



# Interim Research Report

Anne Wiltshire  
Stellenbosch University  
Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology

# 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

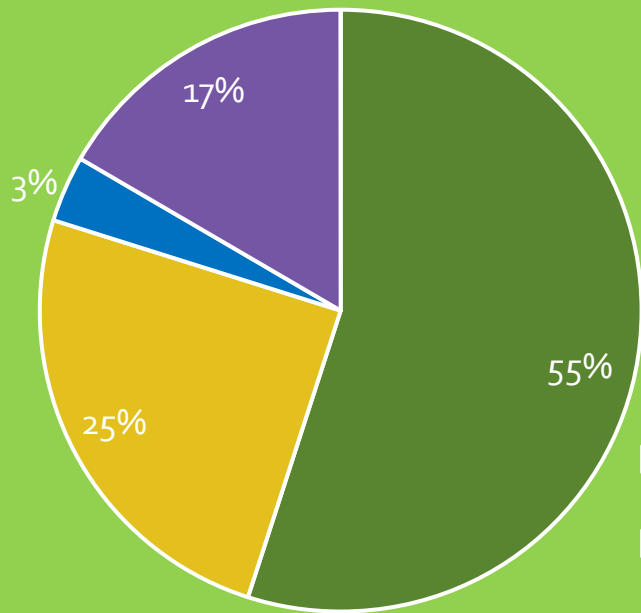
# Profile of temporary off-farm workers

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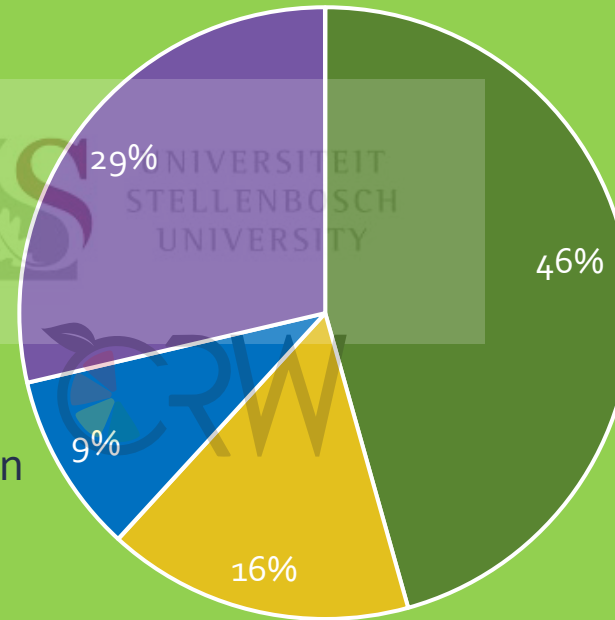


