

# Sales and merchandising workers go on strike

Apr 4, 2011 | Anna Majavu | [0 comments](#)

**YOUR favourite foods could be missing from supermarket shelves from today as 6000 sales and merchandising workers begin a strike.**

•  
•



Dairy products from Parmalat, tinned food products from Rhodes, Distell brandy, wines from KWV, Sasko bread and juices from Ceres as well as products from Coca-Cola will be affected, said Food and Allied Workers' Union (Fawu) general secretary Katishi Masemola.

The strike is due to companies' refusal to recognise the union.

One of the affected sales and merchandising workers, Lekgotla Morake, told Sowetan that they are employed by labour brokers - including the Smollan Group - to go from supermarket to supermarket, packing shelves with only that company's product.

According to Morake their working conditions are "terrible".

"The middleman will tell Checkers, for example, that if it buys certain products he will send workers to pack those products on to the shelves

"To get this job, you must have your own car.

"We get sent all over the place all day long, yet we don't get any petrol money

"This is why we joined the union.

"You can work for this company for 10 or 15 years but there is no pension fund for you," Morake said

Masemola said it was "disgusting" that permanent sales and merchandising workers were paid R6000 a month, while those who were employed through labour brokers received only R1800 to R2500 a month.

Masemola said: "Our members are prepared to hold on for weeks or months in this campaign until basic organisational rights are achieved and bargaining rights are guaranteed by collective (recognition) agreements.

"We will be mobilising workers in Parmalat, Unilever and Pioneer Foods divisions of Sasko bakeries and Ceres juices to embark on secondary strikes and other solidarity support activities," said Masemola.

The Smollan Group labour brokers could not be reached for comment as the company's mailbox was full.

**[Printed in Sowetan, 4 April, 2011]**