

Farm workers to strike again

Farm workers across the country have resolved to strike today, 4 December 2012, after wage negotiations stalled.

Following a meeting with farm workers in De Doorns, in Western Cape, Cosatu provincial secretary Tony Ehrenreich said on Sunday (2 December) that Western Cape workers were "very upset."

"They said they are resuming the strike. It will be on a national level."

This was after negotiations with AgriSA to increase the minimum wage from R69 to R150 a day deadlocked.

Cosatu has distanced itself from the upcoming strike.

Ehrenreich said discussions with farmers were underway to find a solution before the strike started.

AgriSA president Johannes Moller said that, in the current economy, farmers could not afford to pay workers more.

Moller said wages now accounted for R12.9bn, or 22%, of the agricultural sector's R60bn a year gross turnover.

"Even if we increase it by R10 a year, that is an extra R1.7bn," he said.

He said workers and farmers needed to think "outside the box" to find a solution.

Moller said AgriSA would continue to meet Cosatu to find a solution.

"Everything is not going well with the economy damaging crops and property won't help their cause," he said

Police spokesman Captain Frederick van Wyk said De Doorns had been peaceful since last month's violence.

Labour Department spokesman Musa Zondi said the minister's hands were tied because minimum wages could only be increased annually. They were last increased in March this year.

Source: *The Times* via I-Net Bridge

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