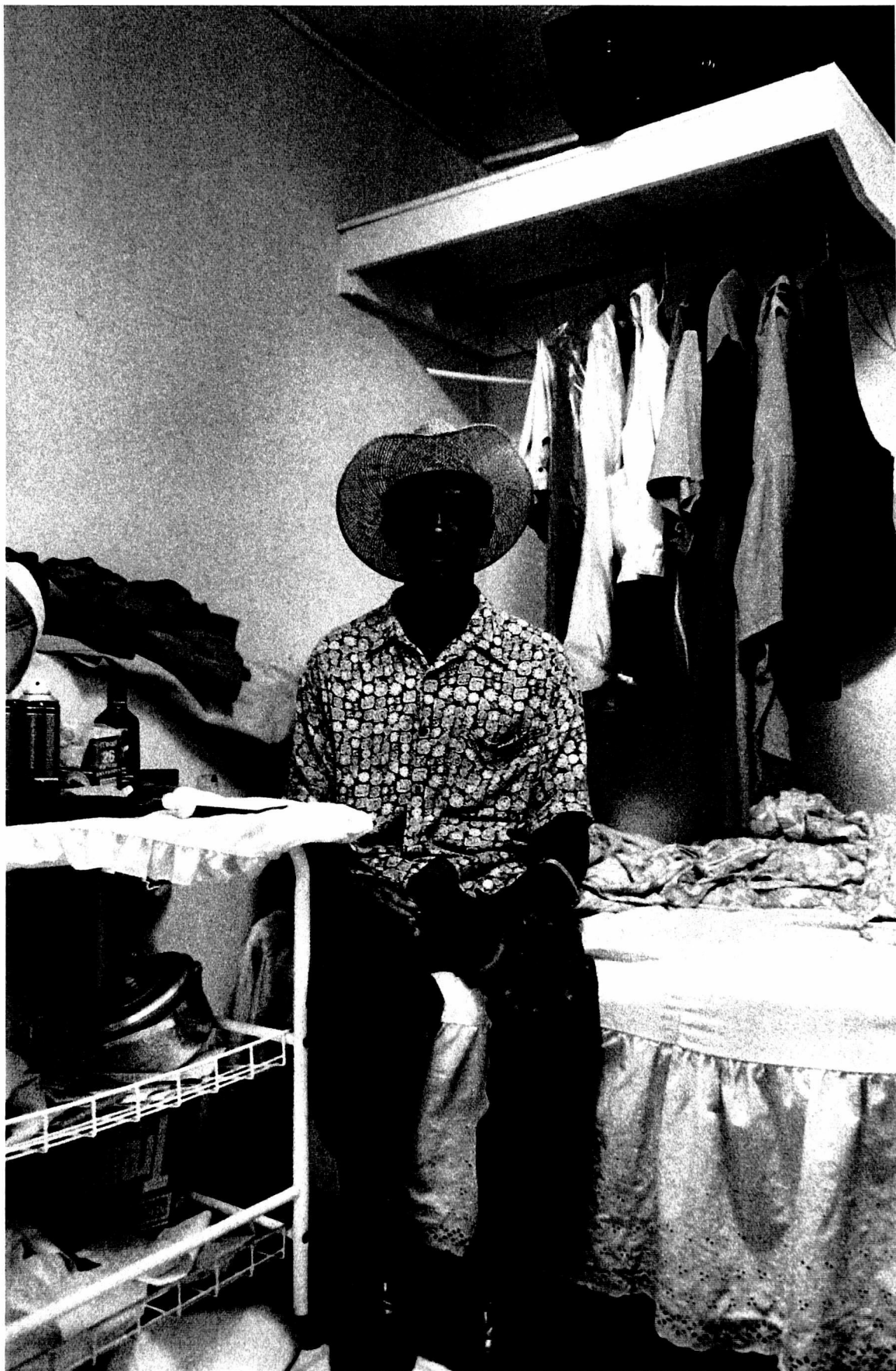


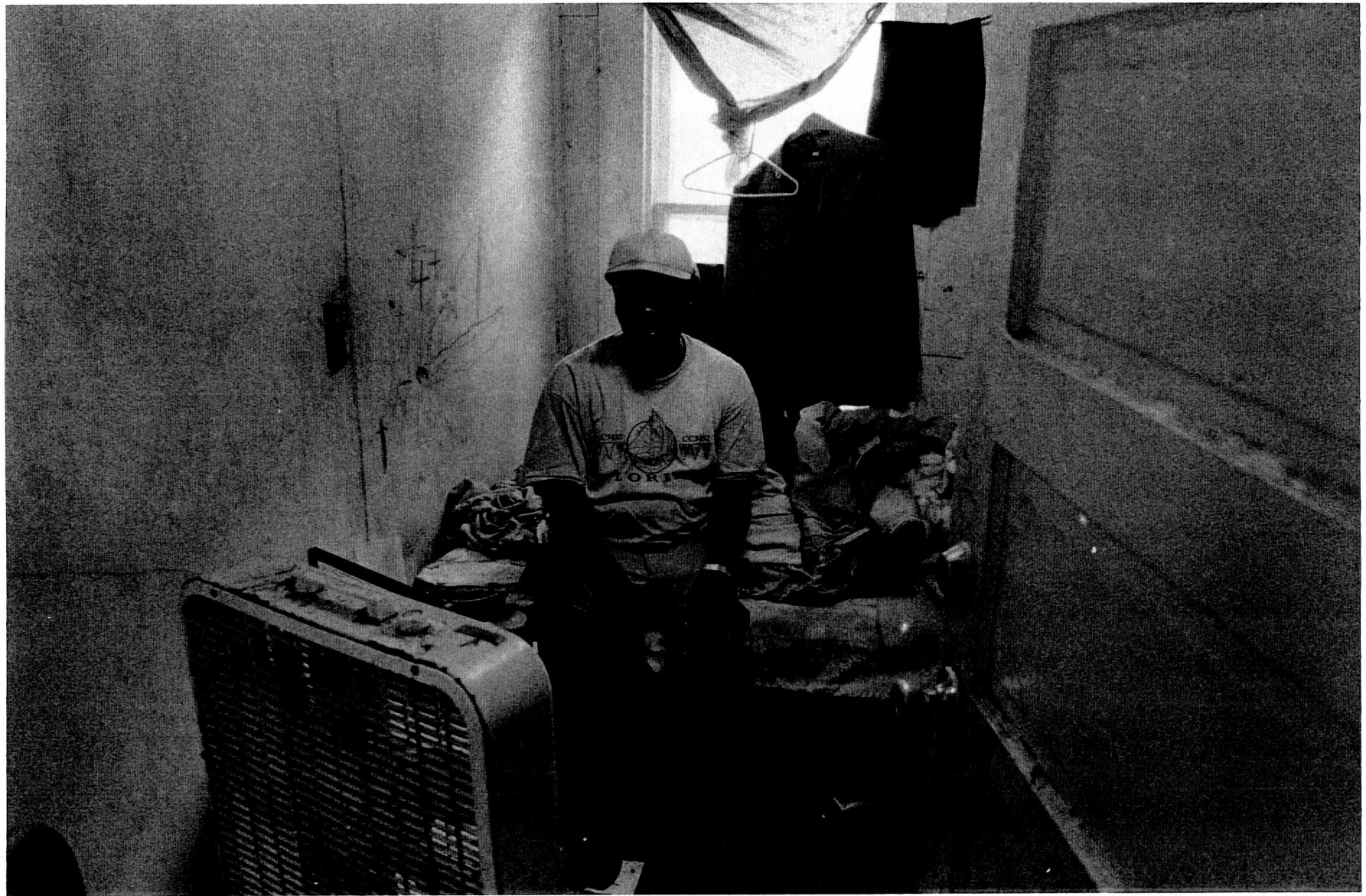


**Some Examples of
Farmworker Housing
in Belle Glade, Florida**

(All are believed to have been inspected and approved under state and federal housing standards.)