# Composition of Workforce

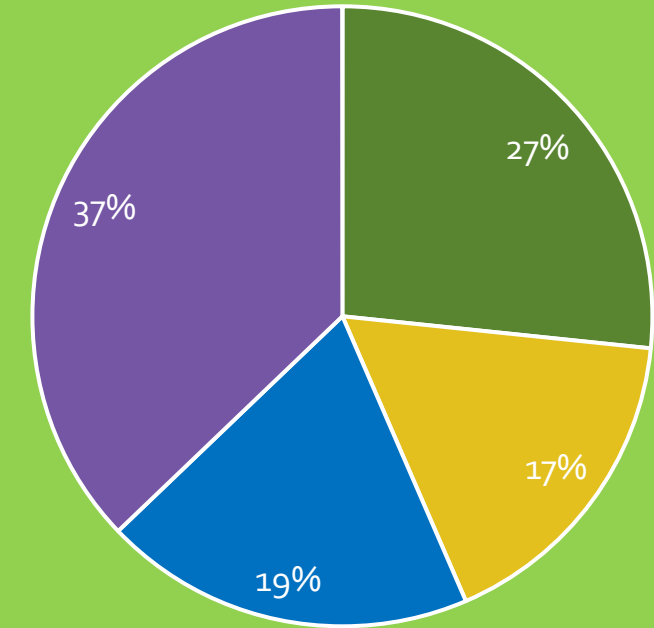
Permanent Employees



Temporary Employees



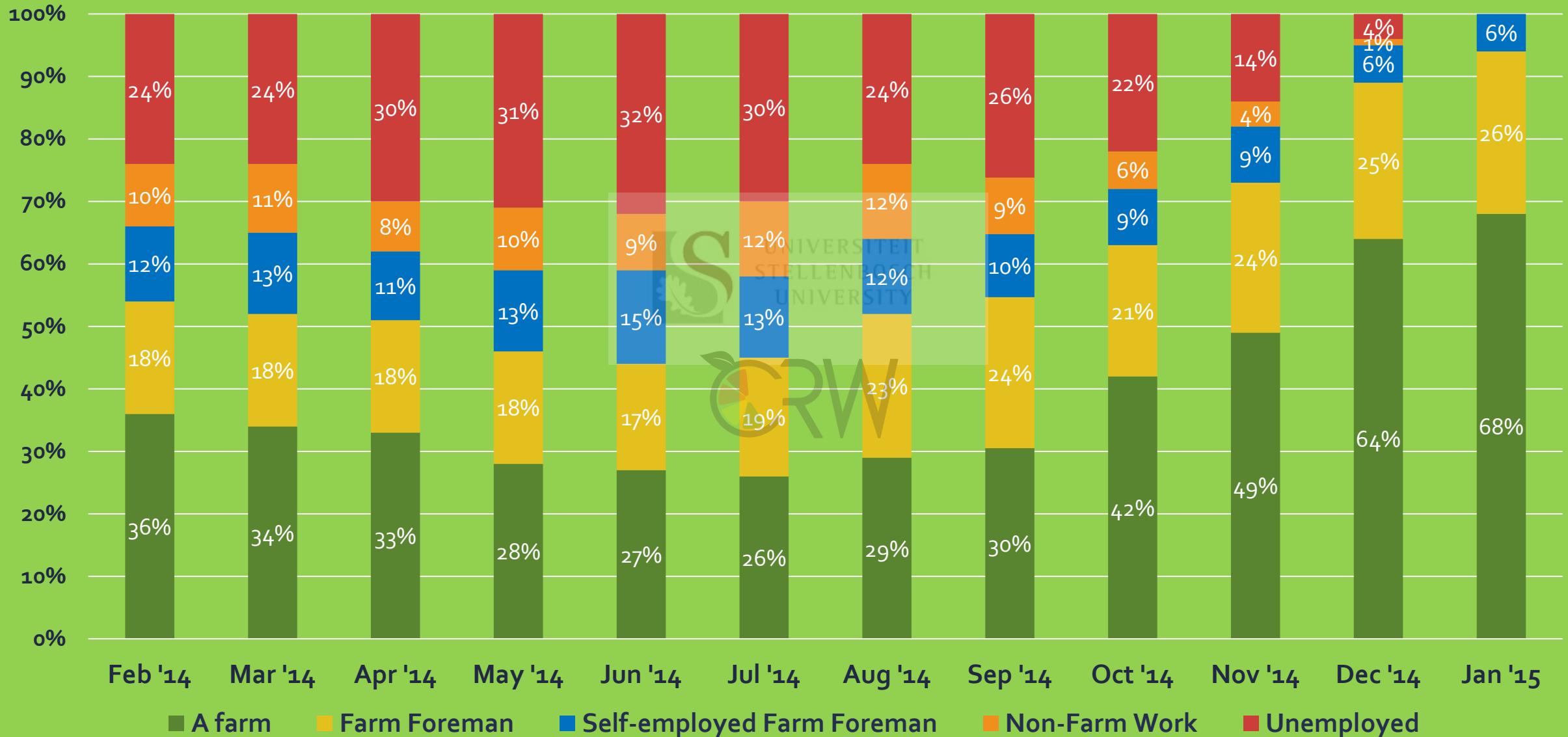
Temporary off-farm Employees



