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The living and working conditions of farm workers. a case study of Farm Macdonald in Gauteng

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Abstract

Farm workers have a strong contribution in the economy endure poor pay, terrible living conditions, and precarious employment in order to produce a huge amount of surplus value for their employees via their labour. While the South African government speaks about protecting vulnerable workers, their practical interventions in this area have been weak and episodic, in large part because they have an interest in the economic fortunes of the commercial farming sector. In 2001, news articles reported that in a specific farm situated in Gauteng there was lack of adequate resources such as: water; electricity; sanitation, and overcrowding in the farm residences. Other issues that surfaced were racism; unlawful wage deductions; denial of leave and non-compensation for injury on duty as well as non-payment for overtime. In response to media scrutiny in 2012, Supermarket *a* placed the farm under investigation and suspended the farm as one of its suppliers. These allegations called for further investigations and research depicted that farm workers were still being unfairly treated. The initiative by government and other role players in helping to protect the affected farm workers provided to be ineffective. Labour issues taking place in Farm Macdonald can be used to define some the main features of labour farming in South Africa in broader sense.