



**CANADIAN AGRICULTURE & AGRI-FOOD  
WORKFORCE ACTION PLAN**



**LABOUR TASK FORCE**



**AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT  
REPORT:  
RECRUITMENT & WAGES**

**JUNE 1, 2016**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

The Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) would like to acknowledge the contributions and participation of the following groups in the research and development of this report.

## Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Workforce Action Plan Contributing Partners:



## Participating in the research:

- Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association
- Alberta Pork
- Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance
- Canadian Honey Council
- Canadian Meat Council
- Maritime Seafood Coalition
- Mushrooms Canada
- Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency
- PEI Agriculture Sector Council
- Sask Pulse
- Western Canadian Wheat Growers

# INTRODUCTION

---

This report presents 10 Case Studies that help to specify agricultural workforce management in the areas of recruitment and wages. This research was conducted in response to the Agriculture and Agri-Food Labour Task Force's (LTF) request for the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) to survey LTF members on recruitment activities and wage range examples. Using a value chain approach, with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Value Chain Roundtables LTF representatives participating, the research has been a collective effort by participants noted in the acknowledgement section of the document.

Canada's agriculture and agri-food industry is full of high-quality career options with competitive wages and benefits. Agricultural employers expend extensive efforts on recruitment and retention of Canadian workers and it is important to note that the majority of the industry's permanent year-round positions are filled by Canadians. The industry also offers many lifestyle benefits and flexibility not available in other industries.

Agriculture and agri-food jobs require extensive on-the-job training which employers provide to workers to develop unique and special skills their individual commodities require. Wage ranges are highly variable depending on the commodity and region. For this reason, within the *Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Workforce Action Plan*, the Labour Task Force is recommending to the Federal Government that commodity specific wage research be conducted and for regulated agricultural wages to include a transparent wage rate process that includes industry consultation.<sup>1</sup>

## **Examples provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Labour Task Force members:**

- Case Study 1 – Horticulture Value Chain (Mushroom Industry, Ontario)
- Case Study 2 – Pork Value Chain (Alberta)
- Case Study 3 – Beef Value Chain (Alberta)
- Case Study 4 – Grain Value Chain/Agriculture (Saskatchewan/Atlantic)
- Case Study 5 – Bee Health Value Chain (Alberta/Saskatchewan)
- Case Study 6 – Food Processing Value Chain (Primary Processing)
- Case Study 7 – Sheep Value Chain (Primary Processing Ontario)
- Case Study 8 - Lobster Processing Recruitment Efforts (Seafood Value Chain/ Atlantic Canada)
- Case Study 9 - Seafood Processing Plants (Seafood Value Chain/Bay of Fundy, Atlantic Canada)
- Case Study 10 - Integrated Fishing & Processing Operation (Seafood Value Chain/Newfoundland, Atlantic Canada)

## Case Study 1 – Horticulture Industry Recruitment Efforts (Ontario)

---

### WAGE RANGE AND BENEFITS (Mushrooms Canada)

#### Mushroom Farm Wage Range

- **Entry Level:** minimum and/or regulated wage rate for mushroom harvesters (offers on-the-job training, no experience)
- **Average Wage:** \$14.50 to \$15.00
- **Experienced:** with production bonuses (depending on mushroom crop quality) between 5-10% of the experienced harvesters can average approximately \$18.00 per hour, earning between \$16 and \$24 per hour on a consistent basis.

#### Benefits

Mushroom farm benefits can include:

- Extended health benefits, including dental, prescription drug, chiropractic, massage, life insurance, and more;
- Company pension plans;
- Transportation allowance; and
- An employer referral incentive for recruiting new workers (up to \$1000 per referral).

**Mushroom harvesters' have unique and special skills and they are extremely valued and** highly skilled at their jobs. Their highly developed skills, include: dexterity, speed and judgment regarding quality. These experienced workers are very difficult to replace as it takes up to 6-12 months to train a new harvester to be proficient at the job. Improved mushroom harvesting technology is over 10 years away.

---

#### Recruitment, Hiring New Canadians and Refugees

An Ontario mushroom grower approaches immigrant organizations to communicate that they have rewarding, meaningful work available at a fair wage. Their farms, that are located in Essex County and Wellington, Ontario, have aligned themselves with two immigrant organizations: the South Essex Community Council (SECC) Community Connections Program <http://www.secc.on.ca/settlement-services/community-connections/> and Job Connect. By bridging partnerships with immigrant organizations, the grower has continued to be a front runner providing job opportunities for immigrants in the Haitian, Sudanese, Cambodian, Arabic, and Asian communities.

The grower holds regular job fairs - every six months or sooner - in partnership with the immigrant organizations. The immigrant organizations provide a room for the job fairs and invite immigrants who are looking for work to attend the job fairs. Half of their associates do harvesting work; the other half are involved in maintenance and labour jobs, skilled trades, operating farm equipment, quality control, food safety, supervisory, and accounting jobs. The grower invites all new job developers working for their partner immigrant organizations to tour farm facilities and to perform the jobs so they are able to match immigrants' skills with job requirements.

The HR Manager participates regularly in social activities of the cultural communities whose members work at the farms; for example, an annual celebration the Jamaican community holds at its church, and activities with the Haitian community in Windsor, Ontario. The company's presence at these community events typically results in job applications from members of the immigrant communities. Current employees also tell others in their communities about job opportunities at the company.

