

## Jobs in peril at Clover - Solidarity

More than 90 jobs are in peril as dairy company Clover plans to close down its Wesselsbron cheese factory, the trade union Solidarity said on Wednesday, 11 March 2009.



Clover plans to close the factory by 31 May, according to the union.

It said that this followed the Section 189 notice Clover issued this week, in which it cited the production cost of bulk cheese as one of the most important reasons for the planned retrenchments.

"In terms of the Section 189 notice issued to trade unions yesterday, Clover intends to completely shut down the Wesselsbron cheese factory and incorporate the production of Tussers and Gouda at the Lichtenburg factory. In addition, Clover believes that it must optimise its cheese factories in order to force prices down and improve operational efficiency."

According to Solidarity spokesperson Jaco Kleynhans, Clover's decision to close the doors of the Wesselsbron factory is a huge setback for the local community because Clover is one of the largest employers in the town.

"Clover's decision to retrench 92 people will not only lead to a loss of expertise at the company, but will also have a serious ripple effect on the community, which has become largely dependent on the factory," explained Kleynhans.

Solidarity said that Clover suggested averting the retrenchments by placing a moratorium on filling vacant positions and by offering voluntary severance and pension packages.

"In terms of the notice, Clover is offering a severance package of two weeks' salary for every completed year of service in addition to the payment of pro rata bonuses and long-service bonuses to employees."

Meanwhile, Clover has also requested that the Section 189 consultation process be handled by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

"This means that a 60-day consultation period has now commenced, during which trade unions will consult with Clover in an effort to ward off the retrenchments," said Solidarity.

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