



CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL  
HUMAN RESOURCE COUNCIL

CONSEIL CANADIEN POUR LES  
RESSOURCES HUMAINES EN AGRICULTURE

CAHRC-CCRHA

**REPORT:**  
NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPANDING THE AGRICULTURAL  
WORKFORCE PILOT PROJECTS WITH UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS

Brought to you by:  
Canadian Ag HR Council





## Table of Contents

Section	Section Title	Page
1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	Methodology	1
3.0	Common Success Criteria Across the Case Studies	2
4.0	Case Studies	3
	Highline Mushrooms	3
	University of Manitoba	6
	Leads Employment Services	8
	First Nations Agriculture Association	11
	Saskatchewan Abilities Council	12
	Link Up Employment Services	14
	PEI Association of Newcomers to Canada	15
	Saugeen First Nation Amphitheatre	18
	Saskatchewan Indian Equity Foundation	19
	Centres d'emplois Agricole (CEA) of the Union des Producteurs Agricoles	21
	Kitchen Partners	25
	Maple Leaf Foods (Pork)	26
	Van Raay Paskal Farms	27
	HyLife	28
5.0	Appendix A - Case Study Interview Template	30



## 1.0 Introduction

The Competency Group began working with the CAHRC in August 2014 on a research project investigating opportunities and barriers to participation among traditionally under-represented groups in the Canadian workforce. Through conducting research and an environmental scan of existing information on labour force development, three under-represented groups were recommended for further investigation. These three groups were: Aboriginal people, Immigrants, and Persons with Disabilities. With each group in mind, barriers to employment were investigated through one-on-one interviews and a series of online and in-person focus groups.

As this project was conducted, it became clear there were opportunities to increase participation among all three under-represented groups rather than just one. As a result, the CAHRC has asked for three pilot project plans to be developed - one for each under-represented group. Upon completion, one group will be selected to participate in the initial pilot project funded by the CAHRC. The remaining two pilot projects will be ready to proceed pending funding arrangements.

## 2.0 Methodology

The methodology for the pilot project development includes several phases of activities. These include:

- Identifying innovative approaches to increase agricultural employment (14 success case studies);
- Identifying common success criteria across 10 case studies;
- Identifying parameters of 3 pilot projects;
- Developing backgrounders to invite participation of under-represented groups and employers;
- Identifying agencies interested in participating in a pilot project;
- Identifying employers interested in participating in a pilot project; and
- Developing project plans for each pilot project.

This report will summarize the first two activities. It will identify the common success criteria heard during the interviews, and will conclude with fourteen written case studies.

### **Identify Innovative Approaches via Fourteen Case Study Investigations**

Through previous phases of research, potential success stories were identified by project stakeholders (e.g., interviewees, focus group participants, addressing barriers working group members, advisory committee members). In addition, project stakeholders were asked for recommendations during an in-person meeting in Ottawa in March 2015. Email invitations and follow-up telephone calls were made to schedule interviews to develop the ten case studies. The consultants conducted three recorded interviews per under-represented group using an interview guide which was developed specific to this project. The interview guide can be found in Appendix A, page 25.

### **Interviewees**

The consultants conducted seventeen interviews in total then selected fourteen for case study development. The interviewees chosen for case studies are:

#### Aboriginal People

- Jennifer Kewageshig - Saugeen First Nation Amphitheatre
- Sally Harvey - Landscape Ontario
- Terry Brodziak - Saskatchewan Indian Equity Foundation Inc.



- Trevor Kempthorne - First Nations Agriculture Association
- Jeremy Janzen - HyLife

#### Immigrants

- Allen Tyrchnicz - University of Manitoba, Internationally Educated Agrologists Post-Baccalaureate Diploma Program
- Chuck Stallard - Highline Mushrooms
- Jennifer Jeffrey - PEI Association of Newcomers to Canada
- Robert Ouellet - Agriculture Employment Centre of the Union des Producteurs Agricoles
- Jeff Clark & Desiree Robertson - Kitchen Partners
- Severin Habetler - Maple Leaf Pork
- Jolayne Farn - Van Raay Paskal Farms

#### Persons with Disabilities

- Bob Santos - Link Up Employment Services
- Cory Quigley - Saskatchewan Abilities Council - Partners in Employment
- Jeff Withers - Leads Employment Services

### **Identify Common Success Criteria Across Fourteen Case Studies**

The consultants reviewed the interview guide recordings to identify common success criteria. The common criteria can be found in the following section, Section 3.

## **3.0 Common Success Criteria Across the Case Studies**

The case studies were reviewed to identify common factors that contributed to successful employment of the under-represented groups as outlined below.

### **Excellent Partnerships Between Employment Agencies and Employers**

The case studies identified examples of employment agencies that had established long-standing positive relations with employers. The agencies actively sought out employers to find employment opportunities for their clients. They took initiative to fully understand the job requirements by visiting job sites to observe the work being performed. They were committed to maintaining open and trusting relationships that would be sustained over the long term. The case studies also identified examples of employers who valued the development of long standing positive relationships with employment agencies. In both cases, the working relationships between employers and employment agencies were viewed as partnerships that benefited both clients and employers.

### **Presence of a Champion**

The case studies identified many “champions” either in employment agencies or businesses who were highly committed to the cause of successfully placing individuals at work. These individuals illustrated excellent leadership skills, enthusiasm, and commitment to positive working relationships with partners, belief in the skills and abilities of employees, as well as excellent coordination and project management skills.

### **Commitment to Follow Up and Address Work Placement Problems**

A critical aspect of successful employment of members of under-represented groups is providing follow up and support to clients on the job and finding solutions for problems that interfere with their success. The case studies illustrated that problems with work placements do occur; however, with regular follow up and support,



solutions can usually be found that result in a positive employment outcome. Employers need to feel comfortable about identifying problems and both the agency and employer need to be open and flexible to find workable solutions.

### **Win-win for Employer and Client**

A consistent finding among the case studies interviewees was a belief that both the individual and the employer should benefit from the job placement. Representatives of employment agencies were committed to placing their clients in jobs that improved the profitability of the business at the same time providing their clients with rewarding work.

### **Strong Coordination and Project Management**

The case studies highlighted many examples of excellent coordination, project management, and networking. The organizational and administrative skills of the project coordinators of several projects were cited as a key reason for the project's success.

### **Address of the Unique Aspects of the Under-represented Groups**

The case studies illustrated the commitment of both employment agencies and employers to recognize and address the unique aspects of each group in order to create effective job placements. Aboriginal people, persons with disabilities, and immigrants each have unique characteristics that must be considered for successful employment outcomes. A cookie-cutter approach will not result in successful employment for any of the under-represented groups. There is no quick fix.

### **A Plan to Address Transportation Challenges**

Transportation was consistently identified as a significant employment barrier among the under-represented groups. There were some examples of companies that have devised methods to overcome it and suggestions for how the barrier could be addressed. Without a commitment to address the transportation issue it seems unlikely that members of the under-represented groups will be able to be successfully employed in agriculture outside of urban areas.

## **4.0 Case Studies**

### **Highline Mushrooms**

#### **Experience Employing Immigrants**

---

#### **Company Background**

The head office of Highline Mushrooms is located in Leamington, Ontario. The interview to develop this case study was conducted with Chuck Stallard, Corporate HR Manager at Highline Mushrooms.

Highline Mushrooms was founded in 1961 by Dr. Murray O'Neil. The company has four growing facilities (two in Leamington, Ontario; one in Kingsville, Ontario; and one in Wellington, Ontario) and a distribution centre based in Montreal, Quebec. The following company description is drawn from the company's website:

"From humble beginnings, we have grown to become the largest mushroom grower in Canada. We can attribute this to a number of factors; however, there are three fundamental principles that have guided us throughout the years: Focus on Excellence – "First we will be best, *then* we will be first." – Dr. Murray O'Neil; Associate Care – we are a family business and every Associate is a member of our family; Customer Service – our customers



deserve the very best from us. With a passion for quality and innovation, Highline has driven to the forefront of many great technological advances in the North American mushroom industry. Our highly developed cropping techniques have enabled us to grow all white, mini-bella and portabella mushrooms without the use of any pesticides or fungicides regularly required in the cultivation of mushrooms.” Source: <http://www.highlinemushrooms.com/en/about> accessed March 15, 2015.

### **The Highline Mushrooms Story**

Approximately 70 percent of Highline Mushrooms' employees are new Canadians. For many immigrants, Highline is their 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 interview with Chuck Stallard identified several key aspects of Highline Mushrooms' approach to employing immigrants including recruitment, overcoming transportation barriers, overcoming language barriers, new hire orientation, supervisory and leadership development, effective HR practices, and key success factors.

