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Directorate of Labour Market  
Research and Analysis



MINISTRY OF LABOUR  
AND SOCIAL PROTECTION



## DIRECTORATE OF LABOUR MARKET RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

*What Farm workers and Farmers  
should know about minimum wages  
and conditions of Employment in  
Kenya*



Directorate of Labour Market Research and Analysis, 2015  
MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

## Preface



In today's rapidly evolving economic landscape, the availability and use of reliable Labour Market Information (LMI) is not just a policy imperative—it is a cornerstone for inclusive growth, decent employment, and sustainable development. Guided by Kenya's Vision 2030 and the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), the State Department for Labour and Skills Development, is steadfast in its commitment to producing and disseminating timely, accurate, and actionable Labour Market Information.

This publication serves as a critical instrument for enhancing information sharing about the labour market. By shedding light on employment trends, skill demands, wage dynamics, working conditions, and sectoral performance, it provides a comprehensive overview of the labour sphere in Kenya. Such insights are vital for shaping evidence-based policies, optimizing workforce planning, and ensuring our education and training systems are responsive to current and future labour market needs.

For policymakers, LMI offers the foundation for designing informed strategies that promote job creation, productivity, and decent work. For employers and investors, it clarifies workforce development and business decision-making. For training institutions, it is a guide for aligning curricula with market demands. And for job seekers, especially youth, it is an indispensable resource for navigating career choices, identifying emerging opportunities, and building the skills that matter most.

This publication also helps advance equity in the world of work by enabling the monitoring of labour standards and assessing the inclusivity of employment outcomes across gender, age, and other social groups. Through this, we contribute to the broader agenda of social justice, decent work, and national cohesion.

**Hon. Dr. Alfred N. Mutua, EGH**  
**Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection**





## WRITTEN PARTICULARS OF EMPLOYMENT

Farm workers are not always aware of their rights or what is expected of them.

It is also difficult for the Department of Labour to investigate complaints if there is no documentation that proves the conditions.

Providing a farm worker with written particulars of employment will help when any dispute arises.

It is the responsibility of the farmer to issue these particulars.

The farmer must give a farm worker written particulars of employment. The farmer must ensure that the farm worker understands the contents of what is required.

### **The following should form part of written particulars of employment;**

- Name of the employer and his postal
- Name and occupation the worker or brief description of the work
- Date of employment
- Ordinary days and hours of work
- Wage or the rate and method
- The rate of pay for overtime work
- Any deductions
- The period of notice to terminate employment.
- Leave to which the farm worker is entitled to.
- Period of notice required to terminate employment, or if employment is for a specific period, the date when employment is to terminate.

## Acknowledgements



The State Department for Labour and Skills Development wishes to express its sincere appreciation to the Directorate of Labour Market Research and Analysis for their exemplary dedication and rigorous efforts in conducting the research that forms the foundation of this publication. Your in-depth analysis and commitment to understanding labour market dynamics have been instrumental in generating critical insights in the labour market.

We also extend our profound gratitude to the Labour Market Observatory Unit for their unwavering diligence in in-depth analysis of labour market data for production of labour market information and intelligence. Your meticulous attention to detail and steadfast commitment to ensuring data reliability have significantly strengthened the credibility of this publication.

This document stands as a testament to your collective expertise and hard work. It serves as a vital resource for policymakers, educators, employers, and job seekers, providing actionable insights.

We are confident that the regular production and use of labour market publications are essential for creating a skilled, agile, and competitive workforce one that is capable of driving Kenya's socio-economic transformation.

Once again, we thank you for your invaluable contributions.

