

F.A.W.U. Bulletin

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FAWU Revises Wage Demand After Rainbow Chicken Workers' Month Long Strike

About 4 500 employees from Rainbow Chickens' processing and farm plants in the Western Cape, the North West, Mpumalanga, Gauteng, Kwa-Zulu Natal and the Eastern Cape is in the fourth week of a national strike that started on 26 May, 2011. These FAWU members are demanding better wages, a reduction in working hours and backdated payment to April 2011.

When the strike started a month ago, the union demanded wage increases of 14.9% for processing workers and 11.4% for farming workers. This would translate into a R500.00 wage increase for processing and a minimum wage of R4 400.00 for workers on the farming division. Current salaries of processing and farming workers are R4 422 and R 3800.00 respectively.

The General Secretary Katishi Masemola was quoted saying that the union has revised its wage demands to 7.5% for the processing workers and 8% for the farming workers, hoping that the revised demands will persuade the employer to come back to the negotiating table. Online reports state that the company announced that it reduced its offer of 7.2% for processing, and 7.8% for farming, to 6% and 6.5% respectively, because of the "inconvenience" that the industrial action had caused.

The union and the company also differed regarding the backdated payment. FAWU wants the increases to be backdated to April 1, 2011 since the collective agreement expired at the end of March 2011 while the company believes it should be paid on the date that the agreement is reached.

In addition, FAWU demand a 40-hour working week instead of the present 45 hours per week. Our members report that they are exhausted after working nine-hour shifts and it affects their ability to concentrate.

If this situation persists, they are much more likely to make products of a lesser quality as a result of lack of concentration, fatigue, etc. FAWU ensured management that production targets will be maintained if each worker only one hour less than normal which will have each worker on an eight hour shift. We believe that a 40 hour working week will ultimately benefit the company as their workforce will be well-rested and able to work more effectively, resulting in higher products quality.

Sugar Workers Ends Week Long Strike

About 3000 members from FAWU, SATAWU and a rival union in Mpumalanga embarked on a protected strike on the 16th of June 2011 after the CCMA has issued a certificate that the matter remain unresolved. The workers went on strike after Transvaal Suiker Beperk (TSB) announced that they would not be receiving any performance bonuses this year.

Workers were angry when they have heard the news since that they have always received production bonuses since 2007 and the company has performed even better this year than last year and workers themselves said they know they have done well in terms of keeping up with production targets.

On Tuesday, 21 June 2011, the strikers had to report to work and abort the combined strike effort after the company obtained an interim court order the previous day ruling that the strike do not comply with section 64 of the LRA which states that employees have the right to strike over a matter of mutual interest if has not been resolved at the CCMA. Provincial Secretary, cde Ernest Mmakoe, said that we will be opposing this court order as we believe the matter was in fact a matter of mutual interest. He confirmed that workers were paid a R1000.00 each after they have raised their concerns with the company but that they are still looking for their rightful bonus payments.

FAWU Mourns The Death Of Revolutionary Leader Kader Asmal

The Food and Allied Workers' Union is deeply saddened by the sudden passing of a dedicated, heroic, fearless and spirited cadre who has committed his whole life to serve the poor and oppressed people of our beautiful country. Not only did he play a great role in the liberation of our country, he continued to play a leading role in post-apartheid South Africa, serving as Member of Parliament in the National Assembly and in various other positions in many national and international commissions.

We commend comrade Asmal for the influential role he played in South African politics and in particular the pursuit for the emancipation of women and the promotion of human rights. He served the movement with passion and conviction, working endlessly to ensure justice and equality for the vulnerable and the poor. He will be remembered as a diligent campaigner for human rights, the right to education and a fierce defender of the country's constitution at all times.

We wish to send our sincere condolences to his relatives, friends and colleagues which had the privilege of personally knowing such a great revolutionary leader.

We, the Food and Allied Workers' Union would like to express our gratitude to comrade Kader Asmal for his many contributions to a democratic South Africa. We will be forever inspired by the wisdom, intellect, integrity and sacrifices made by this great revolutionary leader.

Hamba Kahle, cde Kader Asmal

FAWU To Celebrate 25 Yrs of Unity - 1986 Merger

The Food and Allied Workers' Union will be celebrating the 1986 merger of the Food and Canning Workers' Union (FCWU), Sweet Food and Canning Workers' Union (SFAWU) and Retail and Allied Workers' Union (RAWU) on Saturday, 25 June in Johannesburg. The unions came together 25 years ago and decided to join forces under the banner of the Food and Allied Workers' Union.

The 25th anniversary of the birth of FAWU will see worker leaders and officials from all provinces as well as former National Office Bearers of the unions coming together to celebrate the event.

South Africa Confirms Mswati's Secret Mission

The government of South Africa has indeed been approached by the Swazi government to help relieve the current fiscal problems facing the tiny kingdom. This is according to a report by Business Week, in its online publication.

The report further alleges that the South African government is considering helping its Swazi counterparts on the premise that the South African government supports stability. As to how prolonging a dictatorship by lending it money will lead to stability is something that requires an explanation from the proponents of this ludicrous idea.

Swaziland's unions and pro-democracy groups have stated it categorically that they are opposed to any country or financial institution bailing out the Swazi government. This is justified by the fact that no matter how much money is given to the government of Swaziland, without the necessary changes in the political setup, a bail out will simply postpone the inevitable and further leave the country's next government deep in debt.

Swaziland must be given a clean slate from which to begin, both politically and economically. The country's citizens could not ask for more than that. The world should allow king's Mswati's reign to prove to be the dead end that it is, so that a new political dispensation can emerge from its ashes.

Issued by Lucky Lukhele from the Swaziland Solidarity Network [SSN], 23 June 2011

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