- Male Black African
- Male Coloured
- Female Black African
- Female Coloured

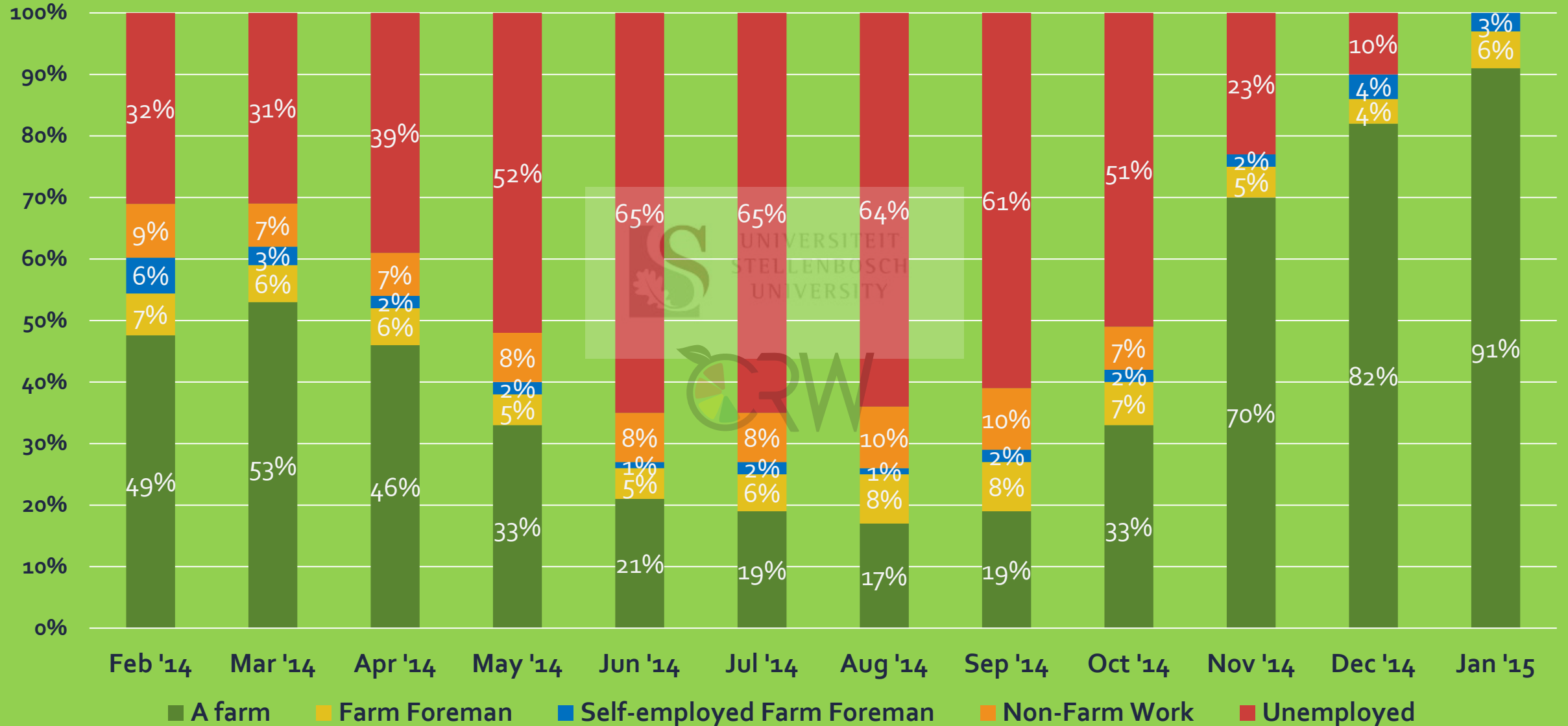
4 participating farms create 2712 jobs per year: 786 permanent and 1926 temporary.