**Shadrack M. Mwadime, CBS**

**Principal Secretary, State Department for Labour and Skills Development**





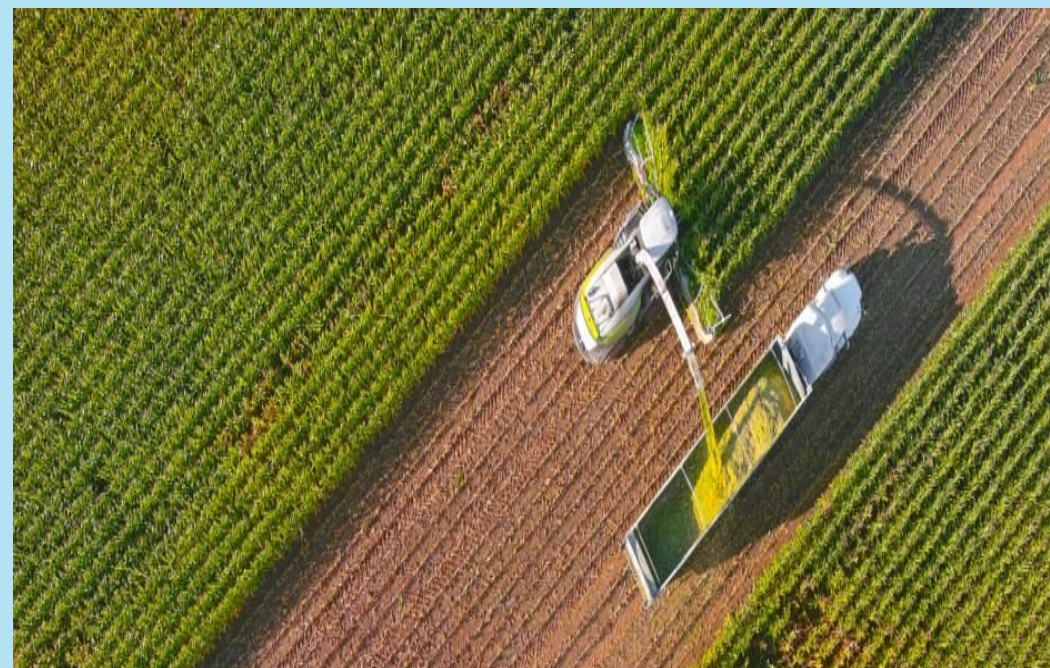
## Background

The agriculture sector continues to be the bedrock of Kenya's economy, employing a vast majority of the population and significantly contributing to the national GDP. Over the past few years, the sector has contributed 20.9% in 2019, 22.7% in 2020, 21.5% in 2021, 21.2% in 2022 and 21.8% in 2023, highlighting its indispensable role in ensuring food security, rural livelihoods, and economic development.

This publication was developed as part of the government's Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda, which seeks to promote inclusive economic growth, particularly at the grassroots level. Agriculture, being a primary source of income and employment in rural areas, is central to this agenda. The sector's growth and sustainability hinge on maintaining fair employment practices, ensuring that both farmworkers and farmers are empowered and protected under the law.

For farmworkers, this document outlines their rights regarding minimum wages, working conditions, leave entitlements, and workplace safety. For farmers, the publication serves as a guideline to understanding their legal obligations to workers, helping them to foster compliance with labour laws and enhance the welfare of their workforce.

This publication is intended to contribute to a more informed and harmonious working environment in the agricultural sector, reinforcing the government's commitment to creating a more inclusive and resilient economy through the empowerment of rural communities.





Records

What records must be kept?

A farmer will be required to give the farm worker a pay slip and a written particulars of employment

Pay slip

Every farm worker must get a pay slip.

Information to be on the pay slip

- ⇒ Farm worker’s name and address
- ⇒ Farm workers name and occupation
- ⇒ Period in respect of which payment is made
- ⇒ Farm worker wage rate and overtime rate
- ⇒ Number of ordinary hours worked by a farm worker during that period
- ⇒ Number of overtime hours worked by a farm worker during that period
- ⇒ Number of hours worked by the farm worker on a paid holiday or on a Sunday
- ⇒ Farm workers wage
- ⇒ Details of any other pay arising out of the farm workers employment
- ⇒ Details of any deductions made
- ⇒ Actual amount paid to the farm worker.



OVERVIEW OF KENYA’S AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

WAGE EMPLOYMENT in Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry Sector in KENYA (2019-2023)

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number of wage-employed people (Numbers)	336607	322300	337200	341600

Source: KNBS Annual Economic surveys

The wage employment landscape within Kenya’s agricultural sector has shown a positive trend in recent years, supporting job creation and economic inclusion for many Kenyans. In 2019, wage employment stood at 336,607 individuals, and despite a slight decline in 2020, the sector has since rebounded with a steady increase in employment numbers. By 2023, the number of wage-employed individuals reached 344,300, underscoring the sector’s role as a primary source of formal employment. This growth reflects ongoing government and private-sector investments aimed at modernizing agricultural practices, improving productivity, and enhancing working conditions. The steady rise in wage employment points to the sector’s capacity to provide stable income opportunities, particularly for rural communities.