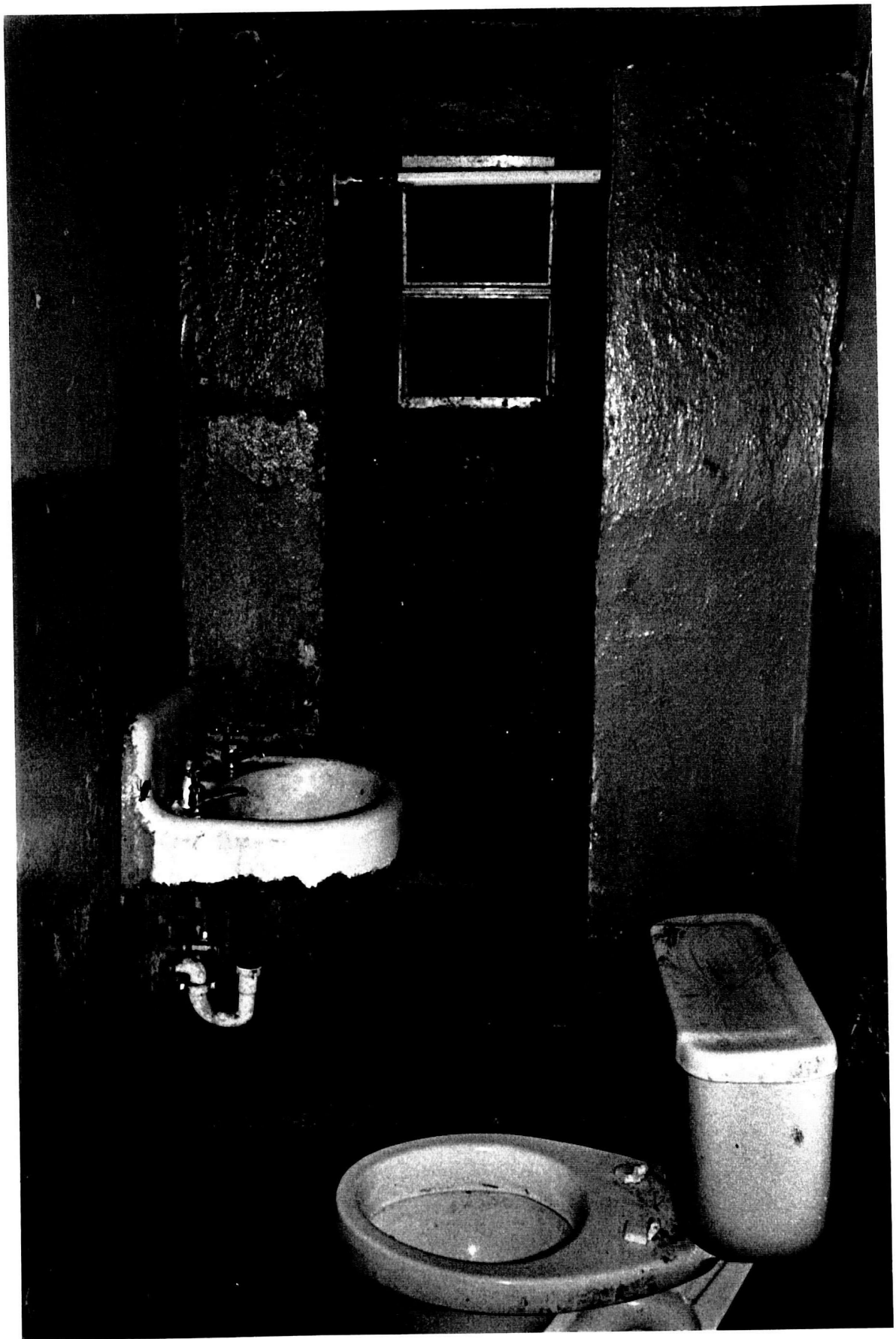


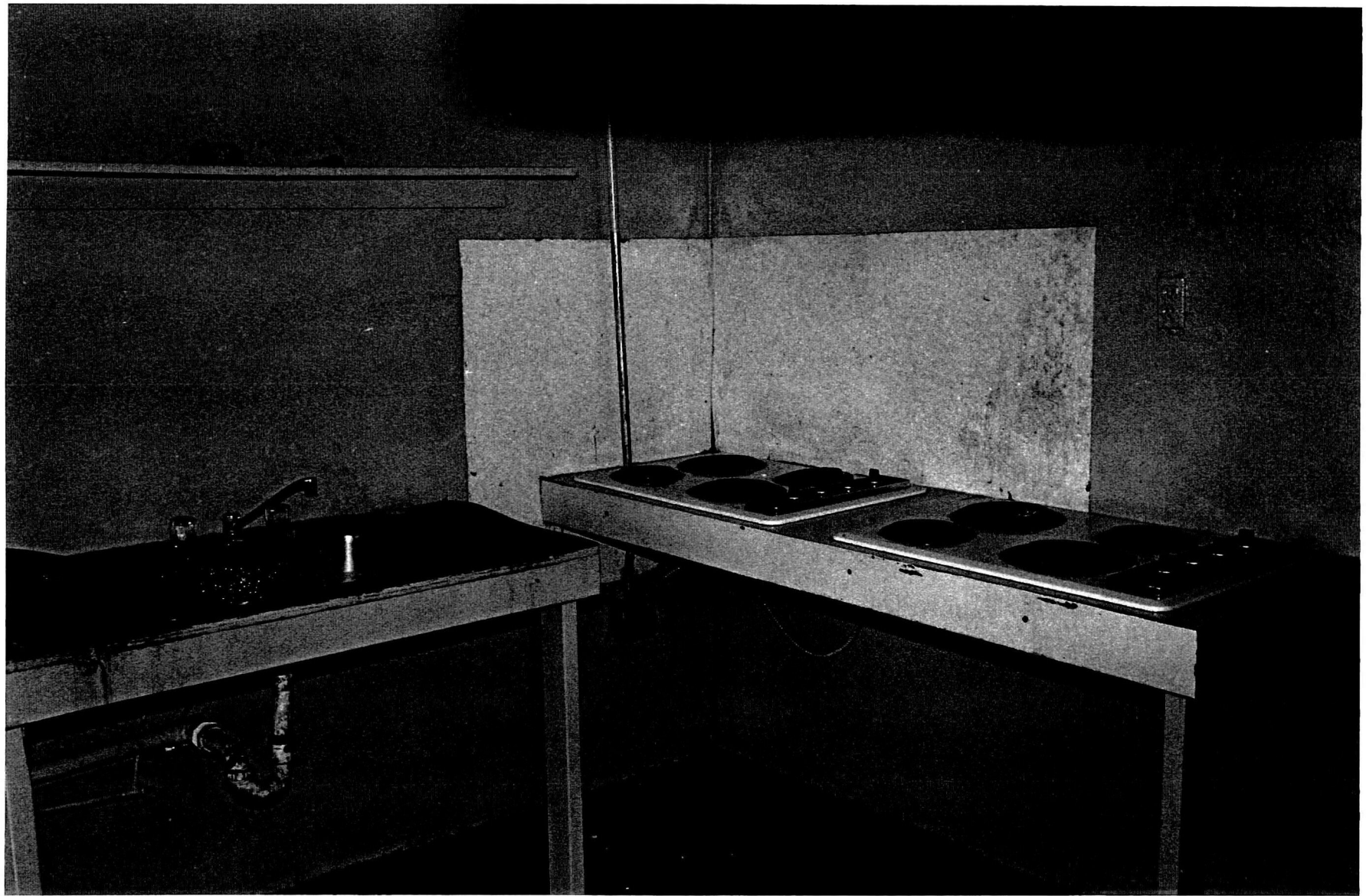














**Some Examples of
Farmworker Housing
in North Carolina**

**(All are believed to have been inspected and approved under state and federal
housing standards.)**



Description of dwelling:

