

## ***PART IV***

## ***RECOMMENDATIONS***

## Chapter 13

### Recommendations

#### 1. Scope of application

- 1.1. The sectors to which this sectoral determination applies are
  - (a) primary and secondary agriculture
  - (b) mixed farming
  - (c) horticulture,
  - (d) animal products
  - (e) field crops, and
  - (f) aqua farming.
  
- 1.2. The conditions of the sectoral determination apply to all people who work in the agricultural sector except those who are self-employed. A self-employed person is one who controls the means and manner of his/her work in that he or she:
  - (a) Provides the tools (if any) with which he/she works **and**
  - (b) Is not supervised in any way **and**
  - (c) Determines the timing of his/her work **and**
  - (d) Determines the methods if his/her work.
  
- 1.2. Any person who only works for a single employer for at least 2 months in one year may not be classified as being self-employed.
- 1.3. Any person who works or supplies personal services on a farm or in the agricultural sector should be regarded as a farm worker unless the work is entirely unsupervised or is supplied to a client or customer of a profession or business undertaking carried on by the individual.
- 1.4. Domestic workers and security guards on farms should be classified as farm workers and would be entitled to the same basic terms and conditions of employment as other farm workers.
- 1.5. Any person who works on a farm, but is covered by another sectoral determination or by a bargaining council agreement, shall have their terms and conditions of employment determined by the other determination or the agreement concerned. For instance, an employee employed in a bed and breakfast establishment on a farm would be covered by the agricultural determination, unless there is a determination or a bargaining council agreement regulating the hospitality sector covering bed and breakfast establishments.

- 1.6. A person who works in the agricultural sector is covered by the sectoral determination regardless of his or her status as:
- (a) An indefinitely employed full-time employee;
  - (b) A fixed-term full-time employee;
  - (c) An indefinitely employed part-time employee; or
  - (d) A fixed-term part-time employee.

Part-time employees shall be entitled to the minimum wage applicable in their magisterial district, and to all terms and conditions of employment specified in the sectoral determination, on a pro-rata basis as set out in Table 33 above.

## 2. Minimum wages

- 2.1. The minimum wages to be paid to employees in the agricultural sector, where the Magisterial Districts are grouped as in the Table above, are:
- (a) R750,00 per month in the magisterial districts in Group 1;
  - (b) R600,00 per month in the magisterial districts in Group 2;
  - (c) R500,00 per month in the magisterial districts in Group 3;
  - (d) R400,00 per month in the magisterial districts in Group 4.
- 2.2. Piece rates may be applied only if the amount paid results in a wage which is not lower than that prescribed. Piece rates may therefore represent a productivity incentive over and above the minimum wage, and not an alternative to it.
- 2.3. The resulting wages are presented in the Table below and compared with current wages. This shows that the current average wage in magisterial districts in Group 1 is R950.00, which is 1/3 above the average for the country, and includes 35.61% of the farm workers in South Africa. The proposed minimum wage for Group 1 is R750.00, or R34.63 per day for workers who are not paid on a monthly basis, and so forth for each of the four groups.

**Table 38: Recommended minimum wages**

Group	Average Wage (R per Month)	% Of Country Average	Number of Workers	Proportion Of total	Proposed minimum wage (R per Month)	Proposed Daily Wage (R per day)
1	950,00	134,00	227044	35,61	750	34,63
2	695,00	97,89	164849	25,85	600	27,70
3	588,00	82,82	84955	13,32	500	23,08
4	450,00	63,38	160816	25,22	400	18,48
<b>All</b>	<b>710,00</b>	<b>100,00</b>	<b>637644</b>	<b>100,00</b>		

The Table below provides some further background to these proposed minimum wages. The calculations were based on the 1996 Census, thus the proposed minimum cash payment in 2001 had to be deflated to 1996 (3<sup>rd</sup> column). The average wage in

1996 for that group of Magisterial Districts before and after the introduction of the minimum wage is presented in the next two columns, while the absolute and percentage increase is provided in the two columns thereafter. It is important to note that this absolute and relative increase in average wages represents the **minimum** expected increase. Farm worker income data were only available in broad income ranges. In all cases only the wages of workers earning from R0-R200 were adjusted. The last column shows how many workers' wages will be affected in each of the Groups. Thus, it is estimated that 10.6% of the workers in Magisterial Districts in Group 1 are presently being paid at a rate below the proposed minimum wage, while almost half (48.8%) of those in Group 4 earn less than the proposed minimum wage. This table shows the minimum cash wages where the maximum level of deduction has been made for payments in kind (see section 4 below).