Approximately 70 percent of their employees are new Canadians. For many immigrants, the employer finds that they end up being the immigrant's first or second job in Canada. The average length of employment is 8 years, with some employees remaining employed with the company for 20-30 years. The company works very closely with community partners and has had a successful history of employing refugees. Some have stayed until retirement with their children working in management positions; others have stayed for a time, learned English and then returned to school (while working part time) to pursue university degrees and professional designations.

### **Overcoming Transportation Barriers**

Employees who live in Leamington or Wellington are close to the farms. However, employees coming from larger metropolitan centres typically commute about 40 minutes per day. Seventy percent of the employees of the Kingsville farm commute 30-40 minutes to work. There is no community transportation available. In 2006, the company introduced a travel pay policy in which employees are paid \$6.35 per day for travel providing they arrive at work on time. This policy encourages car-pooling especially for members of the same cultural communities that work at the farms. While the travel pay policy works well, transportation barriers still exists, especially for new employees who don't yet know anyone working at the farm.

### **Overcoming Language Barriers**

The company has provided second language training two days per week on site after work and also pays any costs related to the training. If employees' shifts run late, the grower provides them time off from work to attend classes. The company translates all communications into eight languages in addition to English and French, for example, Cambodian, Thai, Burma, Spanish, Chinese, and Mandarin. Employees who speak the languages assist with the translation and the company also uses Google Translate as well. Typical items for translation include health and safety messages and the bi-weekly corporate newsletter.

### **New Hire Orientation**

When new recruits are hired, they go onto the job site to observe the job. They participate with the supervisor to perform the job and observe the interaction with the supervisor. When the employees return for their first paid days of work, they will have already met their supervisors and will have a general concept of the work. The grower provides six weeks of training with an informal buddy system, often with a person of similar background or community. After six weeks, the new recruit has a good sense of what job is all about.

### **Supervisory and Leadership Development**

The mushroom grower makes sure the supervisor knows how to encourage new recruits. They conduct regular meetings with the HR team. They conduct leadership training with an organizational psychologist covering various issues such as conflict resolution and change management.

### **Effective Human Resources (HR) Practices**

The grower implements low cost, big return human resources practices. For example, they have a Values in Action Program that encourages employees to uphold the company's values of excellence: Care, Respect, Effort, Integrity, Openness, and Fairness. They recognize employees who demonstrate the values at work and in the community. For example, employees who demonstrate flexibility around harvest work schedules and participate in community events such as the MS Walk have their names entered into a prize draw. Winners of monthly Values in Action Awards are issued ballots for a chance to win a day off with pay at the annual company family picnic.

## Case Study 2 – Pork Industry Recruitment Efforts (Alberta)

---

### WAGE RANGE AND BENEFITS

#### Hog Operation in Alberta Wage Range (Alberta Pork)

- **Entry Level:** \$13.50 - \$15.00 per hour (no experience, offers on-the-job training)
- **Experienced:** \$15.00 - \$20.00 per hour
- **Managerial/Supervisor:** \$50,000 per year

#### Benefits:

On-farm jobs offer significant benefits which vary depending on the size of the agricultural operation. Benefits for on-farm agriculture workers could include subsidized housing or the full cost of housing is sometimes covered. Benefits for experienced and managerial agriculture worker could include incentives such as usage of a truck, fuel and cell phone. Some farm employers also offer RRSP contribution plans.

---

A family-owned Alberta pork operation has a 60,000 hogs and a primary meat processing facility which employs 130 employees, both in rural areas.

#### Recruitment Activities

The farm and processing facility actively recruit Canadian domestic workers through multiple strategies. Since January of this year, they have participated in the following activities:

- **Job Fairs:** 7 job fairs: Edmonton, Lethbridge, Red Deer (2), Innisfail, Olds and Guelph, ON.
- **Advertising:** Actively advertising continuously on the ESDC job bank. Ongoing advertisements in the Red Deer Advocate and online. Advertised in the Lethbridge Herald regularly. Also placed ads in the Three Hills Capital and Drumheller Mail.

From all of these efforts, the employer managed to recruit 2 people from job fairs and recently picked up a few workers from the local newspaper advertisements.

The farm continues to seek pork technicians on the farm and the value added meat plant is seeking 20 people to meet current production demands.

The employer is reviewing options to find out what is involved with hiring ex-convicts as an option and they are also researching requirements for the refugee programming.

## Case Study 3a - Beef Industry Recruitment Efforts (Alberta)

---

### WAGE RANGE AND BENEFITS (information provided by agricultural employment agency)

#### Feedlot Operation in Alberta Wage Range: (Alberta Cattle Feeders)

- **Entry Level:** \$17.00 - \$22.00 per hour (no experience, offers on-the-job training)
- **Experienced / Managerial:** over \$22 per hour

#### Benefits

On-farm jobs offer significant benefits which vary depending on the size of the agricultural operation. Benefits for on-farm agriculture workers could include subsidized housing or the full cost of housing is sometimes covered. Benefits for experienced and managerial agriculture worker could include incentives such as usage of a truck, fuel and cell phone. Some farm employers also offer RRSP contribution plans.

---

**Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association (ACFA)** is conducting a recruitment campaign which features a prominent recruitment section on their website: <http://www.cattlefeeders.ca/recruitment/>.

