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# THE IMPACT OF LABOUR LEGISLATION ON SOUTH AFRICAN FARM WORKERS' LIVELIHOODS IN THE SKUINSDRIFT AREA, NORTH WEST PROVINCE

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## ABSTRACT

People living and working on commercial farms in South Africa are the poorest and most vulnerable group in the labour market. They rely on multiple livelihood strategies to alleviate risk and to survive. Wages from their employment in agriculture usually constitute their primary source of income and therefore play an important part in their livelihood strategy, as does their dependence on the farmer for housing, food, credit and access to services. The livelihood strategies of these poor people have been disturbed by the introduction of the Sectoral Determination for the Agricultural Sector, which prescribes a minimum wage for farm workers. It is especially the most vulnerable workers who are hit by the farmers' reluctance to grant them the same benefits as they received before. The law thus only succeeds in supporting those workers who are better educated, healthy and able to manage the higher amount of cash wage in a responsible way. It is necessary to protect those who are made worse off through the legislation by a comprehensive rural development strategy. Such a development strategy must target those factors keeping the poorest farm workers vulnerable and struggling for survival.

Key words: farm labour; multiple livelihoods; minimum wages; paternalism