Clover workers strike in demand of union recognition

By Karl Gernetzky   3 May 2016

Workers demanding recognition of their trade union at JSE-listed dairy producer Clover on Thursday downed tools at the company's Clayville factory, in Midrand.

Clover CEO Johann Vorster says the group will be exporting products to Nigeria on a cash basis only.

Photographer: Martin Rhodes

They also maintained that other national distribution sites have also been affected.

About 500 members at the Olifantsfontein facility were picketing, with significant negative effects and idled delivery vehicles, General Industries Workers Union of SA (Giwusa) organiser Clarence Debeila said on Thursday.

The union, along with the #outsourcingmustfall movement, on Wednesday announced the industrial action, which pertained to grievances about the recognition of Giwusa at Clover.

"For over three years, sick of the cosy sweetheart relationship between existing unions and management, workers have been building their new union (Giwusa) and demanding recognition; for three years, management has frustrated workers legitimate efforts," read the statement from Mr Debeila.

He said the union, having organised at Clover since 2013, had received certification of nonresolution from the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) earlier in April.

The union gave notice of indefinite strikes on Monday, and was expecting Clover to seek a court interdict.

The company's arguments for the interdict that arbitration be pursued was likely to fall flat, as Giwusa had been the applicant in the CCMA proceedings, he said.

Clover said in a statement on Thursday it had received a court interdict against the strike on Thursday afternoon, with arbitration date now scheduled for May.

Contingency plans had been in place with a limited impact in Limpopo and at Clayville. The company remained committed to resolving the matter through appropriate channels, the statement read.

Source: Business Day