

## **Initiatives in the SA Wine Industry :**

### **Farm Worker conditions and empowerment a priority**

The South African Wine & Brandy Company (SAWB<sup>Co</sup>), representative body of the wine industry, noted the recent findings of the Wine Directory Project with regard to working conditions on wine farms. A final report was not yet received for evaluation and further comments. It will however be important for various stakeholders to find constructive ways of working together to tackle such challenges in the industry.

The SAWB<sup>Co</sup> had prioritised economic empowerment and social upliftment in its Wine Industry Plan (WIP) together with programmes to improve the industry competitiveness and export orientation, sustainable resource utilisation and technological innovation, said Dr Johan van Rooyen, CEO: SAWB. These programmes will provide the platform for the promotion of “Brand South Africa” in the wine industry and will allow for the systematic and structured audit of progress and performance. “Labour, including farm workers, is fully represented on the SAWB Board of Directors to drive their concerns and two new operational units have been established to deal with social upliftment and economic empowerment in a coherent manner. These initiatives are fully endorsed by the industry at large – wine producers, cellars, the wine trade and labour. The wine industry is thus structured to deal with issues such as farm worker upliftment on a representative and transparent basis”.

The chairperson of the SAWB Labour Chamber, Nosey Pieterse, noted that the social development, training and representation of farm workers was high on the agenda of the wine industry and discussions by the SAWB<sup>Co</sup> with relevant groupings were in progress. He added that the wine industry also fully endorsed the Ethical Code implemented by the Wine Industry Ethical Trade Association (WIETA), a voluntary association of stakeholders involving the wine industry, NGO's, trade unions and government, focussing on workers in all sections of the wine industry and promoting ethical trade and the well-being of these groups.