

## **Migrant workers sue citrus company for wages**

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### **Body**

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More than 100 migrant farm workers are suing an Arcadia citrus company, saying they were not paid their federally mandated wages.

The suit, filed in federal court on Friday, alleges 112 Mexican workers were underpaid while they picked fruit for Sorrells Brothers Packing during the past two years.

The workers were guaranteed wages of \$ 7.66 an hour, but received \$ 5 an hour or less, based on production, attorney Gregory Schell said.

Compiled from Staff and Wire Reports4\*BRFS

A federal law requires such employees, who are brought to the United States to make up for labor shortages as guest workers, to be paid the average wage of other state farm laborers.

More than \$ 250,000 is owed in back wages, Schell said.

"The abuse of migrant workers in this case was severe and pervasive," Schell said. "Although the guest worker program is often depicted as providing foreign workers with more protection than farm workers, that is not the case here."

The workers were not reimbursed for their transportation costs, another violation of the law, Schell said. Nine workers in the suit also said they were fired without cause in 1999.

No trial date has been set. Calls placed to Sorrells Brothers Packing on Saturday seeking comment were not immediately returned.

Boy hurt in crash

in stable condition

ST. PETERSBURG - A 7-year-old boy was in stable condition Sunday, the day after his mother's car slammed into the back of a Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority bus.

Steven Landis was hospitalized at All Children's Hospital with head and internal injuries.

The bus was stopped about 8:30 p.m. Friday in the eastbound curb lane of 38th Avenue N just east of 26th Street N when a 1988 Chevrolet Corsica driven by the boy's mother, Kiara Whiteman, hit the vehicle, police said.

Whiteman, 29, was charged with driving under the influence causing serious bodily injury.

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Power boat racer

thrown from boat, injured

ST. PETERSBURG - A racer was seriously injured Sunday when he was ejected from his 27-foot boat, Gecko Imported Tequila, in Tampa Bay during the 2001 American Power Boat Association Offshore National Championships.

Throttleman Dominick Guido was in critical but stable condition at Bayfront Medical Center in St. Petersburg.

Guido, of New Jersey, was injured when his single-engine boat spun out on Turn 2 in the middle of the race in front of thousands of spectators. Officials with the American Power Boat Association declined to release details about the accident late Sunday.

- Staff and wire reports

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