

Agri worker transport to receive serious attention

Western Cape Provincial Minister of Agriculture, Ivan Meyer has welcomed the news that the Western Cape Provincial Parliament's Standing Committee on Agriculture, Environmental Affairs and Planning is giving serious attention to agri-worker transport.



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The action by the Committee follows Meyer's request that the law-making body gives due consideration to recent road accidents involving agricultural workers.

The Committee resolved to support Agri Western Cape and the Western Cape Department of Agriculture's recommendation that employers arranging transport for agricultural workers must ensure that:

- No more than 50% of the licensed capacity of the vehicle or vessel is exceeded, and
- All directions regarding hygienic conditions and the limitation of exposure to persons with Covid-19 are adhered to by all concerned.

- The transporting of agricultural workers on open trucks poses a significant threat to the safety of agricultural workers.

"No law determines the number of people to be loaded at the back of a bakkie or a truck. The only way to determine whether a truck is overloaded is by weighing it at the weighbridge. Doing so is also a challenge as body weight differs from the goods load usually transported by heavy vehicles.

"The National Minister of Transport should amend current regulation 247 of the National Transport Regulations accordingly, and I will be raising this with my counterpart," says Meyer.

The Western Cape Minister of Transport and Public Works, Bongikosi Madikizela agreed that the safe, dignified transport of agri-workers is a priority for the Western Cape Government. For this reason, the Western Cape Department of Agriculture's Technical Committee on Rural Safety will also be considering making agricultural worker transport a focus area of its rural safety plan.

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