

Wise men once said...

1952 : “A HUNGRY MAN IS NOT A FREE MAN.”

— Adlai Ewing Stevenson II

1985 : “ONLY A FREE MAN CAN NEGOTIATE.”

— Nelson Mandela

2015 : EMPOWERMENT AND CARING FOR COMMUNITIES

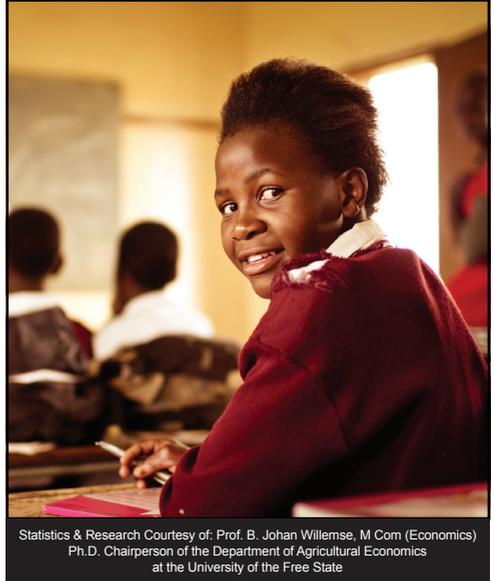
Empowerment and caring for workers is a standard practice in South African agriculture.

Agriculture in South Africa contributes to about 10% of formal employment and also provides seasonal employment for a significant number of casual labourers. In general, agriculture in South Africa is still very labour intensive, which means that farm workers are the life blood of any commercial agricultural producer's business. It therefore stands to reason that these producers want to look after their labour force as well as they can.

On most commercial farms it is general practice for producers to take care of their labourers' needs in terms of housing, power and water supply, as well as work clothes and required safety equipment, to name but a few. In the majority of cases, contrary to popular belief, workers are also compensated at rates that far exceed the prescribed minimum wage. Medical- and unemployment insurance is often provided and workers and their families could even have access to private medical services.

As an additional benefit, some producers have also taken it upon themselves to provide nursery schools and day-care facilities for their employees' children. In the recent past it was common practice for a couple of producers in a particular area to band together to provide small farm schools, operated at their own expense, to provide primary schooling for children in the area. Unfortunately this practice was declared undesirable by government.

In his recent State of the Nation address, President Zuma announced that government will push ahead with the controversial 'fifty-fifty' policy on strengthening the rights of farm workers. This policy proposes that those who have worked and lived on a farm for ten years or more should by law get a proportional share of the land or equity in the farm. The policy was not well received and some commentators pointed out that it was badly drafted, probably unconstitutional, difficult to implement, and unlikely to really benefit farm workers.



Statistics & Research Courtesy of: Prof. B. Johan Willemsse, M Com (Economics)
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There are however, already many examples of commercial producers who are empowering their employees, at their own expense, to participate in ownership and profit sharing in their businesses. These empowerment models, which were tailor-made for each producer's own unique circumstances, have in most instances been far more successful than any of the state schemes that have been implemented to date.

The wool industry, for example, has a support service that has dramatically increased both the quality and value of wool while creating wealth and prosperity in its communities. Agri-businesses, in collaboration with various agricultural industry organisations, are actively involved in supporting new and emerging producers with expertise, funding and contract work. Various training and internship programmes have been made available by the relevant industries which are self-financed and facilitated by these entities.

**WE SUPPORT THE PEOPLE
WHO FEED OUR COUNTRY. DO YOU?**