**Table 39: The implications of the recommended minimum wage**

Group	Proposed Cash Minimum Wage	Equivalent 1996 amount	Average Wage (before)	Average Wage (after)	R increase	% increase	Minimum % of workers affected
1	600	456,48	609,17	634,93	25,76	4,22	10,6
2	480	365,19	445,54	498,88	53,34	11,97	17,4
3	400	304,32	377,51	460,14	82,63	21,89	32,1
4	320	243,46	287,73	414,48	126,75	44,05	48,8

### 3. Payment in kind

Most farm workers in South Africa receive a portion of their payment “in kind”. The single largest item of payment in kind is most commonly the provision of accommodation (followed by food). However, the quality is highly variable. The sectoral determination therefore needs to define minimum standards for the purposes of determining whether accommodation provided to an employee may be considered to be payment in kind.

In order to build on and improve existing practices, and to prevent the withdrawal of such payments, the sectoral determination needs to define and regulate payment in kind. This should allow for employers to pay a reduced cash wage to employees receiving payments in kind, while setting a minimum cash wage that must be received.

- 3.1. Accommodation or food provided by an employer to an employee should only constitute payment in kind if:
  - a. It is provided by the employer at his or her cost;
  - b. It is provided on a consistent and regular basis as a condition of employment
- 3.2. Payments in kind must be valued on the basis of the cost to the employer of supplying goods and services to employees subject to these restrictions:
  - (a) The total payment in kind may not be deemed to constitute more than 20% of the total wage and

- (b) The maximum value of payment in kind to an employee who only receives accommodation or food is 10% of the total wage paid; and
  - (c) No additional deduction may be made from the employee's cash wage for a payment in kind.
- 3.3. Housing may be considered to constitute payment in kind only if no rental is charged for the house in which the employee is resident and if it meets the following specifications:
- (a) A roof which does not leak is in place **and**
  - (b) Glass windows have been installed and can be opened **and**
  - (c) Electricity is available inside the house **and**
  - (d) Water is available on tap inside the house **and**
  - (e) A flush toilet or pit latrine is available in, or in close proximity to, the house **and**
  - (f) The size of the house is not less than 54 square meters or 10 square metres per adult resident, whichever is greater.
- 3.4. Supply of accommodation may not be a payment in kind unless the employee is ordinarily resident on the farm.
- 3.5. Where more than one employee occupies a single house, and that house is considered to constitute a form of payment in kind, the value of the use of the house must be deducted from the wages of all adult employees resident therein, on an equally proportionate basis. However an employer may not deduct more than a total of 20% of one employee's wage in respect of the same house.
- 3.6. Housing may not be considered to constitute payment in kind in the case of employees under the age of 18.
- 3.7. The cost of supplying fuel, electricity or water may be included in the cost of accommodation.
- 3.8. Fuel may be considered to be payment in kind, insofar as the employer provides the employees with electricity and/or firewood and/or a flammable liquid fuel. Water provided to an employee may be valued as the average cost of water provision for domestic use by the employee and any dependants of the employee.

#### **4. Sick leave and medical certificates**

In many rural areas, access to medical and health services is a difficulty for farm workers that is compounded by lack of independent transport and public transport (or the financial means to use public transport). The requirement that employees produce a medical certificate to claim sick leave therefore poses practical problems.

In some instances, therefore, it may assist farm workers if the law were to expand the range of health practitioners who are authorised to provide such a medical certificate.

At present, levels of qualification among traditional healers and community health workers have not been confirmed within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The sectoral determination therefore needs to specify that, in addition to the recognised professions of doctors, nurses and psychologists, traditional healers and community health workers may provide medical certificates. It is proposed that:

Employees shall be entitled to sick leave on the terms specified in the BCEA, subject to the provision that medical certificates may be provided by any of the following:

- (a) A medical doctor/general practitioner **or**
- (b) A clinical nurse practitioner<sup>1</sup> **or**
- (c) A traditional healer **or**
- (d) A community health worker **or**
- (e) A psychologist **or**
- (f) Any other health practitioner authorised to diagnose a medical condition.