### **Recruitment**

Highline Mushrooms approaches immigrant organizations to communicate that they have rewarding, meaningful work available at a fair wage. The Highline Mushrooms 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, Highline has continued to be a front runner providing job opportunities for immigrants in the Haitian, Sudanese, Cambodian, Arabic, and Asian communities. Highline 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. Highline hires immigrants for all jobs. Half of their associates do harvesting work; the other half are involved in maintenance and labour jobs, skilled trades, operating farm equipment, supervisory, and accounting jobs. Highline 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 Highline job requirements.

The Highline 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 Highline presence at these community events typically results in job applications from members of the immigrant communities. Current Highline employees also tell others in their communities about job opportunities at Highline.

### **Overcoming Transportation Barriers**

Employees who live in Leamington or Wellington are close to Highline 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, Highline 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**

Highline provides second language training two days per week on site after work. The company pays any costs related to the training. If employees' shifts run late, Highline provides them time off from work to attend classes.



Highline 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 Highline may use Google Translate as well. Typical items for translation include health and safety messages and the bi-weekly corporate newsletter.

Highline uses photos without text for training purposes, for example, photos of packing techniques and photos illustrating desired mushroom quality. Highline uses a minimum amount of text as many Canadian-born employees have literacy issues as well.

### **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. Highline 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**

Highline 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**

Highline implements low cost, big return human resources practices. For example, they have a Values in Action Program that encourages employees to uphold Highline Mushrooms' values of excellence: Care, Respect, Effort, Integrity, Openness, and Fairness. They recognize employees who demonstrate the Highline 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 for Highline clothing. 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.

### **Key Success Factors**

Chuck Stollard, Corporate HR Manager of Highline Mushrooms identified the following key factors for successful employment of immigrants:

- Businesses must:
  - Make full use of the services offered by community job partners.
  - Maintain an open dialogue with job partners. If something does not work, the company must be open about it and be willing to work with the job partners to make improvements.
  - Make themselves attractive to new Canadians by providing good and meaningful work at fair pay.
  - Make efforts to communicate with new Canadians so that they feel at home in the workplace.
  - Make communications available in the languages of the immigrants.
  - Ensure that good recruitment processes are in place. They should not hire people just for the sake of hiring them.
- Front line supervisors must appreciate that employees come from different cultures with different life experiences. Immigrants may not immediately understand what is expected of them. Front line supervisors must be patient and be willing to explain things a second way, if necessary. Supervisors must



use flexible approaches to get their messages across to immigrant employees, for example, performing the job together with the employees.

## University of Manitoba

### Internationally Educated Agrologists Post-Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IEAP)

The Internationally Educated Agrologists Post-Baccalaureate Diploma Program is a Post-Baccalaureate Diploma Program offered by the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences at the University of Manitoba. The program assists new Manitobans with an agricultural degree from outside of Canada to achieve meaningful work in their field, and to help the Manitoba agricultural industry discover new talent. The program is a pathway for Internationally Educated Agrologists (IEAs) to gain formal recognition of their non-Canadian credentials by the Manitoba Institute of Agrologists (MIA), the professional regulatory body for Agrologists in Manitoba. The program facilitates the integration of foreign-trained agrologists into the Canadian agriculture sector. The interview to develop this case study was conducted with Allen Tyrchniewicz, a consulting agrologist who is an instructor in the program. [NOTE: Allen Tyrchniewicz prefers to remove his name if the case study is published.]

#### Program Background

The Manitoba Institute of Agrologists identified that many Internationally Educated Agrologists within Manitoba are unable to use their skills. They possess the necessary knowledge but lack knowledge of Canadian agriculture. This recognition led to the development of a pilot program for Internationally Educated Agrologists. The University of Manitoba website contains the following description of the program:

“The IEAP began as a pilot program in 2007 with a partnership between: Government of Manitoba, Labour and Immigration (Funder), Manitoba Institute of Agrologists (Regulatory Body), Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences, University of Manitoba (Operator). An individual must be a registered member of the Manitoba Institute of Agrologists (MIA) in order to be licensed to practice the profession of Agrology in Manitoba. This program provides a process whereby Internationally Educated Agrologists (IEAs) can meet the minimum knowledge requirements of the MIA in order to qualify for the Professional Agrologist (P.Ag.) designation in Manitoba. So far, the IEAs that have joined the IEAP are Canadian Citizens and/or permanent residents who came from 25 different countries, including: Bangladesh, Bolivia, China, Colombia, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Macedonia, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia, Rwanda, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and Sudan. In 2012, after 5 years of its pilot phase, the IEAP became a permanent Post-Baccalaureate Diploma Program at the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences at the University of Manitoba.”

Source: <http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/afs/ieap/1792.html> accessed March 8, 2015.

#### Features of Internationally Educated Agrologists Post-Baccalaureate Diploma Program

##### Program Promotion

Typically an internationally educated agrologist (IEA) comes into the Manitoba Institute of Agrologists (MIA). MIA assesses their credentials to determine what they need to qualify for a professional agrologist designation. If the individual is missing only Canadian agriculture experience, MIA suggests they take the IEAP program. The individual submits an application to the program. The IEAP programs looks for students that are very keen to practice agriculture and work with farmers. The IEAP evaluates if the applicant is a good fit for the program. Not everyone is accepted. There are 15 students per year accepted into the program.



The program is also advertised in immigrant serving agencies where new immigrants would typically go for services. Many people find out about the program by word of mouth. The program often receives applications from outside of Manitoba because of word of mouth recommendations.

### **Program Structure**

The program structure as defined in the University of Manitoba website is as follows:

“The IEAP is a full-time program to be completed in 12 months. Foreign-trained agrologists that qualify for the program are required to complete a minimum of eight courses at the University of Manitoba as selected by the Advisory Committee of the IEAP Program. The eight months of academic training are followed by a four-month co-op work experience. The academic course work provides an opportunity for the foreign-trained agrologists to demonstrate and confirm their technical and professional competency in the Canadian context. The four-month work experience addresses the challenge of lack of Canadian work experience. The work experience is a paid cooperative opportunity in which the foreign-trained agrologist is hired by and works for an agricultural company. Courses are selected based on: Educational, background, Agricultural background experience, Intended scope of practice.”

Students pay tuition to participate in the program. They are also directed to any support funding that may be available.

Source: <http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/afs/ieap/1795.html> accessed March 8, 2015.

### **Curriculum**

The IEAP works with students to find out what they hope to accomplish by completing the program. The IEAP evaluates each student’s scope of expertise and develops a customized curriculum for them focused on their area of expertise. All students must take a course in agri-business and a course in business communications where they learn about Canadian business culture such as the handshake and how to make eye contact. Students also take a course in practicing the profession of agrology. This course introduces students to the nature of agriculture in Manitoba and Canada, for example, the common types of crops and animals in Canadian farming. Students are also provided with additional resources to find information. Students select a commodity they want to work with throughout the year. They do a number of projects relating to the commodity, for example, understand processing, wholesaling, marketing, and regulatory bodies related to the commodity. Students are introduced to the potential areas of employment for their areas of expertise. The program includes tours of farm operations, and opportunities to meet with farm organizations, government officials and CEOs of larger companies who talk about business risk management and the future of farming. The program places a great deal of emphasis on building networking skills. Students find out the key people they should meet in their areas of speciality.

### **Co-op Job Placement and Mentoring**

Students are expected to find their own co-op job placements. The program assists by suggesting possible options for work placements, and by offering career planning advice and assistance with resume development. After completion of the co-op placement, students become qualified to register with the Manitoba Institute of Agrologists. At that point, they are assigned a mentor who works with them on a professional basis. Mentors stay in contact for several years to see how the graduates are progressing.

### **Key Success Factors**



The program is very successful. The program opens doors, teaches students how to network, and helps them succeed. One-hundred percent of graduates have been successful in finding employment. Employers often seek out program graduates because of the valuable skills they develop in the program. In the past the program would invite employers to present to their students. Now employers are asking to present to class and often ask their human resources staff as well.

Most of the Internationally Educated Agrologists who come to the program have experienced difficulties finding work in their areas of specialty in Canada and are motivated to find good jobs. This drive is critical to their success. They have tried searching for jobs on their own and understand that they need help. After completing the program, graduates say the program gave them the kick start that was needed to launch their careers in Canada.

One major factor for the program's success is the presence of a coordinator who understands the needs of immigrants and identifies what they want to accomplish. The program coordinator was an immigrant and naturally understands the needs of the immigrants. She follows up with the students and employers during job placements. She interviews both parties. If there are issues, she helps to work them out.

Other key success factors include:

- the emphasis on learning about Canadian cultural practices;
- the emphasis of helping students learn the appropriate way to network and how to develop their own networks;
- the small class size of no more than 15 students allows for greater individual learning and facilitates improved learning opportunities during site visits and tours of agricultural operations; and
- the creation of customized courses which are separate from the existing university courses.