TWO WOOD FRAME HOUSES

Directions to site: (specific)

FROM KALCOTTA TRAIL 140
WEST TO H. 56

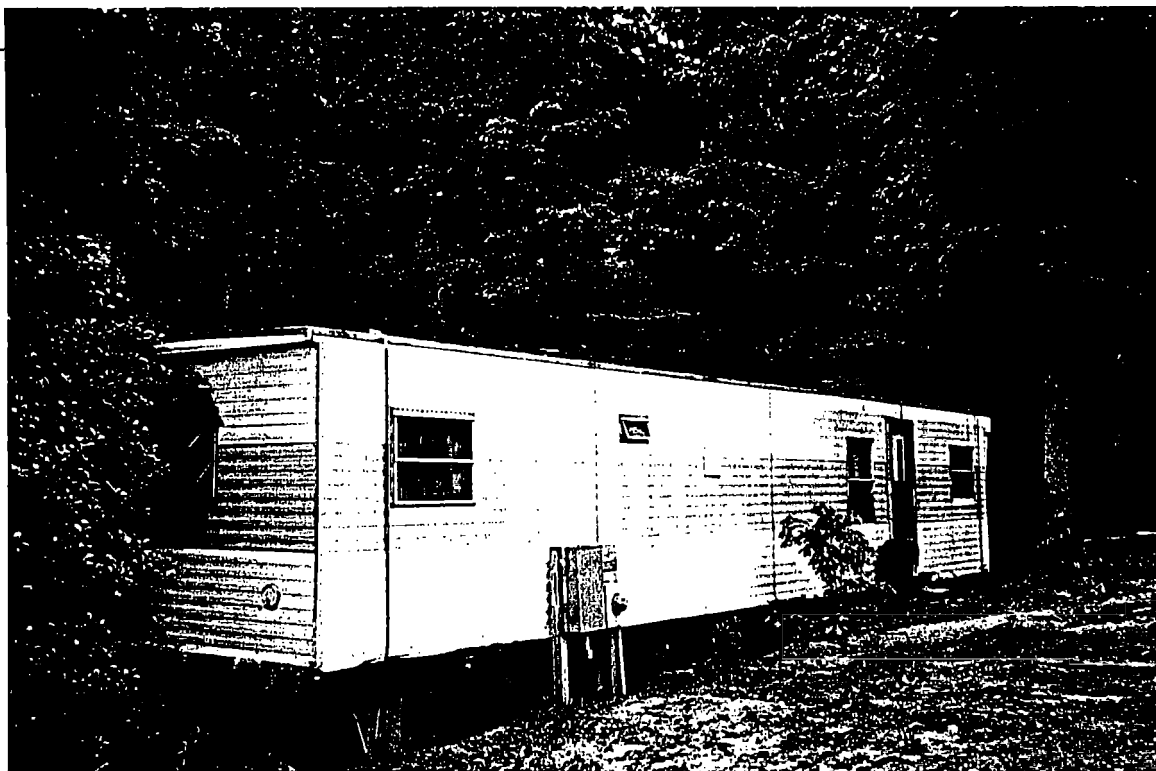


Description of dwelling:

Directions to site: (specific)

1988 8661
1995

mp Number: 1

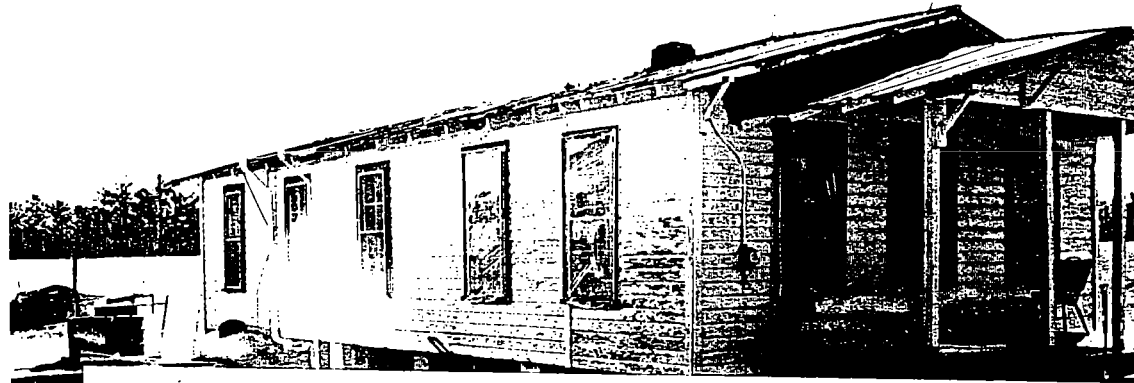


Description of dwelling:

Directions to site: (specific)

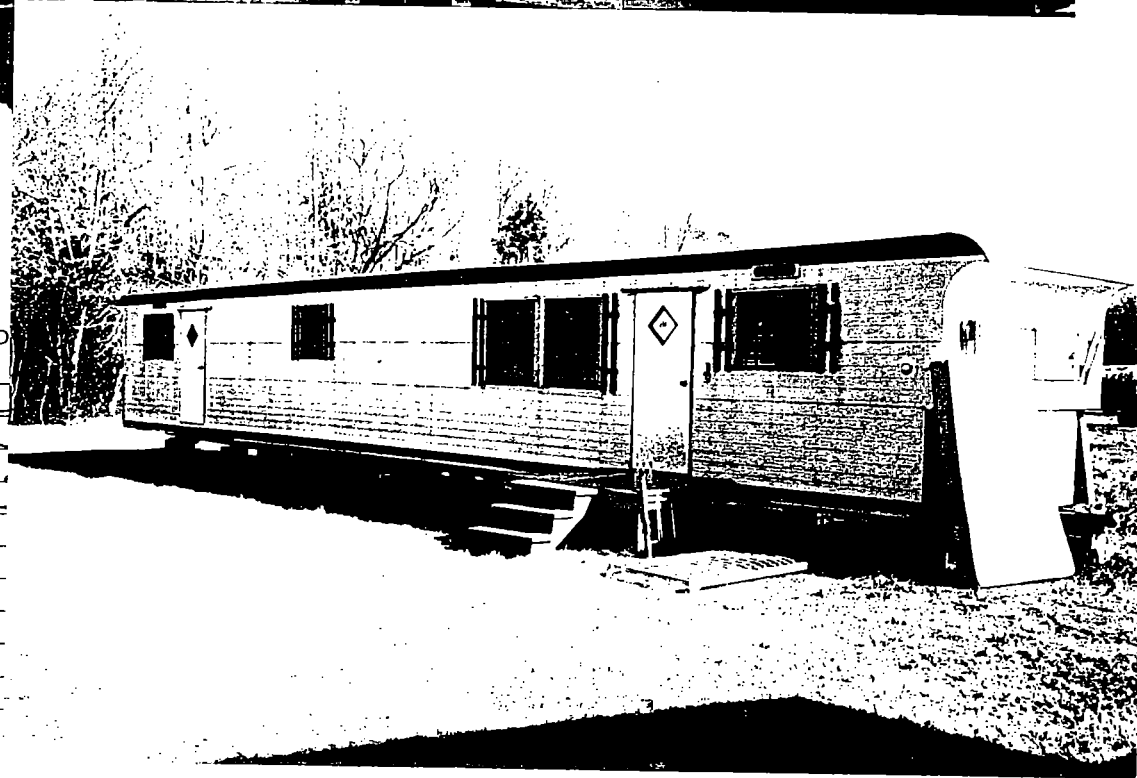
FR. 115 57 INFE 0.1 N/A 262

CAMP NUMBER. _____



Description

One story
levelled
rooms
kitchen
shower



levelled

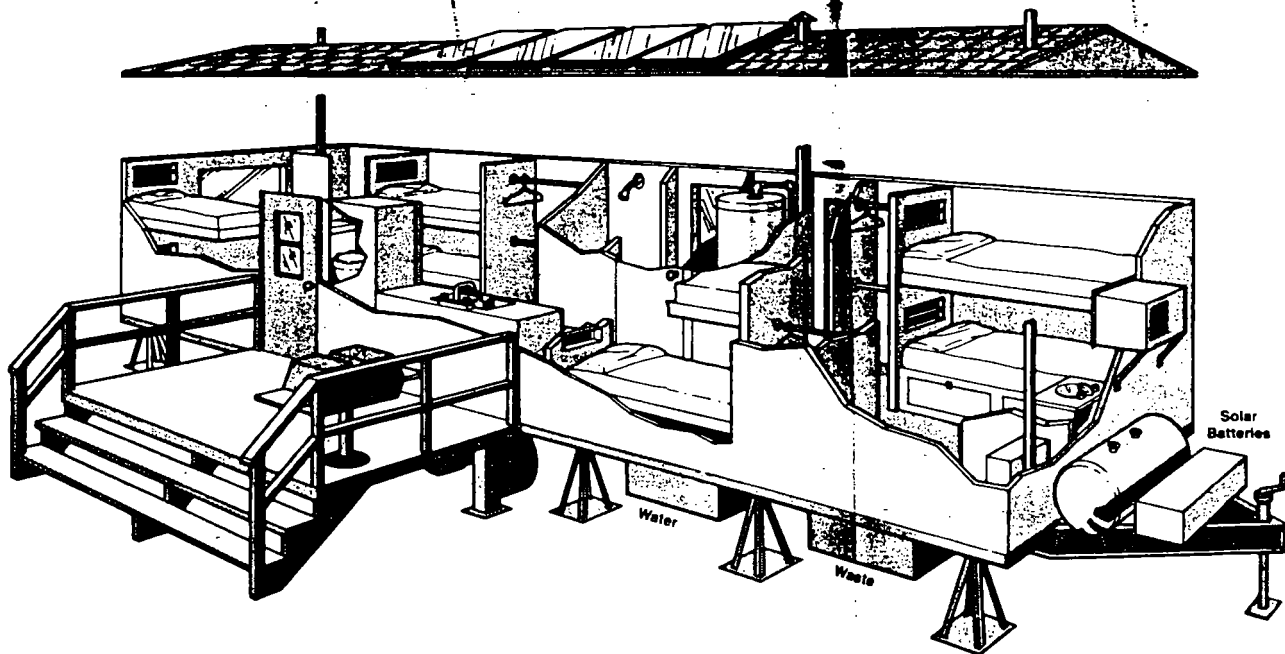
Ref. 1





**An Example of
Trailer Housing
That Apparently Would Comply with
Farmworker Housing Standards**

Manage A Valuable Asset — Build Equity — Enhance Your Bottom Line



Meets or exceeds all current OSHA, California, Florida and Texas regulations for housing 7 workers, or 8 non-employees. Portable and built to last 15 years with minimum upkeep.

# of UNITS	BASE PRICE	10% DOWN PAYMENT	EACH MONTHLY PAYMENT	A YEARLY COST	B TAX BENEFITS	C YEARLY RENTAL INCOME	D GROSS PROFIT	E GROSS PROFIT YEARS 6-15
① thru 4	\$13,950	\$1,395	\$285.76	\$ 3,708 ①	\$ 1,236	\$ 4,320 ¹	\$ 1,848 1-unit	\$ 3,920/1 unit each year
⑤ thru 9	\$13,750	\$1,375	\$281.65	\$ 18,274 ⑤	\$ 6,091	\$ 21,600 ¹	\$ 9,417 5-units	\$ 19,600/5 units each year
⑩ thru 19	\$13,500	\$1,350	\$276.53	\$ 35,884 ⑩	\$11,961	\$ 43,200 ¹	\$ 19,277 10-units	\$ 39,200/10 units each year
②⑩ thru 29	\$13,250	\$1,325	\$271.41	\$ 70,438 ②⑩	\$23,479	\$ 86,400 ¹	\$ 39,441 20-units	\$ 78,400/20 units each year
③⑩ thru 39	\$13,000	\$1,300	\$266.29	\$103,664 ③⑩	\$34,555	\$129,600 ¹	\$ 60,491 30-units	\$117,600/30 units each year
④⑩ thru 49	\$12,750	\$1,275	\$261.71	\$135,821 ④⑩	\$45,274	\$172,800 ¹	\$ 82,253 40-units	\$156,800/40 units each year
⑤⑩ + over	\$12,500	\$1,250	\$256.05	\$166,130 ⑤⑩	\$55,377	\$216,000 ¹	\$105,247 50-units	\$196,900/50 units each year

A 10% down - 60 mos @ 13% on balance — dn. payment spread over 5 yrs.
 B Per unit — based on volume purchase years 1-5 on 33% Tax Bracket (Ask your C.P.A.)
 C 4 mos. full — (7) workers @ \$4 per person per day 2 mos. 1/2 full — (4) workers @ \$4 per person per day
