

■ N A T I O N

Loss of jobs: farmworkers disgruntled

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In 2012, De Doorns was the scene of violent protest action in which 30 hectares of vineyard were destroyed by fires. Farm workers had demanded an increase in their daily minimum wage from R69 to R150.

One farmworker, who did not want to be named for fear of victimisation, said that there was widespread disgruntlement in the region over locals not being employed by farmers.

"We are not being hired... Things are tense," he said.

Commercial farmers' union Agri-Western Cape spokesperson Jeanne Boshoff said they would comment once they had heard from the police.

"We are still awaiting police reports for confirmation (of) the reasons for the protest action," Boshoff said.

Breede Valley Municipality communications manager Anette Radjoo said limited and seasonal working opportunities for farmworkers was a countrywide issue.

"The Breede Valley Municipality strives to create an environment for economic growth and development for all its residents.

"We offer the local community opportunities for training as well as work skills development, promoting entrepreneurship, tourism and small business development.

"We maintain an unemployment database which we use for work opportunities presented by the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) within our organisation, as well as support infrastructure projects such as cleaning, construction, administrative duties and roadworks," Radjoo said.

Police spokesperson Noloyiso Rwexana said public order police and law enforcement were on the scene.

But police have yet to make any arrests.

"Two trucks were reported looted, police are following-up on the perpetrators, and the traffic has been diverted," Rwexana said yesterday.