Value of Goods and Services Generated by the Agriculture Sector (2019-2023)

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Value of goods and services	1,630,607	1,705,985	1,699,959	1,675,047	1,783,229

Source: KNBS Economic Surveys

The agricultural sector remains a critical component of Kenya’s economy, consistently contributing a substantial share to the country’s GDP. Over the years, the value of goods and services produced within this sector has demonstrated resilience and growth, despite fluctuations due to factors such as weather conditions, market dynamics, and global economic shifts. Starting from a value of 1,630,607 million KES in 2019, the sector saw a gradual increase, peaking in 2023 at 1,783,299 million KES. This upward trend highlights the sector’s recovery and growth following a dip in 2021 and 2022. The 2023 figure reflects improved productivity and favourable conditions, emphasizing agriculture’s crucial role in sustaining economic stability and supporting livelihoods across the nation.



Farmworkers and farmers are individuals employed in various agricultural activities, ranging from cultivating crops to raising livestock. Farmworkers often perform hands-on tasks such as planting, weeding, harvesting, and tending to animals, while farmers oversee the overall management of agricultural operations, including planning, production, and marketing of farm produce.

Farmworkers are responsible for tasks like soil preparation, planting seeds, applying fertilizers and pesticides, irrigating fields, and operating machinery used in farming activities. They may also assist with the care of livestock by feeding, cleaning, and ensuring the health of animals. Farmworkers often work under the supervision of farmers or farm managers to ensure the successful production of crops and livestock.

Farmers, on the other hand, are responsible for the decision-making and management of the farm. They determine the types of crops to be grown or animals to be raised, manage farm resources such as land, equipment, and labour, and oversee the sale and distribution of farm products. Farmers must also navigate market demands, government regulations, and environmental conditions to ensure the profitability and sustainability of their operations.

Job titles within agriculture sector include: *Grower, sugar-cane; Hatcher, Fish; Grower, Vegetable; Subsistence; Farmer, Poultry; Farmer, Ostrich; Beekeeper; Milker; Farmer, Milk; Groundswoman; Farmer, Potato*

Child labour

No farmer shall employ a child in any activity which constitutes worst form of child labour.

For school-age children – i.e. under the minimum age for work – : they need to be taken away from the hazard and out of work as quickly as possible. For older children – i.e. youth over the minimum age – there are two approaches: removing them or removing the risk. But as risks cannot always be totally removed, we usually speak of “risk reduction” or “protection” of young workers.

Young children between 14 and 18 are of common interest to both youth employment and child labour efforts. It is an important age group as it encompasses the transition from school-to-work, or from school-based education to vocational training. It is during these years that the foundation is laid for achieving decent work later in life. Doing hazardous work in adolescence can create huge barriers – educational, physical, psychological, social – that impede a young person from competing successfully for good jobs in the future, and is one of the main ways in which child labour and youth employment are linked.

Employment of a child in any work constituting worst form of child labour shall constitute a cognisable offence punishable or any other written law provided that no person shall be punished twice for the same offence.



Termination of employment

- a) where the contract is to pay wages daily, a contract is terminable by either party at the close of any day without notice;
- b) where the contract is to pay wages periodically at intervals of less than one month, a contract terminable by either party at the end of the period next following the giving of notice in writing
- c) where the contract is to pay wages or salary periodically at intervals of or exceeding one month, a contract terminable by either party at the end of the period of twenty-eight days next following the giving of notice in writing.
- d) These terms will not apply if the contract of service requires a longer written notice of termination that the stated Payment on termination



## Hours of work

The maximum working hours for employees shall be forty-eight (48) hours per week.

## Overtime

Working hours shall not exceed forty-eight hours per week and any extra hours shall be deemed to be overtime and shall, in the absence of a written agreement to the contrary, be remunerated at the minimum rate of one and a half (1.5) times of the normal hourly rate

## Rest period

A farm worker shall be entitled to at least one rest day in every period of seven days

## Public holidays

A worker shall be entitled to a day's holiday with full pay on every public holiday during his or her employment. An employee who works on a public holiday receives, in respect of such work, pay at not less than double the rate payable for work on a day that is not a public holiday, that employee shall not be entitled to a day's holiday with full pay in lieu of the public holiday.



