

# Jobs suffer if farm workers wages go up

Raising the minimum wage of farm workers in the Western Cape will reduce employment, Solidarity said on Tuesday (22 January).



"Raising the minimum wage will not ease the problems in the Western Cape and would rather tend to further diminish employment," said Piet le Roux, senior researcher at Solidarity Research Institute (SRI)

"Farmers will already have to put aside additional funds for increased security and insurance costs," he said.

He said that farm workers and employers shared common interests of safeguarding the infrastructure and production processes from which they earn their daily bread.

On Tuesday (22 January), the Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu) announced that the strike by farm workers in the Western Cape had been called off.

"On the advice of workers, we are calling off the strike in all areas, so that workers can evaluate what they have gained and plan more carefully for the way forward," Western Cape secretary general Tony Ehrenreich said.

He said Cosatu would be co-ordinating "the mother of all strikes against bad farmers" later in the year, should no agreement be reached on a better daily wage, decent working conditions and a comprehensive land reform plan.

Farm workers went on strike last year, demanding that the minimum daily wage be increased from R69 to R150. The strike was suspended in December, but resumed a few weeks ago in various towns in the province.

Cosatu suspended the strike a week ago on condition that farmers' organisation Agri SA agreed not to victimise workers and committed to "local-level" agreements.

Source: *Sapa* via I-Net Bridge

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