# Annual employment patterns: Men

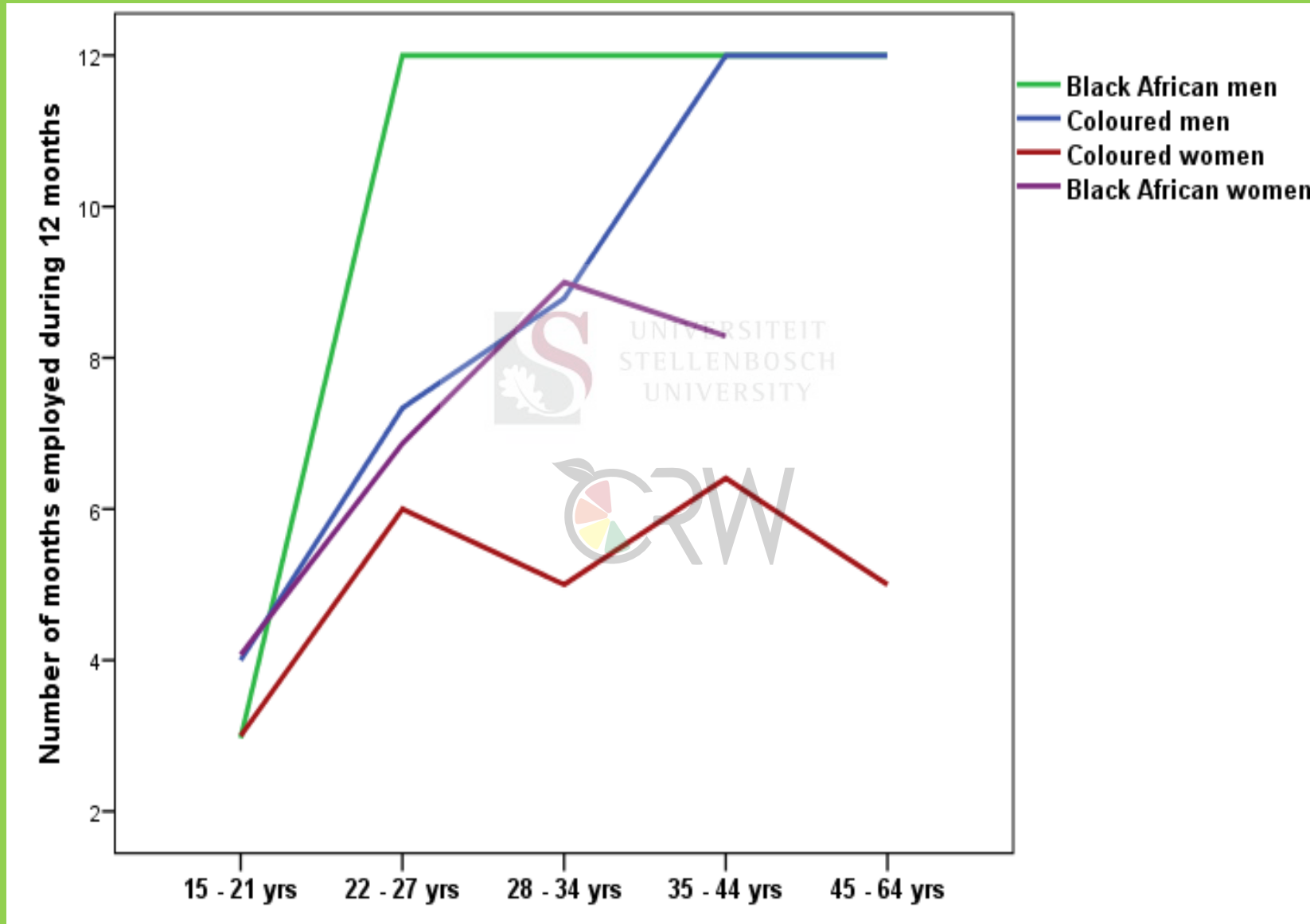




# Annual employment patterns: Women



# 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

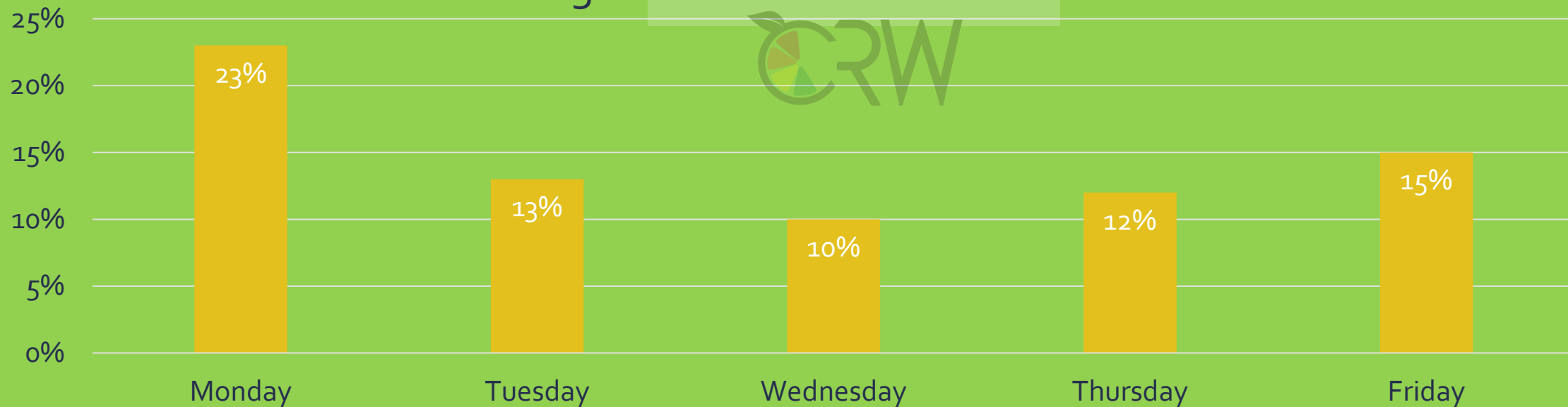
# Labour turnover is distinct to absenteeism