The objective of the ACFA's recruitment campaign is to address the current labour challenges through actively building the employer brand of the agriculture industry and its sectors in order to recruit a sustainable labour force from the widest network possible. The overarching message to the wider network is: you don't have to grow up on a farm to work on one.

To assist ACFA members and the industry at large in an effective recruitment strategy, the campaign will:

1. Create awareness and engage support from stakeholders for feedlot operations and the beef industry
2. Develop and deliver tailored recruitment and retention workshops for employers
3. Establish ACFA as a credible recruitment information hub to support ACFA members and the industry as a whole in attracting and maintaining a sustainable labour force

To attract workers to the beef industry and the cattle feeding sector, the Recruitment Campaign will take the following steps:

- Educate future generations of workers about the beef industry and cattle feeding sector at the secondary school level through partnering with organizations like MindFuel, Ag in the Classroom, and the Dual Credit strategy
- Recruit at secondary and post-secondary levels
- Work in cooperation with other sectors and/or feedlot operators when recruiting
- Recruit outside feedlot regions
- Recruit workers from other industries and sectors and leverage complementary skill sets and experience

The ACFA dedicated web page also includes a Job Board for the cattle industry which employers use to advertise agriculture jobs for their operations. They have also created recruitment videos that are prominently placed on their website:

- <https://vimeo.com/114722405> (long video)
- <https://vimeo.com/113941960> (short version featured on the front page of the ACFA website)
- <http://www.paskalcattle.com/career>

**Social Media** platforms they use to actively promote the agriculture/beef industry and feedlot sectors and share job opportunities and labour information include:

- Twitter: @ACFA\_Beef
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AlbertaCattleFeeders>

- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/6381583?trk=tyah&trkInfo=clickedVertical%3Acompany%2Cidx%3A1-1-1%2CtarId%3A1434482248365%2Ctas%3Aalberta%20cattle>

**Academic Outreach**

The ACFA has a working relationship with the agriculture programs at both Lethbridge College and Olds College and are in the process of reaching out to secondary school divisions across the province to focus on off-campus programs to bring students onto feedlots for hands-on career experience.

**Case Study 3b - Beef Industry Recruitment Efforts (Alberta)**

---

An agriculture recruiter is constantly seeking feedlot and farm workers on behalf of two Alberta farm operations. The farm and feedlot have about 60 people on staff year round and usually they access around 9 international agriculture workers through Labour Market Impact Assessments who work side-by-side with the domestic Canadian agriculture workers. They have successfully transitioned a number of the international agriculture workers to permanent residency. These farm employees have continued to work for the farms as new Canadians. The professional recruiter uses multiple strategies to attract Canadian domestic workers. They have the best results using a creative social media strategy.

The farms actively have ongoing advertising on the following online job boards:

<p><b>Job Boards Ag Recruiters using</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.Kijiji.ca">www.Kijiji.ca</a>  <a href="http://www.Indeed.ca">www.Indeed.ca</a>  <a href="http://www.prospectnow.ca/">http://www.prospectnow.ca/</a> Coordinates with Prospect (is doing work with Aboriginals and vets too)  <a href="http://www.vetyournexthire.com/">http://www.vetyournexthire.com/</a> - this one is for returning veterans  <a href="http://www.breakbarriers.ca/">http://www.breakbarriers.ca/</a> (site for returning military personnel)  <a href="http://naciontalk.ca">http://naciontalk.ca</a> (Aboriginal Job Board)          Facebook          Twitter  <a href="https://twitter.com/IndeedCanada">https://twitter.com/IndeedCanada</a>  <a href="https://www.IndeedCanada">@IndeedCanada</a></p>	<p><b>Ag Job websites:</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.farms.com/classifieds/careers-employment/">http://www.farms.com/classifieds/careers-employment/</a>  <a href="http://www.agcareers.com/internships.cfm">@AgCareers</a>  <a href="http://www.agcallhr.com/">http://www.agcallhr.com/</a>  <a href="https://www.AgCallhr">@AgCallhr</a></p>
--	---

They are also very active on social media (Twitter and Facebook) and that is where we often get queries about positions and are able to share about working at the farms. They have found that Canadians looking into agriculture as a career generally investigate, interview the farm employers via social media before they agree to apply for the job or begin the interview process. They find this is a successful strategy that helps them recruit technically savvy agriculture workers who have skills they require.

These farm employers have worked job fairs in the past but had limited results. They found that 1) the Agriculture Job Fairs have many of the same people attending and recruiting, so they find this is not the best strategy to find and recruit new people for agriculture jobs; 2) None of the Job Fairs were close to their rural location where the farms were located, so people potentially interested in the job would have to re-locate, and the potential workers were not willing to do this. There also weren't many local job fair options, and they are discussing the option of organizing a virtual job fair with target groups such as returning military.