 D Years 1-5 based on volume purchase
 E \$2,000 refurbishings or \$400 per year. After 5th and 10th year

Projected 1-15% increase in worker productivity not included
 more rest, alert worker — less commute time
 Figures are only estimates, useful for comparison,
 utilities, options, taxes and license fees not included

HYBRID TEMPORARY HOUSING UNIT SPECIFICATIONS

Standard Features:

8" Steel I-beam chassis —
 Subfloor —
 Shell —
 Electrical —
 Plumbing —

Dual axle and H.D. tires. Support jacks.
 2 x 6 joists — 16" o.c. 5/8" decking
 Exterior walls 2 x 4 — 16" o.c. Roof — composition shingle. Cathedral ceiling.
 100% copper wiring. 2 exterior lamps. GFI elec. outlets near water
 Pre-wired for solar & a/c.
 House type. Shut-off valves. Washerless faucets.
 1 pc. fiberglass showers (2). Full-size commodes
 40 gal. elec. /gas W/H with jacket. One plumbed for propane
 S.S. sinks, 1 double. 2 vanities

Insulation —
 Walls —
 Exterior doors —
 Windows —
 Floor covering —
 Sleep areas —
 Bath area —
 Furnace heat —

Floors — R-7. Walls — R-11. Ceiling — R-18
 7/16" Hard board panels - inside & out - 15 yr. warranty
 Metal 30" with windows and screens
 6" with screens. Opaque tempered glass in 5.
 Commercial grade Vinyl with 4" and 6" cove base
 Bunk type with built-in shelves. Lockers with latches
 Commercial grade mattresses, pillows - 4 closets.
 2 medicine cabinets — exhaust fan in shower area.
 Propane, gas or electric with thermostat.

Smoke detectors — fire extinguisher — first aid kit.

Our Manufacturers Have a Combined 60 Years Experience

Temporary Quarters

4125 Antonio Valley Blvd.
Suite E
San Diego, CA 92121

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 215
SAN DIEGO, CALIF.