## Absenteeism predicts labour turnover

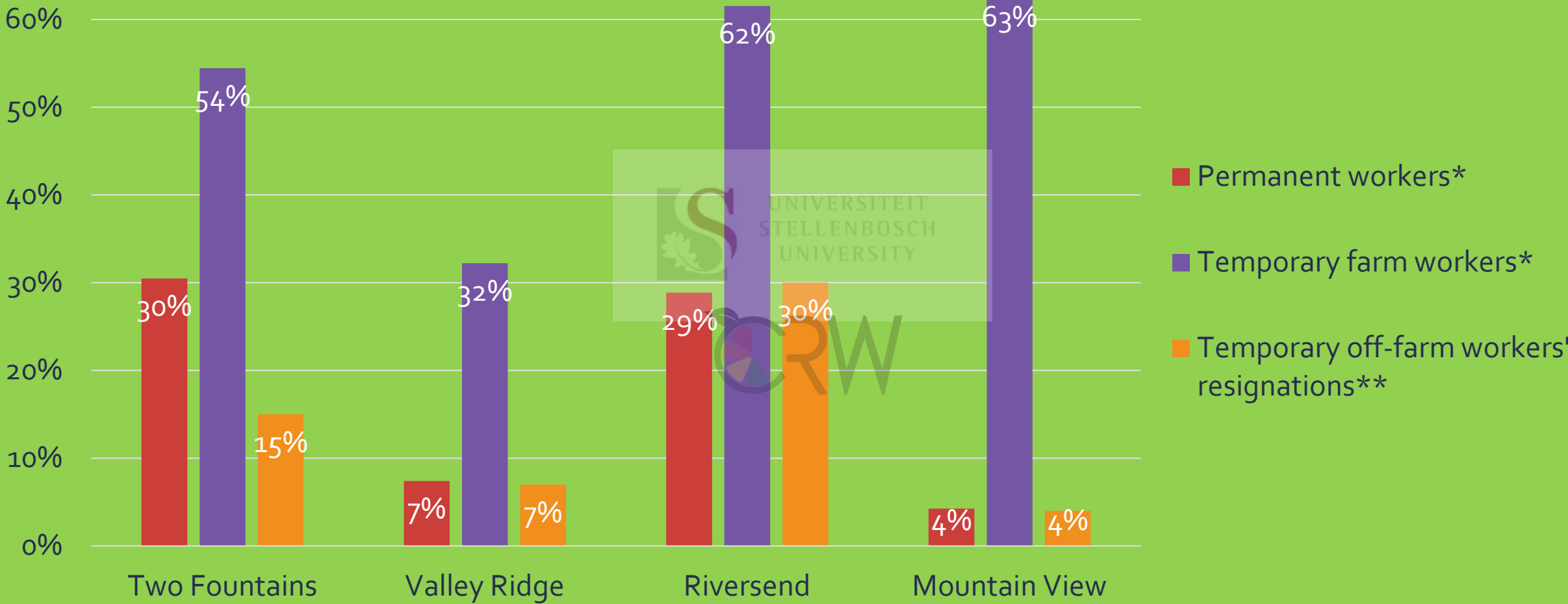
For the week of the survey at Riversend:

- 68% of permanent workers
  - 56% of temporary off-farm workers
- } worked a full week

Absenteeism in Piketberg:



# Crude Waste Rate



\* Employment equity data  
\*\* Survey data

# Reasons for temporary off-farm workers' resignations

	Frequency
Working conditions	13
Household and care responsibilities	9
Housing	6
Total	28

# 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

	Packinghouse	Orchard	Drying Court
Two Orchards	-	23%	100%
Valley Ridge	41%	100%	100%
Riversend	n/a	n/a	-
Mountain View	69%	16%	-

- 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



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# Variation in reasons for working according to income

Annual average monthly income (not real wages per month)	Reasons for working
R0 – R670	No other work
R671 – R1,555	Longer contract
R1,556 – R2,533	Better work conditions
R2,534+	Close to home

Findings:

Certified skills

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# Research Rationale



Why certified skills?