## Case Study 4 – Grain Value Chain and General Agricultural Recruitment Efforts (Saskatchewan/Atlantic)

---

### WAGE RANGE AND BENEFITS

#### **Crop and General Farm Labour Wage Range: (Sask Pulse, Western Canadian Wheat Growers Assoc)**

- **Entry Level:** \$18.00 per hour for general agriculture labour
- **Experienced/ Farm Manager:** \$25.00 - \$30.00 per hour with Class 1A license
- **Some farmers are reportedly paying recruitment agencies up to \$35,000 to find farm managers**

According to Statistics Canada's Job Vacancy and Wage Survey and Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council's Agriculture and Agri-Food Labour Market Information February 2016 Update: Vacancies on farms and in food processing, harvesting landscaping labourer occupations are paid on average:

- \$17.30 In **Lethbridge-Medicine Hat, Alberta**
- \$22.25 an hour **Saskatchewan**
- \$25.20 an hour in **Saskatoon-Biggar**

#### **Benefits**

On-farm jobs offer significant benefits which vary depending on the size of the agricultural operation. Benefits for on-farm agriculture workers could include subsidized housing or the full cost of housing is sometimes covered. Benefits for experienced and managerial agriculture worker could include incentives such as usage of a truck, fuel and cell phone. Some farm employers also offer RRSP contribution plans.

#### **Value-added Crop positions Atlantic Canada Elevator Wage Range (PEI Elevator)**

- \$13.00 to \$18.00 an hour plus provisions for special leave, insurance, pension and health benefits. Also workers compensation, vacation pay, training and statutory holidays.

---

#### **PEI Agriculture Sector Council**

There are 2 provincial Agricultural Sector Councils in Canada which help farmers find workers: one in Prince Edward Island and one in Quebec. There are also evolving Committees and Councils in other provinces such as the Agriculture Industry Labour Council of Alberta.

The Prince Edward Island Agriculture Sector Council helps PEI farmers find workers for their farms. These are some of the activities that the Sector Council participates in promoting agriculture as a prospective career option.

They participate in Job Fair activities such as:

- **Summerside Job Fair**  
They attended the Summerside Job Fair on April 14th hosted by the East Prince Youth Development Centre Inc. Spoke with approximately 40 potential employees interested in agriculture. Signed up 5 potential employees and advised interested parties on how to sign up on our site.
- **Montague Job Fair**  
They attended the Montague Job Fair on April 23rd hosted by Skills PEI. We spoke with approximately 50 potential employees interested in agriculture. Signed up 10 potential employees on their website and advised interested parties on how to sign up.

The PEI Agriculture Sector Council also hosted an **Agriculture Job Fair at the Farm Centre in Charlottetown on April 27, 2015**. They had 14 agriculture employer booths registered to participate and 110 attendants. It was reported to be an excellent opportunity for employers to conduct an initial screening with interested and motivated potential employees and for potential employers to provide first-hand information about working for their agricultural business. Participating in our job fair offered employers the ability to meet with job seekers, accept resumes, distribute job applications and screen candidates all in one day in one location. By offering it as an Agriculture Job Fair, it helped with the screening by specifying the industry. Their Job Fair also hosted a group of students from Charlottetown Rural and a large number of New Comers.

The communications plan for the Job Fair included an extensive advertising campaign with the radio stations, New Comer's Association, UPEI, AVC, Holland College, Island Schools, newspaper publications, flyers, social media. CBC's Nancy Russell conducted interviews that were aired on the CBC Island Morning and their web site. Participant feedback was very positive. PEI Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry commented, "For a first year event the turnout was strong". They plan to continue growing their Job Fair event and believe by making it an "Agriculture" focused event it makes it unique and people attending are truly interested in the industry.

## Case Study 5 – Bee Health Value Chain (Alberta)

---

### WAGE RANGE

#### Wage Range for Western Canadian Apiarists

- **Entry Level:** \$12.50 wage for apiarist workers which offers on-the-job training (no experience)
- **Experienced:** \$19.00 per hour wage for skilled apiarists

The Canadian Honey Council reports that over the past ten years finding and retaining staff has moved from a low priority issue to a top priority for almost every commercial beekeeper in Canada. The industry is highly specialized with unique and special skills required; 95% of the positions are highly seasonal (a few weeks up to 7-8 months) makes it extremely difficult to maintain any significant number of repeat staff).

Unlike many other ventures, virtually no one buys an apiary operation without having some previous experience. Many beekeepers see the hiring of Canadians and Permanent Residents as part of their succession planning preparation.

- **Social Media:** Beekeepers use their personal &/or business Facebook pages to get the word out about their staffing needs. When available, many post positions to local Kijiji type sites or place ads on “Trading Post” radio shows.
- **Job Bank Advertising:** Besides advertising for Canadian domestic workers through the “Job Banks.”
- **Industry Newsletter and Website Advertising:** Virtually all beekeepers will use their provincial and /or the Canadian Honey Council newsletters. These notices are also copied to Association websites, some with specific labour sections. Employers do not stop their recruitment efforts however, as individuals looking here are already considering work in the field.
- **Local Advertising:** They post notices in their retail outlets, local stores and on notice boards. Many utilize church and school bulletins where allowed. The latter is highlighted further if there are still sons/daughters or grand children in the school system.
- **Youth:** Significant recruitment efforts are concentrated on youth. In Alberta, industry members have developed, promoted and supported a module series for the “Green Certificate Program” which gives participating students up to fifteen high school credits if completed. A full time program has returned to the Fairview Campus of Grand Prairie College. Apiaries host and mentor students enrolled there.
- **Public Affairs:** Many beekeepers will do demonstrations for interested groups. Those in areas with a First Nations and/or Metis population have been reaching out to them.