A quote from a former student describes the success of the program:

"For people with an agriculture background from a different country like me, the IEAP Program offers not only technical knowledge about Canadian agriculture but also cultural experience in professional, work and other various actual Canadian settings. The Program was instrumental to me in getting a meaningful job and in establishing my career in agrology in Canada." ~ Richard Balog, P.Ag. (2008-09)

Source: <http://umanitova.ca/faculties/afs/ieap/1812.html> accessed March 8, 2015.

## Leads Employment Services

### Placing Persons with Disabilities in Agricultural Employment

---

#### Organization Background

Leads Employment Services is a not-for-profit employment and skills development agency founded in 1986. The interview to develop this case study was conducted with Jeff Withers, Manager, Employment and Skills Development Services.

Leads Employment Services provides employment and skills development services throughout London, Elgin, Huron, Lambton, Middlesex, Oxford, and Perth counties of Ontario. Leads has approximately 80 employees and is funded by Service Canada, Ontario Ministry of Community Services, and Ontario Works. The organization provides assistance to people above the age of 15 who have physical, mental health, development and learning disabilities. Leads Employment Services has placed more than 13,000 candidates. Their clients earn competitive



wages working for well-respected public, private, and not-for-profit sector employers. The organization's services include:

- Needs analysis – Leads assesses the position available, the employer's organizational requirements and the qualifications of the employer's preferred candidate.
- Pre-screened candidates – Leads reviews candidates' experience and identifies the individuals that best fit the employment opportunity by presenting the employer with a shortlist of only the most qualified individuals.
- Employee follow-up – Once an individual is placed, Leads provides follow-up services for the employers and the new employee. Leads endeavors to build lasting relationships with employers and focuses on providing services in a way that meets employers' future goals, growth and opportunities.

Source: <http://www.leadsservices.com/index.html> accessed March 5, 2015.

### **The Leads Employment Services Story**

Leads counsellors have placed clients in food processing plants and on farms to perform jobs such as milking and working with crops. The interview with Jeff Withers identified several key aspects of Leads Employment Services' approach to finding job placements for persons with disabilities including client assessment, finding job opportunities, making the job match, building relationships with employers, and client follow up.

#### **Client Assessment**

Leads assesses the skill set of the person by using informal assessment methods and formal assessments provided by referral agencies such as the school system and The March of Dimes, for example.

#### **Finding Job Opportunities**

Leads counsellors find potential job opportunities through a lot of "hands-on" work. They do outreach into the community, knocking on employers' doors, making phone calls, attending Chamber of Commerce networking meetings, and getting referrals from other employers. In some cases, referrals may arise from clients' families.

#### **Making the Job Match**

Counsellors go onsite to meet with employers to fully understand their needs. They try to make a match that provides the employer with a productive employee while at the same time providing the client with the opportunity to successfully perform and maintain the job. If clients are not able to fully perform some jobs, the counsellor will propose making adjustments to the job to suit the abilities of the client. This process is commonly called job carving.

#### **Building Relationships with Employers**

Leads has built up a good working relationship over the years with a food processing plant in their area. Their counsellors are well aware of the skill sets that are needed in the plant so are able to make a good match with their clients, being cautious to make only appropriate skills matches. Counsellors tour the plant in order to understand the job requirements and the needs of the employer. They usually place clients who live close to the food processing plant as the area is not served by public transport. Leads counsellors endeavor to build positive, long-term relationships with employers, so that employers will see them as an effective service to call upon when they are looking for workers.

#### **Client Follow Up**

When a client is placed, Leads counsellors are available for job coaching and to provide training for the client in how to perform the job. Counsellors also provide follow up to make sure the match is working well for both the



employer and the client. There is no guarantee of success that the match will work out; however, if the job match is not working well, counsellors investigate to see if further job accommodations can be made or if a different employee should be placed in the job.

### **Overcoming Transportation Challenges**

Getting to and from the place of employment is one of the biggest challenges for Leads clients. Possible solutions include providing room and board on the worksite, car pooling, and family members driving clients to work.

### **Key Success Factors**

For the client, success is defined in terms of quality of life. Clients feel positive that they are making a contribution. The job can be their reason for getting up in the morning. The paycheck allows them to partake of normal activities like going out to eat lunch and participating in social activities.

For the company, the main measure of success is having an employee that is a positive addition to their labour pool, fits in with their workforce and contributes to the financial success of company. As well as providing a positive return on investment, some employers also think that hiring persons with disabilities is the right thing to do.

Employers must be educated that there is a huge untapped labour pool of persons with disabilities who are keen to be active members of society. Productivity on the job is often higher and absenteeism lower among persons with disabilities. Often employers assume that all persons with disabilities have physical limitations; however, this is not necessarily the case. While persons with disabilities may not be able to do all aspects of the job and may have a longer learning curve, they can make a valuable contribution. There are many support agencies that want to work with farmers to contribute to their success.

The responsibility for this education lies with employment agencies such as Leads Employment Services; however, it can also be assisted by employers such as the Employment Alliance in London, Ontario. The Employment Alliance recognizes businesses that employ persons with disabilities. Businesses who have successfully hired persons with disabilities encourage other employers to hire persons with disabilities.

Jeff Withers, Manager, Employment and Skills Development Services outlined several factors that are key to the successful employment of persons with disabilities:

- Face-to-face conversations to build relationships between the employment counsellor and the employer are critical. Counsellors should speak directly with the farmer or HR person who will hire their client.
- The employment counsellor must follow through on all commitments. If they tell the employer they are going to do something, they must do it.
- Providing on-the job support and job coaching is critical to the success of persons with disabilities.
- Follow up is required to make sure the match is working well, that the client is doing well and happy and that the employer is happy.
- When the job match is not working well, the counsellor must make adjustments.

Jeff Withers also offered the following observations and suggestions:

Over the years, technology has advanced, and safety requirements have increased. New employees need more training which is a considerable expense for farmers. Farmers may think twice about hiring a person with disability to do the job. Persons with disabilities may not be able to work full time; however, may be able to make an excellent contribution in a job sharing arrangement.



Farms are becoming tourism destinations. Persons with disabilities could fill tourism-related roles such as running the petting zoo or selling baked goods.

Sharing success stories of successful employment of persons with disabilities and champions educating others about the capabilities of persons with disabilities are good strategies to promote the successful employment of persons with disabilities.

## **First Nations Agriculture Association**

### **Careers in Agricultural Program - Introduction to Agriculture**

---

#### **First Nations Agriculture Association Background**

The First Nations Agriculture Association (FNAA) assists in the start-up, promotion, and sustainability of Aboriginal agri-businesses in British Columbia. The interview to develop this case study was conducted with Trevor Kempthorne, General Manager, First Nations Agricultural Association, Kamloops, BC.

The FNAA is a leader in the development of sustainable, culturally respectful, Aboriginal agriculture in British Columbia. The organization assists Aboriginal communities and producers to build capacity and develop their agriculture, agri-food, or traditional agricultural-based businesses through the provision of culturally appropriate assistance, marketing, education, and financial products and services; and promotes and advocates on behalf of Aboriginal agriculture in British Columbia.

The association provides business financial services to Aboriginal producers and also build capacity through training and education. FNAA does not have direct funding from any government organization. They sell their services and write funding proposals.

Source: <http://abdc.bc.ca/uaed/other-aboriginal-research-practice-networks/f/first-nations-agriculture-lending-association> accessed March 9, 2015.

#### **Features of the Careers in Agriculture Program - Introduction to Agriculture**

The Careers in Agriculture Program - Introduction to Agriculture Program was a three-year program funded by Service Canada. The FNAA undertook a two-year process to apply for and receive approval for the program. The combination classroom and work placement program was offered in several BC communities with several partners and provided training for 120 students. Ninety percent of program participants were Aboriginal students.

#### **Finding Students**

The FNAA has been in existence since 1978 and has many established connections. They used their network to let people know about the program. They reached out to local organizations in each region to find partners – Aboriginal organizations that provide training opportunities for Aboriginal people. They contacted them to let them know that the program was available and that they could accept up to 15 students from each community to train them to work in agriculture.

#### **Curriculum**

The introductory program included six weeks of class time and ten weeks of practical work experience. The curriculum was based on existing agriculture programs offered by Aljam Community College. Aljam Community College was established by the Aboriginal Agricultural Education Society of British Columbia (AAESBC) and offers



Diplomas in Farming, Horticulture and Culinary. The program included some local adaptations to match local agriculture operations. For example, the program in the Okanagan (BC) focused on orchards and vegetable production while the program in Merritt (BC) focused on cattle ranching. Graduates received a certificate which can be used as credit towards the full diploma programs at Aljam Community College. There is a strong connection within the curriculum to the First Nations culture. For example, when addressing food safety students learned how to process and can the moose meat.