## **5. Working time**

Subject to the comments made below, it is proposed that the provisions in the BCEA should apply to agricultural sector.

### **5.1. Ordinary hours of work**

In terms of section 9(1) of the BCEA, the normal maximum ordinary working week (i.e. excluding overtime) for an employee is 45 hours in a week. In terms of item 5 of Schedule 3 to the BCEA, for a period 12 months after its commencement the ordinary maximum hours of farm workers were 48 hours.

Section 55(6)(c) provides that a sectoral determination may not reduce the protection afforded to employees by section 9. Accordingly, it is not possible for a sectoral determination to permit an ordinary working week in excess of 45 hours.

Certain aspects of minimum standards in agriculture are still regulated by the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 3 of 1983. These provisions are section 6A (extension of working hours), section 10(2A) (pay for work on Sundays) and section 14(4A) (rights during notice period). These provisions were introduced by the BCEA Amendment Act 104, 1992 with effect from 1 May 1993 following a tripartite negotiation process in the now defunct National Manpower Commission.

Their appropriateness for inclusion in the sectoral determination is considered below. These provisions remain in force until such time as the matters regulated by these provisions are regulated by a sectoral determination applicable to farm workers (item 3 of schedule 3 to the BCEA).

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<sup>1</sup> As defined in section 38(a) of the Nursing Act, No. 50 of 1978, a clinical nurse practitioner is equipped with clinical curative skills.

## 5.2. Extension of working hours for farm workers

Section 6A of the BCEA of 1983 permits a variation of ordinary hours of work to accommodate seasonal fluctuations in the demand of work. Paraphrased, it provides as follows: -

- “1. A worker and an employer may conclude a written agreement to extend the farm worker’s ordinary hours of work by not more than four hours per week for a period not exceeding four months in any continuous period of twelve months provided that the ordinary hours of work are reduced by the same number of hours during a period of the same duration in the same period of twelve months.
2. The agreement may not extend the farm worker’s ordinary daily hours of work to more than ten hours on a day.
5. The employer must pay the farm worker during any period of extended or reduced hours of work, the wage the farm worker would have received for normal ordinary hours of work.
6. If the farm worker’s employment terminates for any reason at a time when he or she has worked the extended hours but not the equivalent number of reduced hours in terms of the agreement, the employer must pay the worker for the extended hours worked at the prescribed overtime rate.”

This permits an averaging of working hours over a 12-month cycle based on an ordinary working week of 48 hours. It accommodates seasonal fluctuation in the demand for work while at the same time giving the employee a regular income. For the employer, it results in savings on overtime during busy periods such as harvesting.

It is **proposed** that the above provisions should be retained but adjusted to operate on a 45-hour week. An extension of five hours per week should be permitted. This would allow for an ordinary working week of 50 hours during peak seasons.

## 5.3. Work on Sundays

Section 10(2A) of the BCEA, paraphrased, provides as follows: -

- “1. The employer of a farm worker who is required to perform work on a Sunday in the ordinary course of events must pay the worker an amount calculated in accordance with the following table:

<i>Time worked on a Sunday</i>	<i>Payment</i>
<i>Less than 1 hour</i>	<i>Double the ordinary wage for one hour</i>
<i>Longer than 1 hour but less than 2 hours</i>	<i>Double the ordinary wage for time actually worked</i>
<i>Longer than 2 hours but</i>	<i>The employee’s ordinary</i>

<i>less than 5 hours</i>	<i>daily wage plus a ordinary working day off in the following week without remuneration</i>
<i>Longer than 5 hours</i>	<i>The greater of double the wage payable in respect of time worked (excluding overtime) or double the ordinary daily wage plus a ordinary working day off without remuneration in the following week”.</i>

This provision was introduced to deal with forms of agricultural work in which employees are required to work for a short period on each day of the week such as milking cows, setting irrigation equipment etc. It represents an exception to the rule reflected in section 16(2) of the BCEA of 1997 that an employee who works on a Sunday (no matter how short the period) is entitled to at least a full day’s pay. It is **proposed** that this provision be incorporated into the sectoral determination.