## What Farm workers and farmers should know about minimum wages and conditions of employment

### Employment Act, 2007

#### Who is included?

- ⇒ Farm workers in all farming activities in Kenya
- ⇒ A domestic worker employed in a home on a farm
- ⇒ A security guard employed to guard a farm or other premises where farming activities are conducted, who is not employed in the private security industry.



#### What does the law say about wages

- An employer shall pay the entire amount of the wages earned by or payable to a worker in respect of work done by the worker
- An employer shall pay wages to a worker on a working day, and during working hours, at or near to the place of employment or at such other place as may be agreed between the employer and the worker.
- An employer shall not pay wages to a worker in any place where intoxicating liquor is sold or readily available for supply, except in the case of workers employed to work in that place.

Payment of Remuneration

Must be paid in:

- In cash
- Into an account at a bank, or building society, designated by the worker
- By cheque, postal order or money order in favour of the worker
- In the absence of a worker, to a person other than the worker, if the person is duly authorized by the worker in writing to receive the wages on the workers

Deductions

Permissible deductions

- ⇒ Any amount due from the employee as a contribution to any provident fund or superannuation scheme or any other scheme approved by the Commissioner for Labour to which the employee has agreed to contribute
- ⇒ A reasonable amount for any damage done to, or loss of, any property lawfully in the possession or custody of the employer occasioned by the willful default of the employee
- ⇒ An amount not exceeding one day’s wages in respect of each working day for the whole of which the employee, without leave or other lawful cause, absents himself from the premises of the employer or other place proper and appointed for the performance of his work;
- ⇒ An amount equal to the amount of any shortage of money arising through the negligence or dishonesty of the employee whose contract of service provides specifically or his being entrusted with the receipt, custody and payment of money
- ⇒ Any amount paid to the employee in error as wages in excess of the amount of wages due to him
- ⇒ Any amount the deduction of which is authorised by any written law for the time being in force, collective agreement, wage determination, court order or arbitration award;
- ⇒ Any amount in which the employer has no direct or indirect beneficial interest, and which the employee has requested the employer in writing to deduct from his wages;
- ⇒ An amount due and payable by the employee under and in accordance with the terms of an agreement in writing, by way of repayment or part repayment of a loan of money made to him by the employer, not exceeding fifty per cent of the wages payable to that employee after the deduction of all such other amounts as may be due from him under this section

WAGES IN KENYA’S AGRICULTURE SECTOR OVER THE YEARS

S/NO	Occupation	2018			2022			2024		
		Monthly contract per month	All Former Municipalities and Town Councils of Mavoko, Ruiru and Limuru	Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu and Nakuru Cities	Monthly contract per month	All Former Municipalities and Town Councils of Mavoko, Ruiru and Limuru	Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu and Nakuru Cities	Monthly contract per month	All Former Municipalities and Town Councils of Mavoko, Ruiru and Limuru	Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu and Nakuru Cities
1.	General laborer including cleaner, sweeper, gardener, house servant, day watchman, messenger	13572.90	12522.70	7240.95	15201.65	14025.40	8109.90	16113.75	14866.92	8596.494
2.	Tumboy, cook, logger line cutter	14658.85	14038.00	8366.35	16417.90	14566.40	9370.30	17402.97	15220.38	9932.518
3.	Night watchman	15141.95	14038.00	8636.30	16959.00	15722.60	9672.70	17976.54	16665.96	10253.06
4.	sawmill sawyer, machine assistant, mass production machinist	15383.45	14315.30	11602.90	17229.50	16033.15	12995.25	18263.27	16995.14	13774.97
5.	junior clerk, wheel tractor driver (light)	17561.00	16428.30	13431.30	19668.30	18399.70	15043.10	20848.40	19503.68	15945.69



