

FOOD & ALLIED WORKERS' UNION



MEDIA STATEMENT 29 July 2026

FAWU CONDEMNS PREMIER FOODS' PROPOSED CLOSURE OF FRUIT PRODUCTS WESTERN CAPE

The Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU) strongly condemns the reckless decision by Premier Foods [3] to shut down the R1 billion Fruit Products Western Cape (FPWC) canning facility in Tulbagh. This move is a catastrophic failure of corporate responsibility that plunges hundreds of permanent workers and contract and seasonal workers into immediate poverty. As the vanguard union representing food production workers, FAWU declares this closure a direct assault on the working class that will permanently scar the local rural economy.

The closure of FPWC will devastate working-class families as the cannery served as the single largest employer in the area. Its closure will leave zero alternatives for local employment. Moreover, the closure of the cannery will have a snowball effect on the town as it will leave residents without any buying power and small businesses, spaza shops, and other local operations will be hard-hit and face the real possibility of collapse. The collapse of such an integral part of the agro processing market will have a disastrous effect on local farmworkers across the entire Witzenberg municipal area and the Western Cape economy.

The cannery closure would be a death knell for seasonal workers who rely entirely on the November-to-May processing windows to survive the brutal winter months. This closure robs them of their only source of survival. The proposed closure also exposes a casualised labour market where human beings are treated as disposable capital by corporate executives. Hundreds of rural households face severe food insecurity, hunger, and extreme financial distress with no immediate income.

FAWU calls on government intervention from the Department of Employment and Labour as well as the Department of Trade and Industry to assist to find alternatives to continue operations and save thousands of workers, their families and the surrounding communities from poverty and starvation. Such a initiative was successful in the Langeberg/Ashton canning closure and it is our strong believe that the same can be attempted in this scenario as well.

Issued by FAWU Media Liaison Officer, Dominique Martin 082 498 5631. For further information contact FAWU Deputy General Secretary Edwin Mabowa on 082 4444 621, Western Cape Provincial Secretary Zolani Mbanjwa 082 494 7940 or the writer.