#### **5.4. Night work**

Section 17 of the BCEA, 1997 introduced protections for employees who perform night work. Sections 17(3) – (5) contain provisions that have particular relevance to the protection of the health and safety of employees who regularly perform shifts at night. These provisions require employers to inform employees of the health and safety hazards associated with their work and give the employees a right to a medical examination concerning these hazards. In terms of the BCEA, these protection apply to employees who work for a period of longer than one hour after 23h00 and before 06h00 at least five times a month or fifty times per year.

Item 3(2) of the transitional provisions to the BCEA varies this provision by providing that, until there is a sectoral determination for agriculture, the protection in section 17(3) only applies to farm workers who work after 20h00 and before 04h00 at least 5 times per month or 50 times per year. The reason for this provision was that it was considered inappropriate to apply the protections in section 17(3) to employee’s who might start work extremely early to perform functions such as milking cows etc but who do not work night shift.

It is **proposed** that this provision be retained in the sectoral determination.

#### **5.5. General considerations**

In drafting the sectoral determination, it must be borne in mind that certain provisions in the BCEA are phrased in general terms and their interpretation can give rise to some uncertainties. Where appropriate, the sectoral determination should seek to clarify the circumstances in which agricultural employees are entitled to these benefits.

It is proposed that this be done in respect of the definition of emergency work in terms of section 6(2) of the Act and the circumstances under which employees can be required or permitted to work during their meal intervals (section 14(2) of the Act).

## **5.6. Termination of employment**

The general rules applicable to termination of employment in the BCEA should apply to the agricultural sector. In particular, this would require that a contract of employment terminable at the instance of a party to a contract may be terminated on notice of not less than: –

- (a) one week, during the first four weeks of employment of farm workers;
- (b) four weeks thereafter.

Presently section 14(4A) of the BCEA, 1983 provides rights in respect of accommodation, crops and cattle for farm workers whose services have been terminated. It states that the farm worker shall be entitled:

- (i) To the accommodation for the period to which he (sic) would have been entitled under his contract of employment if the contract of employment had been terminated with the required notice or for a period of 30 days from the date on which the contract of employment was terminate, whichever period is the longer;
- (ii) To his(sic) livestock being kept on the land of the employer for the period stipulated in his contract of employment or for 30 days from the date on which the said contract was terminated, whichever period is the longer;
- (iii) To tend to his (sic) standing crop on such land, which forms part of his remuneration, and harvest and remove it within reasonable time after it has become ready for harvesting unless the employer pays the farm worker for such crop the amount they have agreed upon

Three proposals are made in respect of termination of employment.

Firstly, it is proposed that the rights in respect of accommodation during periods of notice should be the same as other workers in terms of section 39 of the BCEA.

Secondly, it is proposed that the provisions currently included in section 14(4A) of the BCEA of 1983 giving employees rights in respect of cattle and crops should be retained in an appropriate form in the sectoral determination.

Thirdly, it is proposed that the sectoral determination should specifically state that the provisions related to termination do not affect the right of a dismissed farm worker to dispute the lawfulness of an eviction or any other action taken in terms of the Extension of Security of Tenure Act (ESTA).

## **5.7. Small businesses and new enterprises**

While the research did not look specifically at the impact of minimum wages on small businesses and micro-enterprises, there was an assumption that a significant number of agricultural employees are working on small farms. In particular, the position of

small farmers (farmers on communal lands in the former homeland areas, and beneficiaries of the land reform programme) needs to be accounted for.

Thus, it is proposed that the minimum wage should not apply to all employers who employ five or less employees at any time of the year. However, all employers should comply with the basic conditions of employment recommended here, regardless of how many people they employ.

In practice this will mean that virtually all of the small farmers, whether on communal lands or under the land reform programme, will be exempt from paying minimum wages. At the same time new entrants who start on a small scale will also be exempt in practice.