### **Work Placement**

Students were placed in various types of agriculture operations such as organic farms, greenhouse production and food processing. Students' wages for work placement were subsidized for four weeks. Employers were responsible for paying for the last six weeks of employment.

### **Key Success Factors**

The FNAA is very pleased with the outcome of the program. More than eighty percent of the students completed the full training and practical components of the program. Service Canada intends to conduct an evaluation of the program and hopes to see an employment rate of at least fifty percent among program graduates.

Trevor Kempthorne identified the following key factors for success:

- Good partners are the most important aspect to make the program a success.
- The local partner must have good connections outside the Aboriginal community within the agricultural business community to attract businesses to participate in the program.
- There must be a local coordinator that is living within the community who is well established in the community who helps find students to participate in the program.
- The overall program organizer must provide excellent administration for the program. The FNAA coordinator was responsible to establish partnerships and to ensure they were successful. She visited every community to meet with members of the organizations considering program participation. If the FNAA was not comfortable with what the partner organization could provide they did not go forward with the partnership.
- Well established, standardized curriculum that had been developed over years was a key factor in the success of the program. While there were a few local adaptations, the curriculum offered was essentially the same in every community.
- Utilizing graduates of the program to go into the communities to promote the program proved to be an effective way to recruit new students.

In reflecting on how the program could be improved in the future, Trevor Kempthorne suggested that employers should be required to commit to paying for six weeks of the placement in order to receive the wage subsidy for the first four weeks.

## **The Saskatchewan Abilities Council - Partners in Employment**

### **Placing Persons with Disabilities in Agricultural Employment**

#### **Organization Background**

The Saskatchewan Abilities Council is a registered charity dedicated to providing programs and services to people with disabilities in Saskatchewan. The interview to develop this case study was conducted with Cory Quigley, Choices Job Developer, Partners in Employment.



The Saskatchewan Abilities Council has delivering recreational, rehabilitation, and vocational programs to more than 35,000 people with disabilities throughout Saskatchewan for over 60 years.

The council has branches located in Regina, Saskatoon, Swift Current, and Yorkton. There are also five Partners in Employment offices located in Moose Jaw, Regina, Saskatoon, Swift Current, and Yorkton.

Source: [http://www.abilitiescouncil.sk.ca/html/learn\\_more/about\\_us/index.cfm](http://www.abilitiescouncil.sk.ca/html/learn_more/about_us/index.cfm) accessed March 18, 2015.

The Partners in Employment program provides free employment services for people with disabilities. The program offers employment services to both individuals and employers. Services for individuals are specifically designed to assist individuals with hidden or visible disabilities find and maintain employment including, employment preparation, job placement, job maintenance, supported employment and work experience. Services for employers include collaboration to match qualified candidates to job vacancies, providing pre-screened candidates, on-site training support and on-going follow up.

Source: [http://www.abilitiescouncil.sk.ca/html/work/partners\\_employment/index.cfm](http://www.abilitiescouncil.sk.ca/html/work/partners_employment/index.cfm) accessed March 18, 2015.

### **The Partners in Employment Story**

Many clients of the Partners in Employment Program have indicated an interest in working on farms as they see outside work as a healthy and appealing option; however, the program has had limited experience placing clients on farms because of the transportation barrier. Most clients do not have a driver's license and cannot afford the cost of acquiring one. Most young people in Saskatchewan take drivers education training at school. Many of the program's clients have missed that opportunity.

The Partners in Employment Program has, however, placed clients with Prairie Pride (a poultry processing plant), and Star Eggs (an operation that specializes in the grading, distribution and marketing of shell eggs). The interview with Corey Quigley identified several key aspects of Partners in Employment's approach to finding job placements for persons with disabilities including client assessment, job matching and support and follow-up.

### **Client Assessment**

Clients are assessed to identify where they are best suited to work. They undergo a variety of assessments depending on individual needs. Tests range from intake checklists to vocational evaluation, aptitude testing and tests of eye-hand coordination and mobility. Depending on the individual test results, clients may attend a resume class, attend skills training, or go directly to a job developer to find employment.

### **Job Matching**

The job developer tries to match the skills and personality of the person with a disability with the needs of the employer. The program has many skilled clients; however, if their personalities do not match the jobs, the placements will not be successful. It is much easier for employees to perform and remain employed in jobs they enjoy and have the skills to perform. It is common for the program to invite employers to come in to conduct job interviews with the program's clients. In some cases, employers contact the job developer to say they are hiring and the job developer considers the abilities of clients to find a potential job match.

### **Support and Follow Up**

When a client is placed on the job, an employment specialist will go onsite to make sure the client understands the requirements of the job. Employment specialists follow up on job placements to make sure all is going well



for the employer and the employee. If any issues are identified, the employment specialist makes adjustments as needed so that the person stays employed.

### Key Success Factors

Cory Quigley identified two key factors for successfully employing persons with disabilities:

- Make a positive match of the person's skills and abilities with the requirements of the job.
- Develop methods to address the transportation barriers for persons with disabilities who want to work on farms. Suggested approaches include providing assistance for employees to obtain drivers licences, providing on-farm room and board, providing regular work cycles with extended time on the farm followed by time off the farm (i.e., two weeks on the farm with days off away from the farm), providing central locations for pickup and drop off to transport employees to and from farms. The construction industry in Saskatchewan has developed some methods for transporting employees that could be considered by the agricultural industry.

## Link Up Employment Services for Persons with Disabilities

### Placing Persons with Disabilities in Agricultural Employment

Link Up Employment Services for Persons with Disabilities is a charitable, not-for-profit employment services agency with a head office in the heart of Toronto, Ontario, and a branch office in Woodbridge, Ontario. The interview to develop this case study was conducted with Bob Santos, Executive Director, Link Up Employment Services for Persons with Disabilities.

### Organization Background

Link Up offers a wide array of cross-disability programs and services that have been developed and employed over the years. They conduct a thorough assessment of each job seeker's skills and abilities and a thorough analysis of each employer's particular requirements to match their clients with employers. They provide ongoing support for job seekers through workshops, seminars, and opportunities to meet local business recruiters. Link Up is committed to building partnerships with community organizations and private sector businesses to create programs to assist job seekers in developing employment. The organization places a special emphasis on assisting youth with disabilities to successfully apply their diversity of skills and abilities. Link Up recognizes the importance of safety in the workplace. They collaborate with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board to offer [SafeAbility](#), a health and safety awareness program, to job seekers.

Source: [http://www.linkup.ca/about\\_us.html](http://www.linkup.ca/about_us.html) accessed March 11, 2015.

### The Link Up Story

Link Up provides tools that enable persons with disabilities to be at their full potential in an accessible environment. They promote physical and attitudinal suitability in their job placements. Evaluating how well the disabled person fits into the work environment is also an important consideration for job placement. Link Up has had limited experience placing clients in agricultural jobs as their services focus on the Greater Toronto Area. However, the organization has placed some clients in horse ranching, tomato harvesting, and sod farming.

The horse ranch job placement example illustrates one of the biggest challenges in placing persons with disabilities. Transporting the workers to the horse ranch for early morning work presented a barrier. Link Up clients use public transportation as they do not own cars and cannot afford to buy them; therefore, a transportation company was hired to deliver people to the job. Link Up has received requests from tomato farms in Leamington, Ontario that need seasonal workers to assist with the harvest. Link Up job developers go to



the area to get a better understanding of the jobs. They have sometimes conducted interviews at the Link Up office. Employers are able to explain the job opportunities to a group of prospective employees.

The majority of Link Up clients have mental health challenges and learning disabilities rather than physical disabilities. Bob Santos indicated that these individuals could benefit greatly from working outdoors, working with animals, or working with food products. He provided an example of a former client with schizophrenia who could not work indoors. The client was placed with a sod growing company and eventually became a foreman with the company. The client progressed from being extremely upset to doing very well. Bob Santos sees excellent potential to place persons with disabilities in agricultural jobs. He suggests that the economic benefits of tapping into this non-traditional workforce are great.

### Key Success Factors

Bob Santos identified several key factors for successfully employing persons with disabilities. These include:

- Job placement of persons with disabilities must focus on productivity and profitability at the same time creating an environment where the person can work to their full potential. The job should be a win-win for both the employer and the employee.
- Job matching must be done on a case-by-case basis. A cookie cutter approach will not work. The process begins with data gathering to identify the barriers and then devising a solution. Mr. Santos indicated that there has not been an instance when they have been unable to find a workable solution.
- Transportation presents a major barrier for persons with disabilities to get to job sites. Bob Santos recommends that employers provide in-house residence and transportation back and forth to town for shopping and entertainment.
- Bob Santos pointed out that there is a continuous demand for workers in the Leamington Ontario, an area that is well known for bringing in temporary foreign workers. Persons with disabilities are not the first group to come to mind to fill these jobs. However, he feels that they could be considered to do the work if lodging and transportation are provided. According to Mr. Santos, "We need to use the people in our country."

## PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada

### Placing Immigrant Workers in Agricultural Employment

The PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada (PEI ANC) is a non-profit charitable organization operating in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. The organization provides short-term settlement services, and long-term inclusion and community integration programs for new immigrants in PEI. The interview to develop this case study was conducted with Jennifer Jeffrey, Employment Program Coordinator, PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada.

### Organization Background

The PEI Association of Newcomers to Canada (PEI ANC) offers five key areas of activity to assist immigrants into the PEI workforce. These are: settlement and integration, employment services, language, community outreach, and immigrant student services.

### Settlement and Integration

Settlement and integration programs help newcomers by:

- Assisting with obtaining essential Canadian documents;
- Assisting with registering for available government programs and services;
- Assisting with orientation, translation, interpretation and referral to other service providers;



- Providing guidance and support as they adjust to life in Canada and PEI;
- Offering hands-on training and home visits; and
- Offering information sessions on a wide variety of topics to all newcomers.

### Employment Services

Employment Assistance Services assist newcomers by:

- Assessing strengths and skills;
- Identifying and overcoming employment barriers;
- Providing information about career and educational opportunities;
- Offering referrals to other programs and services;
- Assisting with resumes, cover letters and application forms;
- Developing job search plans; and
- Improving interview skills.

### Language

The PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada also administers language testing to assist with placing newcomers in an appropriate English language training program. The PEI ANC trains interpreters and translators and offers interpretation services for basic settlement needs.

First generation Canadians serve on the volunteer Board of Directors. New immigrants are also employed as staff members of the organization, and contracted to provide interpretation and translation services.

### Community Outreach

The PEI ANC collaborates with other community organizations to connect newcomers with local communities. They provide public education on variety of topics, including: recognizing and eliminating prejudice and discrimination, cultural sensitivity, and cultural diversity. The PEI ANC also provides resources and support to employers interested in hiring newcomers.

### Immigrant Student Services

This program works with school-aged immigrant children by:

- Assisting newcomer families with enrollment of children in school or kindergarten;
- Helping students become successfully integrated into the PEI school system;
- Connecting students with recreational programs; and
- Organizing in-house programs and activities for newcomer children.

Source: [http://www.peianc.com/content/lang/en/page/front\\_home](http://www.peianc.com/content/lang/en/page/front_home) accessed March 29, 2015.

### PEI Association of Newcomers to Canada Story

A previously employed staff member contacted Balderston's Farm Market, located in Stratford, PEI in 2005 to see if they might be interested in employing some of the newly immigrated Bhutanese refugees. The farm agreed. Though the initial connection with Balderston's Farm Market was made before Jennifer was hired by the PEI ANC, she worked to maintain the connection with Allan & Dianne Balderston and assisted with the coordination of employment services between the Bhutanese immigrants and the farm.

Balderston's Farm Market grows a large variety of fruits and vegetables in Stratford, PEI. They also have u-pick flowers, herbs, strawberries, and pumpkins; bakery items; and preserves. What started with a little red wagon set up at the side of the road selling a few boxes of strawberries in 1957 has since turned into a roadside market



that has become a destination. Four generations later, Balderston's Farm Market also offers 'lunch in the garden' where visitors can sit at a picnic table to enjoy an ice cream cone, fresh fruit sundae or beverage, or fresh bakery item. They also arrange farm tours to educate people about how food is grown and the nutrition it provides.

In the beginning of the employment arrangement, the Bhutanese refugees were hired as farm labourers (i.e., strawberry pickers). Over the years, several have moved into other positions (e.g., supervisory) on the farm. Refugees and immigrants from other countries have also found employment with Balderston's.

The refugees that were placed with the farm were men and women of various ages. Balderston's allowed their children to come to the farm for the day as well as long as they did not destroy any of the strawberry plants (or eat too many berries!). This helped in that the refugees did not have to find childcare.

### Supports Provided

The PEI ANC and Balderston's Farm Market provided many supports to build and foster the employment arrangement with the Bhutanese refugees. For example, Balderston's:

- purchased a van to transport workers
- picked workers up in Charlottetown and returned them to Charlottetown at day's end
- arranged for taxis to transport workers back and forth from Charlottetown to Stratford (Balderston's paid half the cost)
- provided information sessions to the refugees at the PEI ANC office
- developed a PowerPoint presentation to explain working on the farm

For their part, the PEI ANC:

- provided translators for orientation sessions
- accompanied new employees to the farm for the first couple of days to coordinate work activities
- arranged for interpreters to visit the farm to check-in with the employees and the employers

### Key Success Factors

Jennifer Jeffrey identified several key factors for successfully employing immigrants on PEI. These include:

- Open communication and a willingness to learn from each other. Allan and Dianne Balderston were very hands on. There was a lot of effort on their part to remain connected to the PEI ANC and to make a connection with the refugees.
- Transportation often presents a barrier for new immigrants in getting to work. The Balderston's addressed this barrier by arranging transportation and sharing the cost of taxis.
- The job should be a win-win for the employer and the employee. The Balderston's treat their workers like family, including them in family dinners and holiday gatherings.
- Job matching must be done on a case-to-case basis. The refugees from Bhutan worked very well in this agricultural setting. Many of them had agricultural experience and were able to use and/or adapt their skills for this type of work. The PEI ANC also tried to place other immigrant populations at Balderston's Farm Market; however, the expectations of these populations differed from the Bhutanese population and the match was not successful.



## Saugeen First Nation Amphitheatre Dry Stone Masonry Aboriginal Employment Project

The Saugeen First Nation is an Ojibway community located on Lake Huron at the base of the Bruce Peninsula in Ontario. It is well known for its beautiful and scenic Amphitheatre. The interviews to develop this case study were conducted with Jennifer Kewageshig, Program Manager and Employment and Training Officer for the Saugeen First Nation Amphitheatre and Sally Harvey, Manager of Education and Labour Development, Landscape Ontario.

### **Saugeen First Nation Amphitheatre Background**

The Saugeen First Nation Amphitheatre is located in the heart of the village of Saugeen. Adjacent to the amphitheatre are the rock gardens, which are very popular for weddings, photo sessions, art classes or just sitting and enjoying nature. The grounds can be booked for weddings, graduations, or tours. Visitors are also welcome to hike on the nature trails. The amphitheatre project occupies 20 acres of the 100-acre park located on reserve lands. It consists of stone stairways and walkways, terraced gardens and an outdoor amphitheatre constructed of locally quarried stone. It abuts the Wesley United Church. The area is maintained by the people on the reserve.

The amphitheatre was first developed by Reverend Earl Stotesbury in 1972 as a place to foster understanding and friendships between natives and non-natives. At that time, he was awarded a \$200,000 grant to build the amphitheatre using First Nations workers. The amphitheatre took ten years to build.

Source: <http://www.saugeenecdev.ca/Amphitheater.html> accessed March 13, 2015.

### **The Dry Stone Masonry Project Story**

Following the initial build, the amphitheatre was not maintained for several decades. In 2005, Jennifer Kewageshig began a program which was designed to get selected men of the community back to work. She thought the amphitheatre would be a natural project to create a training program that combines meaningful work with skills training.

Participants are men of the community who are not employed. They are restoring the stone and landscaping at the Saugeen First Nation Amphitheatre, specifically they: perform dry stone masonry; finished brick, block, tile and mortar work; re-point foundations; and dress wall stone. The men are paid for their work through the program and are also afforded the opportunity for training and mentoring through an apprenticeship program. The program began as a training program and has evolved into an apprenticeship program. There are currently 8 male apprentices in the program (4 under the age of 30 and 4 over the age of 30) learning the dry stone walling and stone masonry trade under the guidance of Dean McLellan, the only Certified Master Craftsman in Canada recognized by the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain. Landscape Ontario is a partner and supporter of the project. Saugeen First Nation offers two-day outdoor dry stone wall workshops that can lead to Level 1 certification through the Dry Stone Wall Association in the UK.

The apprentices are dedicated workers who take pride in their work. The apprentices have also gone off-reserve to participate in other learning opportunities showcasing their masonry skills.

In December, 2014, the province of Ontario, under the Rural Economic Development program approved up to \$300,000 for 10 Saugeen First Nation Members to be trained in stone masonry to repair the unique and historically important Saugeen First Nation Amphitheater.



Source: <http://news.ontario.ca/omafra/en/2014/12/supporting-jobs-and-growth-in-western-ontario.html> accessed March 25, 2015.

### **Key Success Factors**

Jennifer Kewageshig indicated that success is found in an exchange where the employer (the chief and council) and the employees (band members and their master craftsman) are happy with and fulfilled by the work that is being done. Success is respecting the amphitheatre space and ensuring it remains open to continue the Reverend's vision.

