

National conference to focus on farmworker struggles

From 16-18 October 2019, the University of the Western Cape will be hosting the *Future of Farm Workers National Conference* to explore challenges farmworkers are facing. The conference takes a South Africa-wide perspective and will highlight the centrality of farmworkers in the national economy and food system, at a moment when academic and policy attention is focused on other actors such as farmers, markets, and consumers.



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The conference is jointly hosted by the SARCHI for Food Security, the DST-NRF Centre of Excellence in Food Security and the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies, in association with Women on Farms Project and the Institute for Social Development at UWC.

Farmworkers are essential to the economy and food system, but they are poor and vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

The future is uncertain, and the issues facing farmworkers vary from place to place. "Even within South Africa, farmworkers in the Cape Winelands experience very different challenges to farmworkers in Limpopo," said Professor Stephen Devereux, conference director, South African Research Chair in Social Protection for Food Security (SARCHI).

The conference will bring together diverse stakeholders including activists, civil society, members of government, small-scale and commercial farmers as well as academia. "Our main aim is to help deepen understanding and contribute to policy debates about issues facing farmworkers in South Africa, drawing on research and policy analysis but also on the

perspectives of farmworkers themselves," said Devereux.

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