HYBRID PORTABLE HOUSING FOR:

- Agricultural Workers
- Employee Housing
- Homeless People
- Construction & Mining Projects
- Refugee Influx Areas
- Government Interagency Use
- Emergency Shelter
- International Markets

Telephone: (619) 450-1877

Fax: (619) 450-3206

Telex: (619) 278-1966

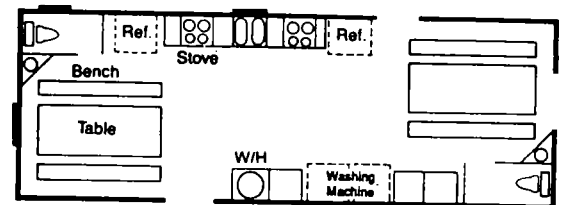
ONE YEAR UNLIMITED WARRANTY

Options:

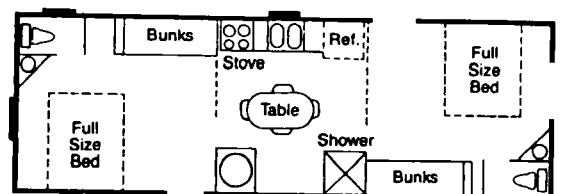
- Solar electrical system (12 yr. ltd. warranty)
- Water/waste system
- Propane set-up
- Portable generator
- Upgrade insulation (Radiant barrier)
- Evaporative cooler or portable A/C unit
- Skirting & installation
- Front porch/step
- Electric/propane Refrigerator
- Outdoor gas grill w/hose
- Picnic table & benches
- Washing machine
- Linen-pillows-cookware
- Water filtration system
- Table & chairs
- Delivery & set up

RV status allows transport & set up with minimal requirements

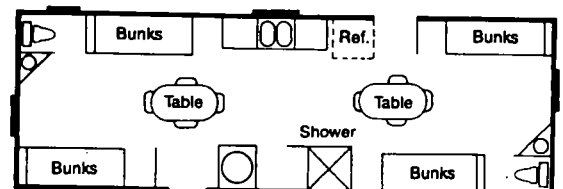
OPTIONAL FLOOR PLANS



Service unit for eating and laundry



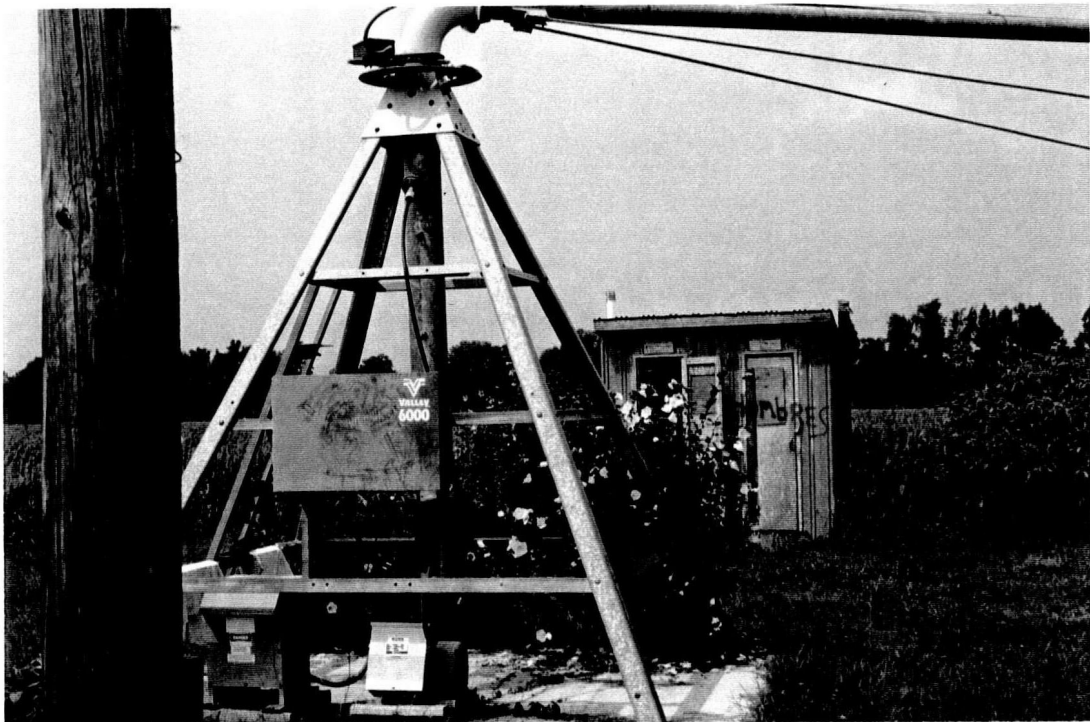
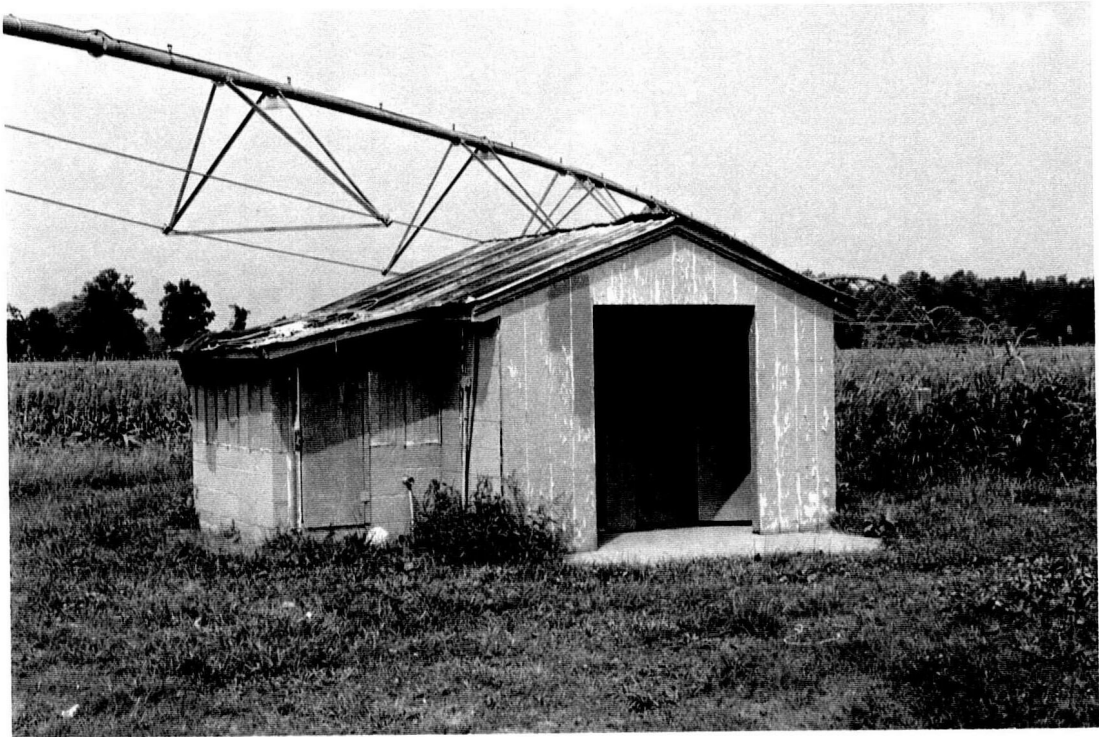
Sleeps 2, 4, 6 or 8