The critical factors to success "began with the dream and vision of Reverend Earl Stotesbury," Kewageshig states. From there, critical factors to success included Ms. Kewageshig's determination and oversight, and the selected men's desire to do a good job and see the project through. Jennifer Kewageshig has been the Program Manager for the Amphitheatre (and other roles) for the past 10 years. She has hired seasonal workers to maintain grounds and run weddings; monitor the flagstone structure for safety; supervise the apprentices and has led instructors to ensure they are complying with regulations.

Ms. Kewageshig believes this work could be replicated, and has been to some degree. The workers, under Dean McLellan's guidance, have worked off the reserve to assist with many dry stone masonry projects (e.g., Canada Blues with Landscape Ontario, and Blue Mountain). There is intent to send one of the working men to Stone Trust in Vermont to become a certified instructor. This is the largest training facility in the USA. By gaining his certification, he can become a champion for this type of work and teach others how to do it.

## **Saskatchewan Indian Equity Foundation Inc. (SIEF)**

### **First Nation Youth Livestock Program**

The Saskatchewan Indian Equity Foundation Inc. (SIEF) is an Aboriginal financial institution that offers developmental lending to First Nation businesses in Saskatchewan. The interview to develop this case study was conducted with Terry K. Brodziak, General Manager, Saskatchewan Indian Equity Foundation Inc.

### **Organization Background**

The SIEF was established in 1986 and is owned by the 75 First Nations of Saskatchewan and affiliated with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN). They have partnered with the TD Bank to create the First Nations Bank of Canada (FNBC). The organization offers commercial and agriculture lending as well as business consulting services and agriculture training and advisory services. The majority of their agriculture clients are livestock producers with mixed farming operations. Livestock operations vary in size from small developmental operations with 15 to 25 head of cattle up to larger, well established operations with 75 to 250 head of livestock.

### **The Youth Livestock Program Story**

Treaty Land Entitlement and a growing population of First Nation youth created the need for the SIEF to offer programs that stimulate and engage youth into agriculture opportunities within their communities. The organization delivered a very successful youth livestock program over nine years. The program was established in 2002 to encourage First Nation youth between the ages of 15 and 25 to purchase, develop, and operate their own micro livestock operations. The intent of the initial four-year program was to build entrepreneurial skills in livestock production and financial management and ultimately to encourage youth to consider agriculture opportunities as a livelihood. The projects included local mentors, labour exchange agreements for feed, training sessions for the mentor and youth, as well as record keeping requirements. The program focused on the



importance of establishing and maintaining a good credit rating. Initially the youth has access to machinery, land base, and facilities through the mentorship program. The program was implemented and managed by the SIEF Agriculture Loans Manager.

Applicants to the program were required to locate a local mentor with at least five years of livestock experience. Applicants were also required to obtain the support of Chief and Council. In order to be approved for the program, youth needed access to wintering facilities, a source of water and adequate winter feed on site, access to adequate pasture and feed resources available over the four-year program, and a co-signer for the loan program.

The budget for each four-year project was \$7,500.00. Applicants contributed 10% cash equity (\$750.00). The SIEF provided a 50% loan (\$3,750.00) and each participant received 40% in non-repayable earned contributions (\$3000.00). The earned contribution was earned over the four-year period by:

- maintaining calving records and financial records over four years
- participating in livestock training seminars organized by the SIEF
- making loan payments to be made as per loan agreements
- maintaining herd numbers for four years

The financing of the livestock purchase occurred as follows:

- Successful applicants were approved for credit to finance their cattle purchases.
- The loan was financed over four years with a payment due upon the sale of calves or on November 1st of each year, whichever came first.
- All cattle were branded with the SIEF brand prior to the disbursement of funds.
- Project funds were used to purchase young quality livestock.

### **Key Success Factors**

Since its inception, the program accepted 135 youth participants. The program was in high demand within First Nations communities in Saskatchewan. Terry Brodziak indicated that the program was highly successful; however, the program is currently not operating due to lack of funding. Seventy-one of the participants completed the four-year program of which:

- forty youth continue to own livestock
- nineteen youth increased their heard numbers
- twelve youth are pursuing post-secondary education
- fifteen youth are employed part-time or full-time jobs in the service industry, livestock markets, cleaning plants, office administration, construction and trucking

The program was administered with high expectations of youth and careful screening was conducted to ensure all parameters were in place to create and maintain successful projects. Participatory hands-on training seminars on livestock production were a key component of the program.



## **Agricultural Employment Centre of the Union des Producteurs Agricoles and Centre de Formation Agricole Saint-Anselme**

### **Skills Training Certificate in Agriculture for Immigrant Workers**

---

The agricultural employment centre or Centres d'emploi agricole (CEA) of the Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA), a regional farmer's union in Chaudière-Appalaches, Quebec (south shore of Quebec city), implemented an innovative immigrant integration project to fill farm labourer jobs in pork and dairy production. The Skills Training Certificate in Agriculture project is now entering its 12th year of success. The interview to develop this case study was conducted on June 23, 2015 with Robert Ouellet, Coordonnateur à l'emploi agricole, AGRICARRIERES, and Daniel Martineau, teacher at the Centre de formation agricole Saint-Anselme.

#### **The Partners**

Several partners came together to initiate the Skills Training Certificate in Agriculture project. These include:

#### **Union des Producteurs Agricoles Background**

The Union catholique des cultivateurs (UCC) was formed in 1924 following the creation of a law which enabled agricultural cooperatives to be established. The UCC was responsible for lobbying for rural electrification and establishing provincial farm credit program.

In 1972, the UCC became the Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA). The UPA is the voice of Quebec farmers and the sole representative of the agriculture industry in Quebec. Over the past 43 years, the UPA fought for many causes including: agricultural zoning and taxation, regional development, joint plan enhancement, real production cost remuneration, recognition of women in agriculture, and the creation of collective tools (e.g., quota systems and provincial joint plans which led the way for buyer/producer agreements).

The UPA also developed an agroenvironmental strategy in support of sustainable models of farming; and is involved (as a Board member) in La Financière agricole du Québec which provides farm insurance, farm financing, and related financial tools. The UPA also created the UPA Développement international, a not-for-profit corporation that lends support to democratic farmers' organizations and collective marketing systems around the world.

The Centres d'emploi agricole of the Union des producteurs agricoles have been in place since 1974. Their main role is to support the recruitment of workers for the agriculture sector. In 2015, the 12 Centres d'emploi agricole will expand its services by providing human resources services for to the agricultural employers.

Sources: <http://www.upa.qc.ca/en> and <http://www.emploiagricole.com/>

#### **Centre de formation agricole Saint-Anselme Background**

The Saint-Anselme Agricultural Training Centre (CFP St-Anselme) offers four programs of study: Agricultural Mechanics, Maple Production, Animal Production (beef, milk, pig, and sheep), and Business Start Up. Work-study (co-op) programs are offered in maple production, animal production, and agricultural machinery. The co-op program provides students with the opportunity to perform at least two internships in the workplace. In the Skills Training Certificate in Agriculture project, the CFP St-Anselme is responsible for providing the training program leading to a Skills Training Certificate (STC) in agriculture.

Source: <http://www.cfast-anselme.ca/CFA-Formations.htm>



### **AGRIcarrières**

AGRIcarrières is a sectorial committee and non-profit organization that is supported by the provincial Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (Labor, Employment and Social Solidarity). It involves stakeholders from the labor market in actions that support employment and the development of the workforce. AGRIcarrières supports valorization and promotion of agricultural jobs and the networking of the Centres d'emploi agricole (CEA). Furthermore, it manages a recruitment center (Agrijob) that brings more than 1400 workers to 250 farms around Montreal from March to November. AGRIcarrières' team also recruits candidates for the Chaudière-Appalaches project and promotes the success of the project through a variety of initiatives (e.g., promotion, organization of presentations, transporting candidates to Chaudière-Appalaches for visits, and participation in employee selection).

Source: <http://agricarrieres.qc.ca/> and <http://www.agrijob.info/>

### **Intégration communautaire des Immigrants (ICI)**

ICI is a non-profit organization supported by the provincial Ministry of Immigration and Cultural Communities to help with the arrival and integration of immigrants in the Chaudière-Appalaches region. ICI has been involved from the beginning to support the integration of candidates into their new work roles and communities.

Source: <http://www.immigration-ici.ca/bienvenueChezNous.php>

### **Emploi-Québec Chaudière-Appalaches**

Emploi-Québec is part of the Ministère de l'Emploi, du Travail et de la Solidarité sociale. It is active in strategies to develop and adapt the labor market. It supports regional initiatives such as training and integration of immigrants and locals in the agriculture sector.