#### Retention Efforts

Retention is challenging in an industry that is highly seasonal in nature. In the past few years it has become increasing difficult to retain staff for even the full season, let alone year to year. Beekeepers in the Prairie Provinces are unable to match many of the perks available in other industries i.e. oil and gas.

The beekeeping business offers a lot of flexibility. Some operations will allow a staff person to run a number of hives (personal or company) for the summer, with varying arrangements for costs. This is declining as many employees aren’t interested in spending the extra time, even for significant benefit. Some operations have seen some success by allow split shifts in the extracting plant. This is allowing younger individuals or those with other jobs to take positions. Unfortunately some apiaries are at times forced to retain individuals with poor to no work ethic. This is especially true for the shorter harvest period. The beekeepers realize this is not a best practice but due to labour shortages, they are sometimes forced to resort to retaining employees with poor performance which ends up having no real benefit to the employer or the employee and severely detracts from productivity of their industry.

### WAGE RANGE AND BENEFITS:

#### Wage Range for Meat Cutters (Canadian Meat Council)

- The average **starting wage** range for primary processing's Meat Cutters/Butchers is between approximately \$13.00 - \$18.00 per hour (dependent on experience and regional location).
- According to the *Wages and Vacancy Rate Survey* conducted by the Government of Saskatchewan in 2013 the Wage Range for 90% of Butchers/Meat cutters is between \$15 - \$23.59 an hour. The Median Hourly Wage was \$20.59.
- The Canadian Meat Council reports that wages and benefits are superior to those paid by U.S. competitors (Canadian meat processors are paying between 10 to 25 per cent higher wages than the U.S.).
- **On-the-Job Training & Wage Progression:** There is a lot of on-the-job detailed skill training involved with the progression of workers in the agri-food meat processing industry. Advancement of plant workers to Meat Cutter average wage range happens very quickly within the meat processing industry.

#### Benefits

Full benefit packages typically include life insurance, disability insurance, health, dental and pension coverage at little or no cost to the worker.

#### Recruitment

Meat processors are incessantly searching for workers, recruiting aggressively, continuously, through a comprehensive array of channels. These include: participation in job fairs organized across the country (40 job fairs in the last year); websites, including Workopolis, Eluta and Job Bank; social media resources, such as Facebook and Linked In; and, local, regional, and national print advertising. The company organizes employer connections through Alberta Works; maintains employer networks with the municipal immigration services, the Centre for Newcomers, Catholic Immigration Service, and Lutherwood Employment Services in Ontario; and, utilizes local employer service Minerva Employment Agency. In the case of functions that are particularly difficult to fill, it uses recruiting agencies such as FEP Search Group.

The cumulative changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program further aggravate the critical shortage of Canadian butchers and meat cutters. As a direct consequence of the inability to access sufficient workers, production, value-added, exports, jobs and economic growth are being exported south of the Canada-U.S. border.

#### Training and Retention

Parallel to the intensive recruitment activities, the company invests substantially in worker training and retention. Open positions are posted internally so that current employees may pursue opportunities for advancement. Success has been achieved in reaching a goal of selecting 80% of the management team from internal candidates.

### PRIMARY PROCESSING JOB MULTIPLIER: Meat Packing → Canadian Jobs

Critical jobs performed by foreign workers in the meat industry do not reduce jobs for the unemployed. Rather, **international agri-food workers sustain thousands of jobs for Canadians.** For example, one foreign origin tenderloin puller creates work for seven tenderloin trimmers who can be recruited domestically. **One foreign origin chuck deboner creates work for six chuck trimmers who can be recruited domestically.** Stated differently, one missing chuck deboner requires that the chain speed be slowed significantly. This results in an important reduction in animals acquired, meat produced, revenue received, global competitiveness and business sustainability.

### **Effective HR Practises and Overcoming Language Barriers**

The human resources department is supplemented with a training team composed of a career development manager, a training supervisor, and 22 production floor trainers. The latter teach and train new employees the very specific knowledge, skills and techniques required in the industry. English as a Second Language classes are provided to foreign employees and Rosetta Stone licenses are offered to all employees who wish to improve their English speaking skills or learn another language.

### **Hiring New Canadians and Refugees**

Notwithstanding the company's proven best practices commitment to the utilization of every option to maximize the recruitment and retention of Canadians, it is not possible to operate a major meat processing establishment **in rural Alberta in a competitive manner without access to some foreign workers to supplement the availability of willing and able Canadians.**

This holds true throughout the meat processing sector. One meat processing company reports 80% of the TFWs hired are achieving Permanent Residency. Employers often provide full relocation and settlement assistance to new workers. Once employed the worker is also provided access to full benefit packages which typically include life insurance, disability insurance, health, dental and pension coverage at little or no cost to the worker. Despite these attractive offerings, experience demonstrates that there is an overall insufficient labor pool of appropriate candidates within Canada.

Meat processing companies often partner with settlement agencies and collaborate with provincial settlement services to employ newcomers with various activities including participating in job fairs for newcomers close to the settlement services facilities. They hold information sessions with settlement agencies and employment counsellors, providing information pamphlets to enable them to refer candidates to meat processing plants.

One meat processing plant has been advised that the Syrians are not yet ready for employment and are still in the settlement and are still with job readiness preparation stage.

### **Rural Location Challenge**

In the context of a domestic labour market that does not require workers to relocate to areas where jobs are available, and an immigration program that no longer supports the needs of the livestock and meat sector, the meat processing industry must retain access to foreign origin when reasonable avenues of domestic recruitment have been exhausted.

