

FAWU BULLETIN

Newsletter For Members and Staff

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FAWU Rejects Tiger Brand's Superficial BEE Deal

Tiger Brand's black economic empowerment (BEE) transaction is "superficial," the Food & Allied Workers Union (Fawu) said on Wednesday. "The FAWU rejects the media-announced BEE transaction by Tiger Brands as a public relations exercise and marketing tactic, far from a genuine empowerment of its employees," it said in a statement.

The union added that Tiger Brands -- unlike many other companies with which Fawu had relationships -- continued to "unilaterally" announce equity transactions involving employees without engaging their representatives. "This is a tendency that continues despite our recent verbal and written warning to them that it is unacceptable," Fawu said. According to the union, there were problems with the transaction as it created "a plethora of individuals holding 100 shares each and thereby creating some kind of incentives instead of collective ownership."

Furthermore, Fawu said the structure of the transaction simply reinforced remuneration disparities by giving black managers more shares, housed in a separate trust, and low-income earners a small number of shares.

According to the union, there was no properly constituted employee share ownership project trust, with members of the board of trustees appointed to run the affairs of the beneficiaries. "We call on the company to sincerely engage with the union to look at the structure and the substance of this transaction and not to engage in a public relations exercise by announcing a deal that does not meaningfully empower our members and employees of Tiger Brands," Fawu said.

In response to Fawu's statement, the company told Sapa that it had invested considerable time and thought into the planning and delivery of the transaction. "We are confident that it will benefit our employees as well as a broader section of society, helping to address social needs in both the short and the long term," the company added. Earlier this week, Tiger Brands announced a BEE deal, saying it would offer an additional 10 percent stake to black investors in a transaction with a value of approximately R2.8 billion.

(Sapa, 03/09/09)

Dairy Workers Pay Farm Worker Wages

About 50 FAWU members, employed by Hygienic Dairy based in Polokwane Industrial Area, have embarked on a protected strike on Monday, 31 August in response to a wage dispute and the company's insistence to pay the workers a sectoral wage which is not applicable to them.

Workers are seeking a wage increase of R176.00 per month while the company is offering a mere R116.00 wage increase. The lowest paid worker earns R 1600.00 while the highest earns R 1900.00 per month which is far below the standard that in

the same sector currently earn. Our members also want an annual bonus which is currently paid conditionally.

Clearly the company is not aware that they are operating in an industrial area and not on a farm where they would be able to pay workers the minimum as required by the sectoral determination for the farm worker sector. Our members are performing highly skilled work and operate machinery used in processing of products, and rightfully deserve decent increases. We feel they are merely using this as an excuse for not paying decent wages or else they are ill-informed and we would like to set them straight.

The company has also instituted a lockout against the workers prohibiting them from access to water and toilets.

Cold Chain Workers End Successful Strike

About 1500 members of FAWU employed by Cold Chain Distributors have ended their industrial action on a successful note after the union and the company on a wage agreement on 30 August 2009 at the company's headquarters in Midrand, Johannesburg.

The workers received a 10 percent wage increase effective from 1 July 2009 until 30 July 2010 after the company offered only 8 percent initially. Our members also managed to retain transport home after 18h00 as well as their cash allowances. They have also come to an agreement with the company on the fact that different medical aid options would be investigated and the financial implications for workers established in order to come to a fair and affordable option for our members. Workers would therefore no longer be forced to join the company's medical aid.

The company also agreed that we would continue wage negotiations for next year after the World Cup and not in 2011 as they initially preferred.

Cold Chain agreed to the principle of having a full-time shop steward as elected by the national shop steward's committee and to give the shop steward a monthly budget to cover expenses for transport and limited business telephone costs. The parties both agreed on a severance package of two weeks for each completed year of service after twelve months although the union preferred four weeks during the strike.

As FAWU, we are glad that our members managed to hold on to their hard gained benefits and even managed to score additional benefits, especially in the midst of an economic recession. We are also happy that we managed to settle the dispute amicably after a relatively short strike.

“We are however still sitting with serious problems in terms of a certain individual in the company’s Human Resources Department that needs to be urgently investigated,” says comrade Debbie De Vries who handled the negotiations between FAWU and the company.

Viva FAWU Viva!!!

Rustenburg Rainbow Chickens’ Unusual Unilateral Changes

About 1800 FAWU members are willing to go on strike from the 10th of September if the company’s management does not reverse their latest unusual and unilateral changes, says comrade Tseleng Tau, Provincial Secretary of the North- West region.

Workers are strongly opposed to management's latest suggestions that they should clock out when going to toilets or take a smoke break. Females, who make up the majority of workers at the factory, are also unhappy over management's attempts to bar them from sitting while working as they did over the last couple of years. It is especially strenuous to stand on their feet for up to nine hours, especially those who are pregnant or have back and other problems. What makes things worse, is that management is not willing to apply these rules of "double clocking" when using the toilet or taking a smoke break, to themselves. If we were all equally treated, it would have made things easier.

Say comrade Tau, we had a meeting with management yesterday and we have given them an ultimatum to take back these lousy decisions or we will refer the matter to the CCMA by the 10th of September 2009 and make an urgent application to go on a protected strike.

Attitude of Agri-Forum and Human Rights Commission

The Congress of South African Trade Unions in the North West Province condemns and rejects strongly the public response to the media by North West Agri-forum and national Human Rights Commission - that COSATU's allegations of killings, victimisation, abuse and mistreatment of farm workers and farm dwellers in the North West are unfounded.

COSATU in the province has it on record, with all case numbers from police stations in all areas. It also has details of those cases that are not reported to the police, due to the intimidation by the same farmers who have a good relationship with some white police and magistrates.

It is good for Agri- forum and the DA to go public and defend their own members who are the real owners of those killing of farm workers. By defending killers, you are also a killer.

We are asking the Human Rights Commission not to listen only to the people who have money, but to listen also to poor farm workers who are dismissed after casting their votes, victimised after joining COSATU unions, mauled by lions, shot and mistaken for animals and evicted for attending May Day rallies. All these cases are reported to the police. What more information or evidence is needed by Human Rights Commission and the Agri-forum.

There is a clear picture of discrimination by the national Human Rights Commission and Agri- forum, which did not want to meet with the Provincial Human Commission because it is led by an African Black man.

The matter of racism, killing of farm workers, and evictions will not stop while Agri- forum, the DA and other farmers are still in denial about the real things that are happening in the farms.

Once again, COSATU has informed the HRC about the continuation of threats, victimisation, plotting against the union leadership and farm workers, and they did nothing to defend workers or COSATU leadership.

Department of Human Settlements Tables New Programme to Provide Farm Workers with Housing/ Land Ownership

A new programme, the *Farm Residence Housing Programme* was presented to the Portfolio Committee for Human Settlements a short while ago.

It has been reported that the programme will provide housing as well as low- cost rental options. The programme will look at three development options:

1. *Rental developments **by farmers**- the farmer will still have ownership but will act as an implementing agent. The option*

won't provide for subdivisions or ownership transfer to farm workers.

2. **Rental developments by housing institutions-** Farmers to lease a part of their land to a housing development institution and the beneficiaries thereof will become part of the institution's management.
3. **Individual ownership-** farmer separates his land into subdivisions, which are able to hold small-scale farming activities, which then are transferred to individual farm workers.

Members of the committee questioned the programme's feasibility as well as the overlapping of the DHS and Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) of which they wanted the latter to be clarified. The DHS however assured the committee that the programme will be implemented in collaboration with farm worker unions and the success thereof will depend on the cooperation from farmers and other stakeholders.

(Farmer's Weekly)

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