Source: <http://www.emploiquebec.gouv.qc.ca/regions/chaudiere-appalaches/>

### **The Skills Training Certificate in Agriculture Project from Year One to Twelve**

The Skills Training Certificate in Agriculture was implemented by the CEA in collaboration with the Saint-Anselme Agricultural Training Centre, the provincial Ministry of Employment and Labour (Emploi-Québec), and the provincial Ministry of Immigration and Cultural Communities. During the first years, it offered students 24 weeks of training leading to a vocational school certificate-recognized by the employers as well as support to ease their integration into the community. One cohort included a training project for dairy farms while a second cohort provided training for pig farms. The dairy project has since been stopped.

The AEC/UPA project is designed to meet the labour needs of agricultural producers and it is those agricultural producers that have helped to make the project successful. Regional employers have made a special commitment to hire and train new immigrants (from Montreal and Quebec regions) rather than to rely on the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. The candidates targeted by the project are immigrants who are already admitted to the province (e.g., Canadian citizens, permanent residents and refugees with asylum status) as they will contribute to the region's socioeconomic development. To complete the cohort, some local residents are also added.

To date, nearly 100 immigrants have been placed in dairy and pig production jobs. However, despite this success, there is a concern that ongoing funding reductions from the provincial employment and labour ministry could cripple the program. This creates an unfortunate situation because many producers have expressed interest in hiring more immigrants.



## The Skills Training Certificate Program

At the beginning of the project, the training program included a five-week apprenticeship with local farms. The two streams offered were pig and dairy farming, as described below.

### Pig Farm Labourer – Qualification: Skills Training Certificate awarded exclusively by school boards

This program is comprised of 600 hours, with 510 hours dedicated to the acquisition of skills tied directly to the duties of the trade, and 90 hours devoted to the acquisition of general skills related to work activities or work life. The program is divided into 12 modules ranging in length from 15 to 120 hours each. The curriculum includes the following courses: About the Vocation, Applying Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety Rules, Introduction to the Trade, Understanding Pig Anatomy and Physiology, Herd Management, Administering Care and Treatment, Running a Breeding Program, Pig Feeding Practices, Communicating in the Workplace and Seeking Employment, Oxycutting and Welding, Facility and Equipment Maintenance, and Workplace Integration.

### Dairy Farming – Qualification: STC awarded exclusively by school boards

This program is comprised of 570 hours, 330 of which are dedicated to the acquisition of skills tied directly to the duties of the trade and the remaining 240 to the acquisition of general skills related to work activities or work life. The program is divided into 14 modules ranging in length from 15 to 60 hours each. The curriculum comprises the following courses: About the Trade and Training Approach, Applying Occupational Health and Safety Rules, Effective Communication in the Workplace, Job Search Resources, Introduction to the Trade, Applying the Concepts of Animal Anatomy and Physiology, Hygiene and Health Care of Dairy Cattle, Milking Cows and Controlling Milk Quality, Applying Genetics and Animal Breeding Concepts, Running a Dairy Cattle Breeding and Improvement Program, Applying Animal Feeding Concepts, Administering a Dairy Cattle Feeding Program, Regular Facility Maintenance, and Workplace Integration.

Since 2010, the dairy program has ceased due to difficulties in integrating candidates into the farms. A new project in the Monteregie region will try to resolve those difficulties in 2016. The pig farm program will continue in 2015 for its 12<sup>th</sup> year. The program provides funding for 400 hours for each participant. As a result of the 2014 project, 6 of the 8 participants were hired into permanent jobs by the pork operations.

## Process for the Skills Training Certificate Project

Training is offered from November to March with promotional campaigns and student recruitment occurring during the summer. Project organizers arrange information sessions; visitation to farms, local towns and the training centre; and meetings with employers, workers and trainers. Additionally, brochures and posters are distributed to immigrant employment organizations. Communications focus on promoting the excellent quality of life that families will experience in the region and on the support participants will receive from local organizations and agricultural employers.

To maximize the program completion rate, candidates must pass an interview that gauges their motivation, interest in agricultural employment and willingness to move to a rural area. Ideally, they should also obtain a driver's licence prior to beginning their jobs. Candidates must qualify for the workforce training program offered by the provincial Ministry of Employment in order to receive financial assistance unless they are able to pay the applicable program fees and support themselves financially for the entire duration of the training program.

Throughout the training, organizers recruit employers interested in hiring the students taking part in the program. Once training ends, efforts are made to match students with businesses that have openings.



Employers can also take students on as apprentices and offer them permanent employment if they are satisfied with their performance during the apprenticeship.

### Key Success Factors

Several key factors have been identified in the success of this project. These include: willing partners, financial and in-kind contributions (i.e., time), and effective communication.

#### Willing Partners

- Agricultural employers must be open to bringing an immigrant workforce to the region to fill agriculture jobs.
- Vocational training partners played a key role in developing the Skills Training Certificate in pork production by ensuring the immigrants' skills met the employers' requirements and that the regional reception and integration services met the immigrants' needs.
- AGRlcarrières recruits potential candidates through its service Agrijob Montréal and brings them to the region to let them see the opportunities for themselves.
- AGRlcarrières collaborates with partners from the region of Chaudière-Appalaches, in particular the agricultural employment centre of the UPA farmer's union.
- Organizers work jointly with local organizations, such as educational institutions, professional associations and community centres, and government agencies to ensure the project's success, as graduates must relocate and integrate into rural areas.

#### Financial and In-kind Contributions

- The UPA, its employment centre and the training centre contribute by lending their resources, facilities and infrastructure, and by covering travel expenses.
- A large grant from the provincial Ministry of Employment and Labour is required to fund the program.
- Organizers and other partners dedicate a substantial amount of time to communicating with various local employment agencies in order to explain the advantages of financing agricultural training for candidates without an agricultural background.
- An \$18,000 contribution was made by six producers to provide housing and food for the immigrant workers training at the Saint-Anselme Agricultural Training Centre.
- The teacher of CFP St-Anselme (agronomist) is a very positive and passionate instructor. He provides each candidate with support and care during class time and outside the formal hours of school.

#### Other Factors

- The region makes considerable efforts to raise awareness about the immigrants' contribution to economic development through press releases, newsletters and social activities.
- A consultative committee is established to define the scope and the guidelines of the immigrant integration component. Support provided to immigrants includes reception services, and assistance with finding a place to live, school enrollment and moving.
- The organizations behind the project created two guides for immigrant employees and employers explaining the origin and particulars of the project, the factors contributing to successful integration, organizer and employer expectations, and a range of information on employment in the province, the values of its residents and immigrant reception services.



## Kitchen Partners

### Experience Employing Immigrants

#### Organization Background

Based in Edmonton, Alberta, Kitchen Partners creates custom prepared stirred food solutions for the food service industry. Custom products include: tomato & cream based sauces; broth & cream based soups; dips & appetizers; marinades; gravies; stews; cold mixed products like pesto & tzatziki; and ethnic sauces such as teriyaki & curries. Kitchen Partners has approximately 70 employees operating 24 hours x 5 days per week to meet the needs of their customers. The interview for this case study was conducted in March 2016 with Jeff Clark, President and Desiree Robertson, Administration and Human Resources Leader.

#### The Kitchen Partners Story

Founded in 1984 as Floron Food Services Inc., the company changed its name in June 2006 to Kitchen Partners Limited. Kitchen Partners currently produces stirred food products for Canadian customers. The Kitchen Partners team prepares fresh stirred food products every day which are cooked, packaged, and rapidly chilled or frozen, and then shipped to its' customers from coast to coast. "Every single ingredient is traceable from field to plate!"

#### Making the Job Match

Kitchen Partners has had success with two main populations of immigrants: those from the Philippines and India. Through the mid to late 2000's successful job matches were made through referrals from employee and utilizing the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. Today, a strong employee referral program and word of mouth reputation keeps Kitchen Partners supplied with an excellent and highly skilled workforce.

#### Building Relationships with Employees

Kitchen Partners prides itself on its ability to build strong and lasting partnerships, especially with employees. The company has strong values with a proven engagement philosophy. Kitchen Partners treats everyone in the same manner, offering all employees training and development opportunities, earning power, and a safe and supportive environment to work and grow.

#### Critical Success Factors

When asked to comment on success factors that keep their workforce coming back day after day (some of them, for more than twenty years), Jeff Clark replied, "We believe in people."

Kitchen Partners truly believes in their people and it shows in all they do. They treat all employees as part of the team, part of a family. Kitchen Partners provides a highly engaged working environment where a willingness to help each other is evident. Their open door policy enables the leadership team to provide every opportunity for regular employee interaction and knowledge sharing.

For Kitchen Partners, success is defined in terms of quality of life. Their employees feel positive that they are making a contribution. Kitchen Partners shows a genuine interest in making the transition to living and prospering here [Edmonton, Alberta, Canada] as seamless as possible. The Kitchen Partners team also participates in celebrations that are important to their employees. For example, as a team they celebrate various ethnic holidays including Chinese New Year and Diwali.