### **5.8. Special measures for vulnerable groups**

Our research has shown that women, the youth and foreign workers constitute the most vulnerable groups among the farm labour force. Yet it is not easy to protect their interests through the provisions of labour legislation in the absence of effective enforcement mechanisms. The following is recommended:

- special steps should be taken to enforce the prohibition of child labour on farms, and that special conditions of employment be set for the youth (those less than 18 years old, and more than 14). These should at least include a ban on night work (including the herding of livestock); a 35 hour work week; and a prohibition on working with agro-chemicals, even if the prescribed protective clothing, etc. is available
- that a premium be included in the minimum wage paid to seasonal and temporary workers who are paid a daily rate. These have been included in the calculations in **Table 37** above. Such a measure is expected to favour women workers

### **5.9. Exceptions and time period before implementation**

Our recommendations cover a minimum wage for each of four groups of Magisterial Districts in the country. However, we are aware that conditions can vary greatly within a Magisterial District. Therefore, we recommend that:

- a six-month period should be allowed between the time of promulgation of these recommendations and their coming into force. During this time appeals should be made to the Employment Conditions Commission to regroup Districts where there is sufficient evidence that this is justified **in terms of the criteria used to make these recommendations** (i.e. where conditions are so skewedly distributed that the averages distort the true case)

In addition, any farmer can utilise the variation provisions spelt out in Section 50 of the BCEA. In terms of these provisions, an individual farmer or group of farmers who can prove hardship, can be given a variation for a defined period.

## **5.10. Enforcement**

Our field research has shown that existing labour legislation is rarely enforced on farms in South Africa. Enforcement is more likely to occur in those rare cases where workers are unionised. Due particularly to the geographical distance that separates farms from each other and urban centres, conventional mechanisms provided in labour legislation are very difficult to apply .

In this respect there are at least four current initiatives that could serve the same purpose, but without placing too large a burden on the thinly stretched resources of the State. These include:

- voluntary efforts between employers and employees to create a code of conduct for a specified group of employers (farmers). Such Codes are being discussed at the level of the Provincial Agricultural Unions, and are supported by AgriSA
- proposals to use access to State support institutions as a lever to reward farmers for following fair labour practices. The proposed Social Product of the Land Bank falls into this category, and has the added advantage of providing rewards for responsible labour management rather than the conventional reliance on penalties only
- industry agreements to support fair labour standards in excess of those required by the State. A case in point is the recent adoption of the Winetech Vision 2020 empowerment strategy that commits the industry to bettering these standards, for example by adopting a minimum wage in excess of the prescribed wage
- external interventions such as those that fall under the heading of fair trade or ethical trade practices, where foreign buyers prescribe, among others, fair labour standards from those whose produce they buy

The Minister of Labour has recently launched an initiative together with major national employer organisations and trade unions entitled: “Vision for Agricultural Relations”. It sets out a commonly agreed vision for labour relations on farms as well as implementation steps. This initiative can also assist in respect of improving enforcement.

It is proposed that the Department of Labour at a national, provincial and local level should liaise with all relevant parties to such above mentioned agreements in order to find synergies in the enforcement of agreed conditions of employment. This should include participation as neutral experts in deliberations where the parties request their participation. In taking this initiative the Department should encourage all parties to make special provision for the position of women as independent labourers in their own right.

## **5.11. Supply of farm workers by third parties**

There is an increasing trend towards “outsourcing” in terms of which third parties supply farmers with their labour requirements. Farm workers supplied by these

agencies are a vulnerable group within farm workers and often face particular difficulties in enforcing their rights.

The determination should define and regulate two types of agencies that supply farm workers to farmers. The first of these is “employment services” or “labour contracting”. This is a person who conducts a business of providing to a client other persons to render services or work and who remunerate those persons. (This category is referred to in the Labour Relations Act and Basic Conditions of Employment Act as “temporary employment services”, although its scope is not confined to persons who provide temporary employees.)

The employment service and the client are jointly and severally liable to comply with the relevant labour legislation. Thus, where the employment service does not pay the workers concerned, the client becomes liable for that obligation. This has resulted in farmers using the services of reliable employment services that comply with the legal obligation in the law. It is proposed that the determination should provide that if the employment service is in default of its obligations to remunerate the workers for a period of thirty days, the client concerned becomes liable to make the payment.

The second category of agencies that supply labour are what are termed “labour brokers”. They differ from employment services in that, while they conduct a business of providing workers to employers, they do not remunerate employees and thus are not employers. In this case, the client is the employer and pays remuneration to the workers concerned. This category of labour supply is not regulated by either the Labour Relations Act or the Basic Conditions of Employment Act. It is proposed that the sectoral determination should regulate it and that the joint and several liability should apply between the employer and the labour broker. This would prevent labour brokering from being used as a device to avoid compliance with the law.

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