

# Under pressure farmers likely to speed up mechanisation

Speaking at an agriculture day in the Eastern Cape Karoo town of Willowmore Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Deputy Minister Pieter Mulder said on Wednesday that exorbitant wage increases may over the long term inevitably lead to work losses and mechanisation of the agricultural sector, BDLive reports.

Mulder warned that the trade unions were increasingly expecting farmers to give attention to social issues, which was in fact the government's task. He stressed that commercial farmers were businesspeople - who needed to make a profit - and not welfare workers. He warned that agricultural strikes would have far-reaching consequences for agriculture.

Farmers across the country, Mulder said, were considering adopting the approach of their counterparts in developed countries, such as the US and Australia, where implements or farming machinery were so developed farm owners could manage their operations with small numbers of workers. BDLive reports that Mulder said after the recent wave of unprotected farm strikes, the move towards mechanisation was expected to speed up.

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