## Case Study 7 –Sheep Value Chain (Ontario Primary Processing)

---

### WAGE RANGE AND BENEFITS:

#### Sheep Abattoir Operation Wage Range in Ontario: (Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency)

- **Entry Level:** \$17.40 sheep abattoir worker/meat cutter (no experience, offering on-the-job training)
- **Experienced:** \$22.00 per hour experienced meat cutter

The largest sheep, goat and veal abattoir in Ontario employs 40 employees with 6 international agri-food workers. It supplies grocery stores with meat in the Toronto area where this is a growing demand from the ethnic population for meat products their company provides.

The abattoir participates in extensive Canadian domestic recruitment activities and advertising and has tracked the results of recent recruitment initiative.

#### A Summary related to their Recruitment initiative includes:

- 22 resumes (4 were from out of country)
- Scheduled 18 interviews
- 14 showed up for interviews
- 11 were hired
- 3 additional were hired and did not show up for the start date

#### A Summary of the Retention is as follows:

- 3 quit after 2 days
- 2 quit after 4 days
- 4 quit after 5 days
- 1 quit after 19 days
- 1 quit after 22 days

There were no net gains from this Recruitment initiative from the Canadian domestic workforce.

## **Case Study 8 –Lobster Processing Recruitment Efforts (Seafood Value Chain/ Atlantic Canada Primary Processing)**

---

### **WAGE RANGE & BENEFITS**

#### **Seafood Plant Wage Range (Nova Scotia Fisheries Sector Council 2014 survey)**

- **Entry Level:** \$10.50 (no experience, offers on-the-job training)
- **Average Wage:** \$13.13 per hour for Nova Scotia seafood plant worker
- **Experienced:** \$18.00 per hour wage for seafood plant workers

#### **Incentives & Benefits**

- Salary increase plant wide- Advertised. Pay well above the minimum & median wage requirements for the province;
- Increased Bonus payouts – Effectively DOUBLED the previous year bonus, without changing target levels;
- Implementation of Medical Dental Group Insurance Benefits under process;
- Flexible scheduling – accommodating religious practices, part time, summer employment.

---

A chronic labour shortage continues to grow in the seafood processing plants. Hardest hit is the lobster sector in three critical areas:

- Southern New Brunswick,
- Eastern PEI and
- Northern Nova Scotia.

#### **Lobster Processing Case Study**

A family-owned lobster processing plant in Atlantic Canada with third generation roots located in New Brunswick currently ships to Canadian consumers as well as exports to US, Asian, and European Markets. The business employs much of the local rural community for decades. They believe they have a responsibility to their community to continue to provide Canadian jobs.

#### **Recruitment Activities include:**

- Aggressively advertising in multiple venues- print, online, HRSDC, AHS, Internal, Social Media ( some success, ultimately not all venues offer the best method of recruitment vs value);
- Actively engaged in Open House recruitment through word of mouth, employee recommendation, advertisement through employment councilors & case managers locally;
- Actively maintaining an electronic resume log of all past and new applicants – that can be used for cold calling;
- Asked for coaching & training commitments from management teams on the production floor;
- Reached out to MAGMA, Corrections Canada to search for hidden labor pools;
- Tested part time – limited hours shifts to aid in requests for revised –lightened work schedules for our older Canadian Staff;
- Implemented performance tracking- feedback and appraisals in the plant. No longer tolerating poor performance or behaviors has helped to keep the integrity of the work for those who take pride in it;
- Developing a strategic long term recruitment plan of action; and
- Continuing to work on finding new sources of labor opportunities.

#### **Recruitment Results Tracked:**

- Held 6 open house “Spring hire seminars” – the group setting has proven to be less intimidating for new hires and offered us a larger pool of candidates- along with an opportunity to pinpoint our advantages to new applicants;
- Offered free training 3 hours in length to cover job descriptions & expectations, food safety training, health & safety, code of conduct training, open question period. OPEN to all attendees of OPEN house and existing staff.

- 406 new applicants:
  - 29 persons were not suited to the work requirements;
  - 61 refused the job after orientation completion;
  - 56 Quit;
  - 26 Quit – for a different job;
  - 14 Fired;
  - The remainder of hired applicants – never showed up to the work premises. For the first day of work. Spring Season during PEAK, many of our employees worked over 72 hours per week due to GAP in employees;
  - To date 406 new applicants have yielded 53 remaining new employees.

**The following is a list of Recruitment activities and steps the Lobster and other Seafood employers have been undertaking:**

- Year Round Advertisements in Print: English & French;
- Year Round Advertisements on Web: HRSDC Job Bank, Kijiji;
- Timed Advertisements on Web: Career Beacon;
- Creation of an Email Account – for Resume’s Only;
- Electronic Job Logs – tracking and updating status of call lists for new applicants;
- Call lists given on a daily basis to production team for new hires;
- Internal Postings: IN House Promotion, Department Changes;
- Internal Postings: Recommendations from outside- leads given by employees;
- Local Mass Hire Meetings – Walk in attendance Open to all Public- Every year prior to Spring Open Intake forms at main office reception;
- Message system to call in- looking for work- and availability for those with no other means to use a computer etc. No resume etc;
- Corrections Canada – Community Employment Coordinator;
- Placement for reformed convicts returning to the workforce;
- MAGMA – Multicultural Association Access to NEW Landed immigrants to this area;
- Student programs local High School Bursary Program;
- International University student do not require a work permit;
- AHS – Atlantic Human Services Diversified Employment Solutions;
- Transition to Work Services;
- Car Pool Groups from outside the area; and
- Bus Transportation available on a daily basis to and from work.