## Maple Leaf Foods (Pork) Experience Employing Immigrants

---

### Organization Background

Maple Leaf Pork is a subsidiary of Maple Leaf Foods, Canada's leading consumer-packaged protein company. Maple Leaf Pork's Lethbridge facility specializes in quick-chilled pork cuts for Japanese and Singapore markets. Maple Leaf Pork has approximately 380 employees processing 1500 pigs per day (five days per week) to meet the needs of their customers. The interview for this case study was conducted in March 2016 with Severin Habetler, Plant Manager.

### The Maple Leaf Pork Story

The Lethbridge facility of Maple Leaf Pork has been successful in employing persons enrolled in the Temporary Foreign Worker program as well as members from the Bhutanese community. There are approximately 45 full-time Bhutanese workers employed at Maple Leaf Pork in Lethbridge. Maple Leaf Pork also has some experience working with the Aboriginal Council of Lethbridge.

### Making the Job Match

The majority of the Bhutanese-occupied positions at Maple Leaf Pork are entry-level production positions that involve packaging and wrapping pork product. Employees may be promoted and trained for a 'knife job' with increased pay once seniority is achieved and work ethic is demonstrated.

### Critical Success Factors

There are several factors that contribute to Maple Leaf Pork's ability to attract and retain workers from the Bhutanese community. These include:

- Room to grow - There are six pay grade levels at the Lethbridge facility. Employees are offered training and development opportunities; however, the facility is union-based which means employees must bid on vacant positions with seniority offered first choice.
- Job security - The plant operates on a 'single shift' (8-hour day) schedule five days per week; however, they also do their own maintenance and cleaning. The work is steady so employees can count on a regular paycheck.
- Culture exchange - Maple Leaf Pork promotes employee engagement through their open-door policy and by having employees participate on engagement committees to share their knowledge and experiences.
- A focus on safety - Health and safety and food safety are of critical importance to Maple Leaf Pork. Today, their focus on food safety and quality is ahead of the industry and led by a Chief Food Safety Officer. Maple Leaf Pork is Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) compliant. As such, all employees received training in food safety on a regular basis.



## Van Raay Paskal Farms

### Experience Employing Immigrants

#### Organization Background

Van Raay Paskal Farms, located in Picture Butte, Alberta, is the result of the amalgamation of Cor Van Raay Farms and Paskal Cattle Company. Van Raay Paskal Farms' main business focus is feeding cattle destined to slaughter at the Brooks processing facility; however, they also ship slaughter steers and heifers to a processing plant in Utah, USA.

Van Raay Paskal Farms owns and operates seven feedlots feeding up to 130,000 head of cattle. The Farm owns and farms more than 22,000 acres of irrigation land that produces barley, corn, and silage/roughage for the feedlot cattle. Van Raay Paskal Farms has approximately 170 employees.

The interview for this case study was conducted in March 2016 with Jolayne Farn, Human Resources Manager.

#### The Van Raay Paskal Farms Story

Van Raay Paskal Farms (VRP Farms) has been successful in attracting and retaining workers from underrepresented populations, including: Mexicans, Mexican Mennonites, Aboriginal people, and Hutterites. VRP Farms also uses the Temporary Foreign Worker program for some Mexican workers with a long-term outlook to assist them to become Canadian citizens.

#### Making the Job Match

The initial match between VRP Farms and Mexican workers occurred by happenstance. One of VRP Farms' owners was in Mexico and began a conversation with a gentleman he met. The two began talking about agriculture and found similarities between Canada and Mexico. That man was offered a position with VRP Farms in Canada. He has since been employed for more than 8 years and has referred many successful employees.

#### Critical Success Factors

There are several factors that contribute to Van Raay Paskal Farms' ability to attract and retain workers from several immigrant populations. These include:

- Excellent orientation program for new arrival- New employees are picked up at the airport and lodged in a hotel until suitable housing is found. They are never alone at the start of their employment.
- Personal loans - Employees are provided with a \$5000 loan to assist in purchasing a vehicle, furniture, etc. This loan is paid back through small deductions over a period of two years.
- Translators - VRP Farms has Spanish translators to ensure new employees fully understand any information being provided to them.
- Opportunities for advancement - All employees are provided with opportunities to grow. Training and development is part of the standard employment package. Several of VRP Farms' Mexican workers have been with the company for eight years and have advanced to management positions.
- Knowledge sharing - Employees are provided with every opportunity to share their knowledge and experience. While they are learning from VRP Farms, VRP Farms is also learning from them.
- Provide English classes - VRP Farms provides flexible learning operations to their employees. English classes are offered when a teacher is available on Tuesday and Thursday evening.
- Employee referral program - The referral program is two tiered. The person that refers a potential hire receives \$75 the first six weeks then another \$75 at the end of the probation period.



## HyLife

### Experience Employing Aboriginal People

#### Organization Background

HyLife is one of Canada's leading pork producers, producing approximately 1.7 million hogs annually in Canada (Manitoba and Saskatchewan) and the United States of America (North Dakota). HyLife sells their products in markets around the world.

HyLife is a vertically integrated food company. The company operates feed mill facilities to provide livestock with top quality, nutritious feed; transportation fleets for moving feed and livestock; genetics laboratories to maintain herd quality; manure management company to assure application of animal waste; a manufacturing and distribution center for supply warehousing; and a pork processing plant providing 'farrow-to-fork' quality control processes. Their head office is in LaBroquerie, Manitoba.

HyLife has approximately 1800 employees, the majority of which are located in Manitoba. Twelve-hundred of those employees work at HyLife Foods in Neepawa, Manitoba at the pork processing plant, and approximately 1000 of those are in meat cutter positions.

The interview for this case study was conducted in April 2016 with Jeremy Janzen, Senior Director of Human Resources.

#### The HyLife Story

HyLife Foods has been successful in attracting and retaining workers from Immigrant and Aboriginal populations. They employ workers from the Philippines, Sandy Bay Reserve, and Long Plain First Nation, as well as from across Canada. HyLife uses the Temporary Foreign Worker program to recruit workers from the Philippines and assists in transitioning them to become Permanent Residents.

#### Making the Job Match

In 2008, HyLife acquired a previously-existing processing facility in Neepawa called Springhill Farms (now HyLife Foods). At the time of acquisition, some members of the Sandy Bay Reserve were employed with Springhill Farms.

In 2014, HyLife 'double shifted' their processing plant which led to the need of an additional 400 workers. Given that Neepawa does not have a large pool of workers (the population is approximately 3600 people with an unemployment rate of approximately 2%), HyLife sourced workers from across Canada and the Philippines. With an industry best turnover rate of only 10%, there remains an ongoing need for additional workers.

For the past year, HyLife has made it a priority to engage more closely with Sandy Bay Reserve. By working closely with the Chief and Council, HyLife has built a trusting relationship with the community. In the month of April, 2016, they hired nine people from the Reserve and continue to work with the community to find additional employees.

#### Critical Success Factors

There are several factors that contribute to HyLife's ability to attract and retain workers from several underrepresented populations. These include:



- Job security - HyLife is seen as a growing, stable, and fair employer that can provide steady employment to interested workers.
- New collective agreement - HyLife has negotiated a new collective agreement which features a good benefit plan, competitive pay, and job security.
- Excellent workplace culture - HyLife has a list of core values that every employee is encouraged to adhere to. The company's open-door policy provides employees with the opportunity to share their experiences with management in a positive way. HyLife hosts several company events throughout the year including staff parties, Family Days, Christmas parties, and employee golf tournaments.
- Provide Training and English classes - HyLife provides flexible learning opportunities to their employees. Three English teachers work at HyLife.
- On-staff immigration lawyer - HyLife employs an immigration lawyer and three case managers to assist foreign workers in their transition to permanent residency.
- A willingness to grow - HyLife is always looking for ways to improve their operations. For example, when transportation was identified as an issue for members from the Sandy Bay Reserve (the commute is 80 minutes each way), the company began to look into options to address this barrier to employment.



## 5.0 Appendix A - Interview Guide

<b>Date</b>	
<b>Interviewee</b>	
<b>Position &amp; Company or Organization</b>	
<b>Overview of organization</b>	
<b>Interviewee's role in case study</b>	
<b>Describe how the match was made</b>	
<b>Describe the project</b> - type of operation - contact name within organization - type of work - characteristics of the employee placed - supports provided (financial, training, mentoring)	
<b>Describe success</b> - define success for the person, organization, and industry - critical factors that made the project a success - what worked well - what would you	



change	
<b>Broader application of this scenario within agriculture</b> - types of jobs - types of operations - what needs to happen to create more successful employment placements - who is responsible	
<b>Case study distribution</b> - can we identify you and your organization by name	