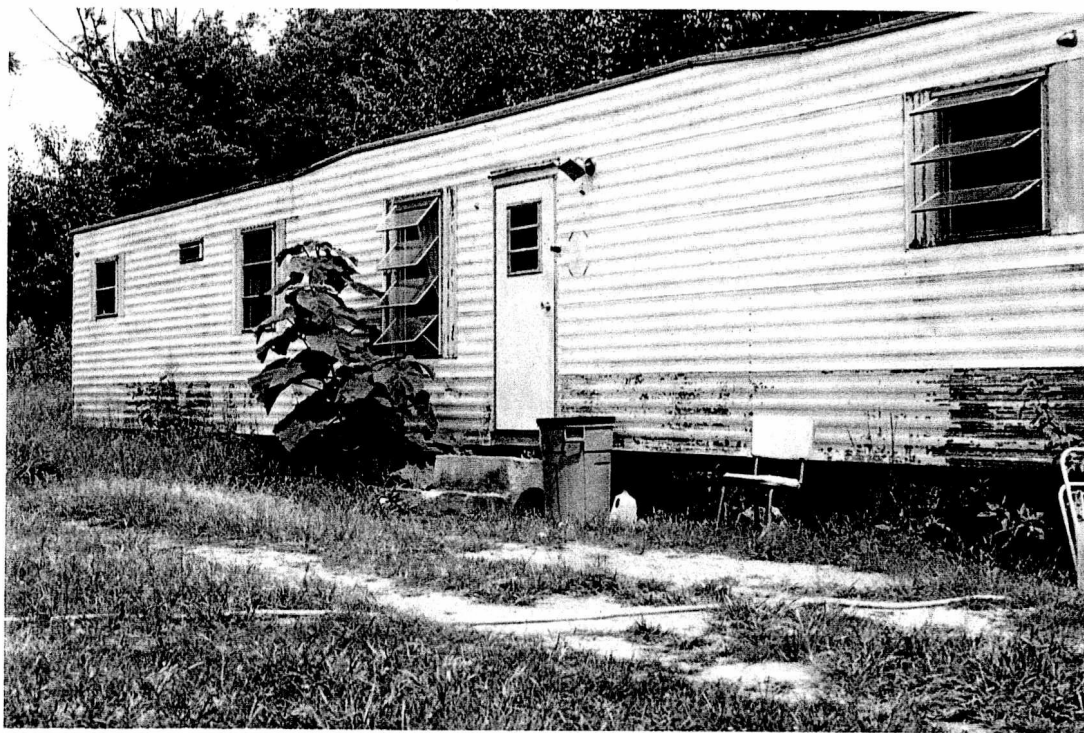


Sleeps 7 or 8



The Eastern Shore of Maryland, 1997(1)





The Eastern Shore of Maryland, 1997(2)



The Eastern Shore of Maryland, 1997(3)