**Canadian Workforce Entrant Targets**

- Older workforce – current “CORE” Canadian Crew Average Age 57- some with 20-30 + years in the industry;
- New Canadian hires – through open house recruiting;
- Newly Landed Canadian Residents- specifically we see a large number of from Romania- and we act as a stepping stone into the local workforce;
- International Students –UdeM – we hired 25 + for summer employment between studies;
- Ex-offenders;
- Persons with disabilities;
- Persons Transitioning from Social Services, persons re-entering the workforce working with AHS.

**Recruitment Regulatory Barriers**

One of the major recruitment barriers is the actual “job Bank” system which only allows for fixed fields of information rather than allowing the benefits of the industry to be promoted. The Seafood industry is working with a number of domestic special needs employees within the current workforce.



## Case Study 9 - Seafood Processing Plants (Seafood Value Chain/Bay of Fundy, Atlantic Canada Primary Processing)

---

### Recruitment Example Bay of Fundy

Atlantic Canada's **Bay of Fundy Business Council** outlines employment requirements in Charlotte County region. The Charlotte County workforce needs 249 workers to be integrated into production just to maintain levels and not shrink our productivity.

The greatest urgency is attached to **155 positions**. Of these, 48 are currently filled with TFWs. **The employer needs these workers for long term work, and plans to convert them to a permanent resident track.** The NBPNP has some positions available within existing quota, but conditions for acceptance into PNP are tight and only applicable for full time employment, while **many seafood processing jobs only offer seasonal employment, making it very difficult to bring new workers in under PNP under existing guidelines.** The seafood sector businesses continue to go to great lengths to try to recruit domestic Canadian workers to staff unfilled jobs. **Efforts include Advertising:**

- Career Beacon,
- HRDC,
- Kijiji,
- Saint Croix Courier
- Charlotte County Money Saver
- On "sandwich boards" along the roads
- On community notice boards

### Example Job Fair 1

For example: a Job Fair was held in Saint John at the Hampton Inn. A city bus route provides easy access to this hotel. Advertising to promote the Job Fair:

- Colour full-page ad in the Saint John Telegraph-Journal;
- Two days of radio ads in Saint John;
- Ads posted at the hotel the weekend before the Job Fair.

**Recruitment Results Tracked:** The result reported by one business at Job Fair: 10 people attended: all 10 were offered employment but only 3 accepted and they quit in two days, after working 2 shifts, (citing travel-related issues).

### Example Job Fair 2

A Job Fair was held at the Work Room at Agar Place, Saint John. Notice of this job fair was sent to:

- All multicultural centers in Saint John;
- YMCA, Newcomers association;
- Posted at the work room as well (this is the same building as Employment Insurance, Social Development and Post-Secondary Education Training and Labour).

### Recruitment Results Tracked

11 attended; 1 was hired for one operation and 1 for another. 9 either had no transportation or did not meet requirements (example: no criminal record). Businesses have advertised across First Nations communities for workers, but have had very little success attracting workers.

## Case Study 10 - Integrated Fishing & Processing Operation (Seafood Value Chain/Newfoundland, Atlantic Canada Primary Processing)

---

A Newfoundland-based international seafood company with extensive harvesting and processing assets throughout Newfoundland and Atlantic Canada. The business is vertically integrated and includes: seafood harvesting, processing and marketing with 5 processing facilities and a fleet of 6 offshore fishing vessels with sales offices around the globe. Sells a diversified range of seafood from Atlantic Canada to over 500 customers in over 35 countries around the world. Annual sales are in excess of \$250 million and include crab, shrimp, scallops, yellowtail flounder, various Groundfish and pelagic species. The business is a leader in Marine Certified sustainable fisheries with more than 90% of its species either MSC certified or in assessment.

At the front line of sustainability is technology and innovation and the business is a leader in research and development and participates in development and implementation of new technology and innovation

As a company they also invest in their workforce which they recognize as their our most important resource.

### **Ageing demographic and lack of fish processing skills**

Currently, the average age of a plant worker is between 55 and 58 years. The business is continuously challenged in finding workers willing to work in the industry and in particular **workers with the skill set required** for many of the different types of jobs. It is extremely difficult to recruit and retain skilled workers as the seafood sector is competing with the more lucrative oil and gas and the construction industries.

### **Recruitment efforts include a combination of the following initiatives:**

- 1) Association with the post-secondary schools throughout the province including partnerships on research initiatives with the Marine Institute of Memorial University. The company sponsors annual scholarships at both the Marine Institute, and Memorial University.
- 2) Communication and cooperation with the various towns where they operate throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. They work with the local towns and with the Union representatives at each facility for recruitment initiatives within the communities.
- 3) Advertising in the local papers, bulletin boards within the company facilities and in the community as well as advertising on the local TV ad channels. Also, advertisement and publication of jobs in the provincial newspapers including the Telegram (NF), Halifax Herald (NS).
- 4) On-line advertisement has become a major part of recruitment efforts and we advertising on various job banks such as JOBSNL, Career Beacon and Workopolis.
- 5) They work with various industry associations using the expertise of others and the opportunities within the industry for recruitment. Ex: Association of Seafood Producers, COMPASS Association.
- 6) They have an internal policy of recruitment and advancement within our operations and encourage all our employees to make use of training and opportunities within our organization.
- 7) They access available programming such as the Canada-NL Job Grant program to allow for enhanced training funding to assist our employees in acquiring new skills for longer term career opportunities.

