

months ahead, probably at the same pace as in the first half of the year. Economist Mike Schussler

not be able to make the breakthrough we need to create jobs". Independent labour analyst Andrew Levy said the government

flatly rejected the amendments. They included laws which would have made failure to achieve affirmative action targets a criminal

Labour Council, the key negotiating forum for business, labour and government. The talks are shrouded in secrecy, but the government says

will be looking to move their plants elsewhere. There may well be some degree of disinvestment." isam@bdfm.co.za

Fruit, vegetable sector 'could yield many more jobs'

HOPEWELL RADEBE
Land and Agriculture Editor

SA's agricultural sector could create at least 400 000 extra jobs if more attention was given to boosting the fruit and vegetable subsectors, according to the University of Pretoria's Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy.

The agricultural sector has shed more than 1,2-million jobs in the past 25 to 30 years due to increased mechanisation and more stringent labour laws. In the 1980s, there were more than 1,8-million workers in the agricultural sector, but this number has fallen to about 600 000.

Releasing its annual South African Agricultural Baseline — an outlook for agricultural production, consumption, prices and trade for the period from this year to 2020 — the bureau said on Friday that no less than 31 subsectors in fruits and vegetables could contribute an estimated 200 000 direct employment opportunities, with an extra 100 000 downstream jobs.

The bureau was due to submit its proposal for the creation of more jobs to the National Planning Commission. Ferdinand Meyer, a lecturer in the University of Pretoria's department of agricultural economics, said this would include opportunities

in labour-intensive fruit industries such as citrus, table grapes, avocado pears, bananas and sugar cane.

In the vegetable subsector, the bureau had identified the potential for extra jobs in areas such as olives, pecan nuts, potatoes, tomatoes as well as rooibos, pomegranate and flowers. Additional jobs could be created by nonlabour-intensive industries such as field crops and livestock. These could contribute 50 000 direct jobs and 30 000 more opportunities downstream.

Dr Meyer said about 2-million hectares of arable land was potentially available for agricultural expansion even though SA had a lim-

ited supply of water. This was despite it having sufficient precipitation for rain-fed cash-crop production.

This excluded the potential inherent in the better utilisation of redistributed land and better land access to farmers in the former homelands. It is estimated that a further 300 000 livelihoods could be enhanced, with a further 200 000 jobs available downstream.

Prof Johann Kirsten, also of the University of Pretoria, said the planning commission would have to seriously address the sensitive question of labour legislation and the policy vacuum created by the lack of a framework for the development of

agriculture. "Rural development and growth should go hand in hand with agriculture development," he said.

Agricultural Business Chamber CEO John Purchase said for agribusiness to contribute to the creation of jobs, the government needed to emphasise inclusiveness and create an enabling policy that would build business confidence through stable economic policies.

At present, farmers and the agriculture value chain were feeling pressure in the face of rising costs for maintaining basic infrastructure, along with training, telecommunication and health insurance. radebeh@bdfm.co.za

Walmart's sustainability drive results in cost savings

SUE BLAINE
Development and Environment Editor

GLOBAL retail giant Walmart saved itself "tens of millions" of dollars by incorporating sustainability into its strategy, Yvo de Boer, global sustainability adviser for tax and advisory services company KPMG said yesterday.

Walmart's R16,5bn takeover of South African retailer Massmart has

been bogged down by controversy, not least in the form of a court challenge by three Cabinet ministers who have called for stricter conditions on the US-based retailer.

Walmart was the example that Mr de Boer, speaking in Johannesburg at the Southern African Internal Audit Conference, chose to illustrate how the private-sector push towards sustainability was outstripping that of governments. His

comments prompted Institute of Internal Auditor board member Rob Newsome's comment that "at least in sustainability" it would seem Walmart's move into SA was positive.

"Companies can achieve significant cost reductions (by making their operations more sustainable).

"Walmart saved itself tens of millions of dollars just by changing its dairy (produce) packaging," Mr de Boer said.

Walmart introduced rectangular, stackable jugs that were easier to pack and ship, halving labour, cutting water use by up to 70% and curbing the number of trips needed to deliver milk and retrieve empty crates, thus cutting fuel use. Ultimately, this led to consumers saving \$0,40 a gallon, according to the US's Centre for Strategic and International Studies website.

The drivers for private-sector sus-

tainability were cost reduction, plus concerns over government regulation and company image, Mr de Boer said.

Despite the lack of a globally binding deal on greenhouse gas emissions in the offing for the upcoming Durban climate change talks, 80 countries were already committed to reducing or curbing their greenhouse gas emissions. blaines@bdfm.co.za

Buffett urges 'shared sacrifice' and tax on richest

Continued from page 1

class fight for us in Afghanistan, and while most Americans struggle to make ends meet, we ultra-rich

some of my super-rich friends do, your percentage may be a bit lower than mine. But if you earn money from a job, your percentage will surely exceed mine — most likely by a lot. Mr Buffett

had soared to \$90,9bn, the rate paid had fallen to 21,6%.

Mr Buffett dismissed the notion of high taxes discouraging hiring and investment. "I have looked and

potential taxes have never scared them off. And in those who argue that rates hurt job creation, I think a lot of people are just

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