



A white teenage checker with Mexican pickers. Photo by Seth M. Holmes.

Although the farm management—including Shelly, who supervises the white picking and checking crews—sees the employment of white teenage checkers as developing positive values toward agriculture and diversity in the valley, checkers learn also that they deserve to have power over Mexicans, even those old enough to be their parents or grandparents. The teenagers are paid minimum wage while being allowed to talk and sit most of the time; the pickers have to kneel constantly and work as fast as possible in order to keep their jobs. The white checkers are given power over how many pounds are marked for the pickers, and I observed more often than not that checkers marked less weight on the cards than the scale displayed. Numerous times over the course of my fieldwork, I observed supervisors telling checkers that the laborers should not pick more than thirty pounds of berries per bucket. Supervisors indicated that more weight would damage the berries. In addition, they indicated that the pickers would try to “get away with” putting more berries per bucket because they were “lazy.” Of course, there was no way for me to estimate precisely how much the berries in