---

<sup>i</sup> <http://www.cahrc-ccrha.ca/sites/default/files/WAP%20Update%20ENG.pdf> page 8, 10

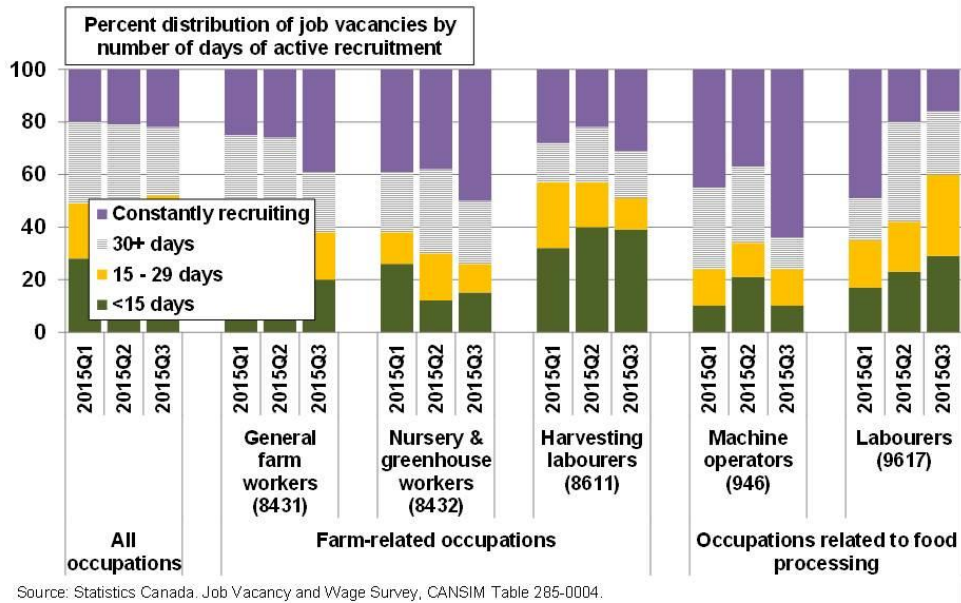
# APPENDIX

## STATISTICS CANADA: AGRICULTURAL RECRUITMENT

Statistics Canada's Job Vacancy and Wage Survey (JVWS) data shows that agriculture has higher job vacancy rates than most other sectors in Canada. Agricultural employers are "constantly recruiting" according to these statistics.

### Agriculture and Agri-Food Labour Market Information Update

#### "Constantly recruiting" is more likely for farm and food-related job vacancies, Canada



Source: Statistics Canada. Job Vacancy and Wage Survey, CANSIM Table 285-0004.

RayD.Bollman@sasktel.net

1

## RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES FARMERS ARE PARTICIPATING IN TRACKED BY OCCUPATION

Recruitment strategies, ranked by percent of firms reporting each recruitment strategy for all occupations		Selected farm-related occupations			Selected occupations related to food processing			
		All occupations	General farm workers (8431)	Nursery & greenhouse workers (8432)	Harvesting labourers (8611)	Machine operators & related workers in food, beverage & assoc products processing (946)	Labourers in food, beverage & associated products processing (9617)	Labourers in fish & seafood processing (9618)
Percent of firms reporting each recruitment strategy								
Online job boards	2Q2015	67	48	74	80	72	69	79
	3Q2015	66	54	78	51	83	59	96
Personal contacts, referrals, informal networks	2Q2015	66	61	70	76	67	69	42
	3Q2015	66	66	75	81	79	71	46
Company website	2Q2015	54	11	21	F	40	37	F
	3Q2015	53	12	F	11	52	41	68
Social media	2Q2015	35	12	29	F	27	19	14
	3Q2015	33	18	F	F	45	19	52
Government employment centre or website	2Q2015	30	52	65	56	44	49	81
	3Q2015	26	33	59	53	74	39	45
Posting a "help-wanted" sign on the storefront of the location	2Q2015	21	25	18	F	29	18	41
	3Q2015	23	9	33	12	52	28	24
Newspaper ads	2Q2015	22	40	50	61	51	28	74
	3Q2015	21	35	47	39	66	33	96
Job or recruitment fairs at schools, colleges or universities	2Q2015	22	8	9	F	27	17	50
	3Q2015	18	5	F	F	40	19	30
Professional networking, headhunters or employment agency	2Q2015	15	18	F	F	10	9	F
	3Q2015	16	7	F	F	29	23	F
Other recruitment strategies	2Q2015	8	8	F	F	25	F	72
	3Q2015	8	21	F	F	18	9	F

"...": not available; "F": too unreliable to publish due to small sample size; "x": data suppressed to meet the requirements of the Statistics Act.  
Source: Statistics Canada. Job Vacancy and Wage Survey, CANSIM Table 285-0004.