

# F.A.W.U. Bulletin

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## Rainbow Chickens Continues Operations Despite Death of Worker

FAWU is still horrified at the incident at Rainbow Chickens in Hammarsdale, Kwa- Zulu Natal on April 6, 2011 which claimed the life of a general worker, cde Eric Nhlangulela, while on duty. The comrade was employed by one of the labour brokers, Unitrans, which is one of five currently operating at the plant.

It is being reported that the comrade operated a huge and dangerous machine that were used to cut chicken in parts. Part of the job included having to pick up parts of chickens that have fallen and placing it under the running machine again.

According to cde Silangwe, provincial secretary in KZN, also allege that a wire was used to remove chickens that had fallen under the machine. Workers say that management gave instructions that this piece of wire should not be used anymore. Now workers remove chicken pieces with their hands.

The scene of the accident was quite horrific as workers say that the comrade was busy pulling these chicken pieces from under the machine when a part of it, just came down on his head. Workers say the comrade died within seconds.

Other employees were traumatised and shocked at what had just happened but management had no sympathy for the worker or his comrades as the company manager, insisted that work continue although the body of the dead comrade was lying there. What make matters even worse, is that a local newspaper reported that the comrade was killed because he did not listen to supervisors who told him not to go under the machine.

FAWU, aggrieved by this horrific situation has requested the Minister of Labour, Ms Mildred Oliphant to intervene. The Minister promised to launch a serious investigation into the matter and inform FAWU of progress made. Meanwhile, FAWU issued a strong press statement condemning the actions of DOL officials who allowed the company operations to continue. He also called for these responsible officials to be fired. Also, FAWU called on Mr . Stephen Heath. The HR Director to publicly apologise for any insensitive statements made by him in this regard and for the company to distance itself from such “...questionable conduct”.

FAWU’s KZN province had an urgent meeting with the COSATU leadership on April 7, 2011 together with our shop stewards who were present when this incident took place. The group looked at a number of things which included:

- previous similar incidents that had taken place;
- engaging the department of labour to be accountable for the conduct of its officials who were involved;
- company representatives who were there – Gerald Gouws, Tians and Mr Pravesh should be immediately suspended while the investigation is going on;
- the company to be held responsible for this mess;
- the company should pay for everything starting from the memorial service to the actual funeral of this comrade;

- Seriously looking at the manner in which the Department of Labour officials perform their duties;
- Asking the family to postpone the funeral so that all the necessary areas are covered in terms of exposing the safety situation at this company;
- Exposing the attitude of the company around the removal of critical evidence – removing the body and allowing the machine to run normally, thereby removing all forms of evidence that we may or the investigators need to get, to make a case against the company;
- Racist nature of the company.

“We were also told that certain security measures like erecting or putting some welded iron around the this machine was done immediately after this incident had happened. This shows that the company is desperate to cover its back”, says cde Washington Silangwe, provincial secretary of Kwa-Zulu Natal.

## **Naledi Conducting Research on Farms to Identify Obstacles to Unionisation**

The Department of Labour has commissioned the National Labour and Economic Development Institute (NALEDI) to conduct a research study to find the obstacles on farms that prevents successful unionisation of this group of workers. The aim of the research is to find a decent work strategy for the farming sector that will include practical and effective policy, legislative, organisational and resourcing models of interventions that can assist the government, unions and other role players in the sector to better organise farm workers.

At least three farms (small, medium and large, respectively) from each province are targeted and they are selected in such a way that they represent urban, peri-urban and rural areas.

According to a letter from Naledi, interviews were to be held in the Limpopo province, one is currently underway in the North West Province (11-14 April 2011) and one was to be held in the Western Cape from 25-28 March 2011.

Interviews are being done on a face-to-face basis with the farmer, union representative and randomly selected farm workers and a focus group of ten women and ten men farm workers. The focus groups of one farm would consist of union members while the next farm's groups may consist of non-union members only.

We at FAWU, hope that the findings of this research will indeed be able to enhance the ability of organisations such as ourselves to address the issues of farm workers in the country.

## **COSATU NW declares war against racist white Best End butchery, Letlhabile**

The Congress of South African Trade Unions in the North West Province and its supporters are declaring war against Best End, a white racist butchery which is union bashing.

The butchery is situated on the Letlhabile road owned by a white racist woman who continues to dismiss workers who have joined a COSATU union, FAWU. Since the workers chose the union of their choice almost over six workers have been dismissed for nothing

Workers are been called baboons and kaffirs and are racial discriminated against on the basis of the union they belong to.

This is an example of the companies which are friends of the labour inspectors and the department of labour, who were requested to do inspections on more than three occasions, but until to date workers are still oppressed and exploited by the same racist white women.

It is clear that workers' rights are undermined due to joining a COSATU union. It is also clear that the exploiter is not prepared to respect the labour laws including the constitutional rights of all the workers. Shop stewards are treated like animals every day.

Workers are dismissed with the support of the department of labour inspectors who are close friends to the racist employer who belongs to the DA.

We are told that workers lost their lives and their fingers due to the pressure they get from the same white racist women who thinks that she is above the law, due to her relationship with some of the inspectors

We are calling for the community of Letlhabile to give solidarity support to the workers who are dismissed and those who are still employed under super-exploitation. We are asking the community to boycott the so called Best End butchery

We are demanding that all workers who were racially dismissed must be reinstated before the end of April 2011 or COSATU will engage on a program of action against the employer and the butchery

We are demanding that the families of all the workers who died while they were employed by the butchery be paid what is due to them

We demand that the department of labour inspectors release the inspection report which was done more than three times, and the report of the injury while on duty of the workers who submitted their reports to the department of labour for a full inspection and to the workmen's compensation.

COSATU members must not be intimidated by a white racist colour. They must not fear anybody. It is their organisational right to belong to a union of their choice. For them to join this union they need no one's permission

From today the racist Best End butchery will be making headlines in the COSATU news to expose their conduct against workers

**For more information contact Solly Phetoe COSATU North West Provincial Secretary at 082 304 4055**

## **Remember Chris Hani!! Vote ANC on May 18**

The 10<sup>th</sup> of April 2011 marks the 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the dastardly assassination of the late General Secretary of the SACP, Cde Chris Hani. The SACP and alliance partners broadly will hold a series of commemorative events during the month of April under the theme ***“Remember Chris Hani!! Vote ANC on May 18”***.

Below is a list of activities that will be taking place during the Chris Hani month:

<b>14 April 2011</b>	<b>Memorial Lecture</b>	<b>Chris Hani Primary School (Jouberton), Klerksdorp – North West Province</b>	<b>Cde Thulas Nxesi, Member of the 12<sup>th</sup> Congress CC or Cde Solly Mapaila</b>	<b>13H00</b>
<b>17 April 2011</b>	<b>Memorial Lecture</b>	<b>Rustenburg, Moses Kotane – North West Province</b>	<b>Cde Ben Martins, Member of the 12<sup>th</sup> Congress CC &amp; PB</b>	<b>10H00</b>
17 April 2011	Memorial Lecture	Amaoti Hall, Thulani Ncwane District	Cde Judy Malqueny	09H00
<b>17 April 2011</b>	<b>Memorial Rally</b>	<b>Thembelitsha Primary School, Kynsna, Southern Cape District – Western Cape Province</b>	<b>Cde Blade Nzimande, General Secretary</b>	<b>10H00</b>

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