6	Bakery machine operator, plywood machine operator, sawmill presser, stitching assistant, machine tool operator, table hand baker or confectioner's copy typist, driver (Cars and light vans)	183 19.50	16907.90	13975.30	20517.80	18936.85	15652.30	21748.87	20073.06	16591.44
7	General clerk, telephone operator, receptionist, storekeeper	20904.90	19112.05	16295.95	23413.50	21405.50	18251.50	24818.31	22689.83	19346.59
8	Driver (Medium sized vehicle)	23039.40	21175.15	18881.21	25804.15	23716.20	21147.00	27352.40	25139.17	22415.82
9	Dryer, crawler tractor driver, sales man	25435.20	23731.80	21418.50	28487.40	26579.60	23988.70	30196.64	28174.38	25428.02
10	caretaker (buildings)	28147.60	26283.30	24485.10	31525.30	29437.30	27423.30	33416.82	31203.54	29068.70
12	Cashier, driver (heavy commercial vehicles) sales-man driver	30627.45	28822.10	27023.95	34302.75	32280.75	30266.80	36360.92	34217.60	32082.81
13	Ungraded artisan	183 19.50	16907.90	13975.55	20517.85	18936.85	15652.60	21748.92	20073.06	16591.76
14	Artisan Grade III	23039.45	21175.15	18845.55	25804.20	23716.20	21107.00	27352.45	25139.17	22373.42
15	Artisan Grade II	24884.05	23731.80	21418.50	27870.15	26579.60	23988.70	29542.36	28174.38	25428.02
	Artisan Grade I	30627.45	28822.10	27024.00	34302.75	32280.75	30266.90	36390.92	34217.60	32082.91

**NOTE:** Kenya's agricultural sector has seen significant wage adjustments aimed at improving the living standards of farmers and farm workers. Wage increments, as a result of government policies, have not only elevated earnings across various roles but also reflect the government's commitment to securing better livelihoods within this essential sector.

Between 2018 and 2024, wage adjustments in various urban and rural areas, such as Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru, and former municipalities, have brought notable improvements. For instance, a general laborer's monthly earnings increased steadily, showing the government's commitment to uplifting lower-income workers. In Nairobi, the wage for a general laborer rose from Kshs 13,572.90 in 2018 to Kshs 16,113.75 in 2024, while those in other municipalities saw similar increments

In summary, wage progression in Kenya's agricultural sector highlights the positive strides in labor policies aimed at supporting the sector's workforce. These changes contribute to improved livelihoods and sustain Kenya's agricultural growth by ensuring fair compensation and safe working environments for all involved.

### Certificate of service

An employer shall issue to an employee a certificate of service upon termination of his employment, unless the employment has continued for a period of less than four consecutive weeks.

### A certificate of service issued under subsection shall contain;

- \* The name of the employer and his postal address
- \* The name of the worker
- \* The date when employment of worker commenced
- \* The nature and usual place of employment of the worker
- \* The date when the employment of the worker ceased



## Leave

### What type of leave is farm worker entitled to

Four types of leaves namely; Annual, sick, maternity leave and paternity leave

#### Conditions regarding annual leave

Employees are entitled to 3 weeks paid leave per annual leave cycle.

Should a public holiday fall within the leave cycle an additional day's paid leave must be granted.

#### Conditions regarding sick leave

- After two consecutive months of service with the employer, farm workers are entitled to sick leave of not less than seven days with full pay and thereafter sick leave of seven days with half pay, in each period of twelve consecutive months of service
- Farm workers should produce a certificate of incapacity to work signed by a duly qualified medical practitioner

#### Key issues related to maternity leave

- ♦ A female farm worker shall be entitled to three months maternity leave with full pay.
- ♦ On expiry of a female farm workers maternity leave, the female employee shall have the right to return to the job which she held immediately prior to her maternity leave or to a reasonably suitable job on terms and conditions not less favourable than those which would have applied had she not been on maternity leave.
- ♦ Maternity leave may be extended with employer consent or may be followed immediately by other types of leave like sick leave or annual leave

#### Paternity Leave

A male farm worker shall be entitled to two weeks paternity leave with full pay

#### Medical Attention

- ⇒ An employer shall ensure the provision sufficient and of proper medicine for his workers during illness and if possible, medical attendance during serious illness.
- ⇒ An employer shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that he is notified of the illness of a worker as soon as reasonably practicable after the first occurrence of the illness.
- ⇒ The illness should not have been contracted during a period when the worker was absent from his employment without lawful cause or excuse
- ⇒ The illness or injury is proved to have been self-inflicted