Interim Research Report

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Research Mandate

Temporary off-farm workers

- Labour turnover
- Certified skills

Skills development institutions

- Definition of temporary farm workers as learners
- Institutions funding temporary farm workers’ certified skills training
Research design

Study population: Temporary off-farm workers in Ceres region

Research strategy: Sequential exploratory mixed methods:
- Phase 1: Exploration
- Phase 2: Qualitative interviews
- Phase 3: Quantitative survey

Sample:
- Participants: 46 temporary off-farm workers
- Respondents: 200 temporary off-farm workers
- Pay-roll data: 552 temporary off-farm workers
- Household members: 887

Data analysis:
- Thematic analysis of interviews
- Statistical analysis of survey data
Profile of temporary off-farm workers
4 participating farms create 2712 jobs per year: 786 permanent and 1926 temporary.
Frequency of employment and unemployment
Findings:
Labour Turnover
Research Rationale

Why labour turnover?

- Farms in Ceres report a high labour turnover.
- Few studies on farm workers’ labour turnover.
  - Two studies (in the USA and Canada) were based on interviews with farm managers.
Definition of labour turnover

**Crude wastage rate**

The standard measure

Percentage of employees leaving an organisation during a specific period.

- includes resignations, dismissals and job turnover

**Resignation rate**

Percentage of employees leaving the organisation voluntarily

**Survival rate**

Percentage of employees returning to work at the same farm the following harvest season
Labour turnover is distinct to absenteeism

Absenteeism predicts labour turnover

For the week of the survey at Riversend:
- 68% of permanent workers worked a full week
- 56% of temporary off-farm workers worked a full week

Absenteeism in Piketberg:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Absenteeism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Crude Waste Rate

- Employment equity data
- Survey data

**Survey data**

- Two Fountains: 30% permanent workers, 15% temporary farm workers, 7% temporary off-farm workers' resignations
- Valley Ridge: 32% permanent workers, 7% temporary farm workers, 7% temporary off-farm workers' resignations
- Riversend: 29% permanent workers, 62% temporary farm workers, 30% temporary off-farm workers' resignations
- Mountain View: 30% permanent workers, 63% temporary farm workers, 4% temporary off-farm workers' resignations

* Permanent workers*
- Temporary farm workers*
- Temporary off-farm workers' resignations**

* Employment equity data
** Survey data
## Reasons for temporary off-farm workers’ resignations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working conditions</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household and care responsibilities</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reasons for resignations

**Working conditions**
- Unprofessionalism in the workplace
- Inability to accrue expected earnings
- Unfairness in the workplace
- Black African workers return home for Christmas

**Household & care responsibilities**
- Lack of child-care
  - Coloured temporary off-farm women
  - Need for a new “250 to 300 unit crèche just in this area”
  - Many children are left unattended and grandmothers endure most of the burden of childcare
- Maternity leave

**Housing**
- Overcrowding in homes
- Lack a permanent residence
- Recalled to family home to replace deceased breadwinners
- Lack of transport
- Distance between workplace and residence
### Survival Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Packinghouse</th>
<th>Orchard</th>
<th>Drying Court</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two Orchards</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley Ridge</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riversend</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain View</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- No statistical significant relationship between survival rate, race, gender and reasons for working
Reasons for working on particular farms

- **Two Orchards:**
  - financial independence

- **Valley Ridge:**
  - provide for children

- **Riversend:**
  - longer contracts

- **Mountain View:**
  - work close to home
Variation in reasons for working according to income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual average monthly income (not real wages per month)</th>
<th>Reasons for working</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ro – R670</td>
<td>No other work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R671 – R1,555</td>
<td>Longer contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R1,556 – R2,533</td>
<td>Better work conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2,534+</td>
<td>Close to home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings:
Certified skills
Research Rationale

Why certified skills?

- Only 5% of agricultural workers have recognised skills in the Western Cape (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, 2012).
- Many farms do not assess temporary farm workers’ skills.
Research Findings: certified skills

• Only 2.6% of temporary off-farm workers have received any certified skills training:
  • 6M: Basic business skills
  • Cleaning & Hygiene

• Employers provide training on farms:
  • Temporary off-farm workers receive uncertified on-the-job training in peak harvesting season
  • Permanent farm workers receive certified skills training out of peak harvesting season

• Employers are reluctant to invest in certified skills training of temporary off-farm workers
  • Workers may not stay long enough to complete courses/contracts and/or return to the same farm for employment
Research Findings: Certified skills continued ...

• 78% of temporary off-farm workers want certified training
• 74% of temporary off-farm workers think certified training will help:

- 36% To find work
- 22% To get a promotion
- 16% To know more about their work
- 9% To earn higher salaries
- 9% To have skills
- 5% To communicate better with co-workers
- 4% To do their work better
Temporary off-farm workers certified training requests

- **Technical skills**
  - 38% of temporary off-farm workers:
    - Driving
    - National certificate: farming
    - Fruit packaging and grading
    - Pest control

- **Supervisory & managerial skills**
  - 20% of temporary off-farm workers:
    - Supervisor
    - Quality controller
    - Production manager

- **General farm work skills**
  - 42% of temporary off-farm workers:
    - Pruning
    - Picking
  
- **Other skills**
  - 10% of temporary off-farm workers:
    - Irrigation
    - Welding
    - Mechanics
  
- **Communication skills**
  - 5% of temporary off-farm workers:
    - Communications skills
  
- **First aid**
  - 1% of temporary off-farm workers:
    - First aid
Findings:
Skills development institutions
• 95% of agricultural workers are not receiving any recognised skills in the Western Cape (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, 2012).

• Are structures in place to provide certified skills for temporary farm workers?
Ambiguity in legal definition of temporary workers:

Skills Development Act:
- employed learner (18.1)

Department of Labour:
- unemployed learner (18.2)
  - approached by employer
  - must register with DoL

AgriSETA: Workplace learnership
- permanent employee (18.1)
- unemployed & under resourced farmers (18.2)

National Skills Fund

N.B.: No subsidised certified skills training provision for temporary employees/learners due to the dichotomous definition of fully employed vs. fully unemployed.
Conclusion:

Recommendations
Recommendations for labour turnover

Resignation rate

- Incentivise workers to reduce labour turnover
  - Improve working conditions (professionalism, fair practices)
  - Collaboration of key stakeholders to increase
    - housing stock
    - child-care facilities

Survival rate

- Incentivise workers to return to the same employer the following season
  - Increase length of contracts
  - Improve working conditions
Recommendations for skills

Certified skills training

• Offer temporary off-farm workers training in
  • Technical skills
  • Supervisory and managerial skills
  • General farm work skills

Certified skills funding

• Update legal definitions of learners to allow temporary workers to access subsidised certified skills training
  • define temporary learners as a separate category (18.3) ?
  • include temporary learners as unemployed learners (18.3) ?
    • National skills funders offer subsidised certified skills training during periods of unemployment?
  • include temporary learners as employed learners (18.3) ?
    • Employers offer subsidised certified skills training out of peak harvesting season?
Thank you