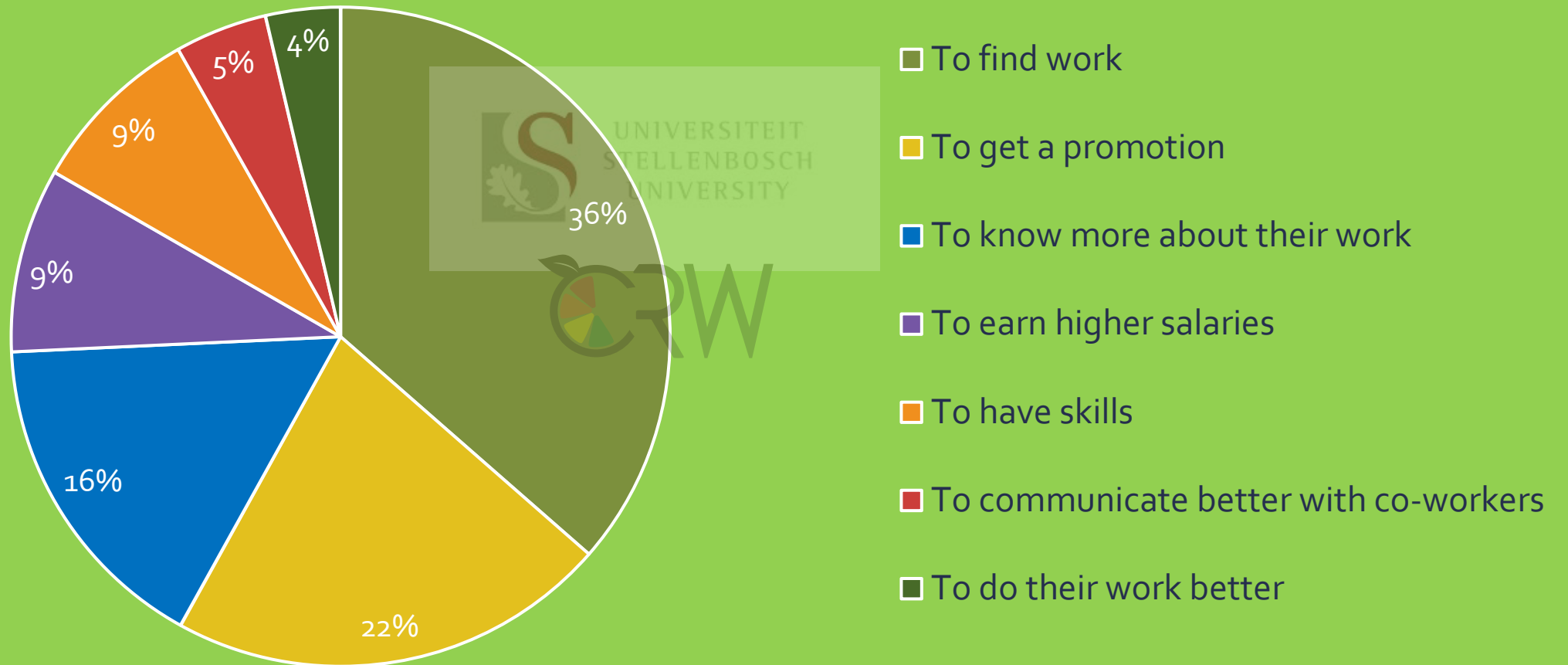
- Only 5% of agricultural workers have recognised skills in the Western Cape (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, 2012).
- Many farms do not assess temporary farm workers' skills

# 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:





# 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
  - Irrigation
  - Welding
  - Mechanics

## 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
  - Communications skills
  - First aid



Findings:

Skills development  
institutions

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# Research Rationale

Why 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?



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



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# 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



Wiltshire, A. 2015. Interim research report: Labour turnover and certified skills of temporary off-farm workers in Ceres [PowerPoint presentation]. 22 April 2015. Prince Alfred's Hamlet.

