



Agriculture Forecast to 2029

How Labour Challenges Will Shape the Future of the 'Poultry and Egg' Industry

The 'poultry and egg'* industry is one of the smaller employers in Canada's agriculture sector, and it benefits from one of the most balanced labour markets. However, a widening labour gap will make it more difficult for this industry to find the workers it needs to meet the market demand for its products.

Industry Overview

The 'poultry and egg' industry includes farm operations that primarily engage in breeding, hatching, and raising poultry for meat or egg production. Animals grown include chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, pheasants, partridges, and pigeons.

In 2017, the industry employed 14,500 people, or roughly 4% of the total agricultural workforce. The industry is largely concentrated in Ontario and Quebec, with Ontario alone accounting for 25% of the workforce.

Because it has such a low level of seasonality, the industry's workforce is almost exclusively made up of Canadian residents, with foreign workers accounting for just 2.1% of the workforce, which is a share far lower than the average of 17% across the entire agriculture sector.

Over the past decade, the market for 'poultry and egg' products has grown. However, productivity for this industry, which is the output per worker, enjoyed even stronger growth. As a result, the industry saw its workforce decline by 0.5% per year between 2007 and 2017. Despite this reduction in the size of the workforce required, the 'poultry and egg' industry was unable to fill 350 jobs with the available domestic labour in 2017, costing the industry \$29 million in lost sales.

* The Labour Market Information data classifies Canada's agriculture sector into 11 commodity areas: 1) 'apiculture'; 2) 'aquaculture'; 3) 'beef'; 4) 'dairy'; 5) 'field fruit and vegetable'; 6) 'grain and oilseed'; 7) 'greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture'; 8) 'poultry and egg'; 9) 'sheep and goat'; 10) 'swine'; and 11) 'tree fruit and vine'.

In 2017, the 'poultry and egg' industry employed 14,500 people.

The industry was unable to fill 350 jobs, which cost the industry \$29 million, or 0.7% of sales.

By 2029, the industry will be unable to fill 2,400 jobs with the available pool of domestic workers.

While slowing market demand for 'poultry and egg' products and improved industry productivity will limit the demand for labour, a shrinking supply of domestic labour will widen the industry's labour gap over the next 10 years.

Labour Forecast

Although the industry's demand for labour will stabilize over the next decade, the labour gap will widen.

The domestic pool of workers will shrink during this time, resulting in a wider gap between the number of jobs the industry needs to fill and the number of domestic workers available to fill them.



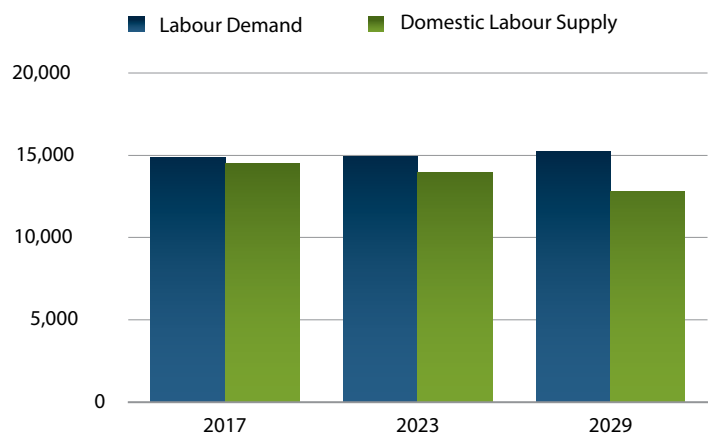
The industry will need approximately 15,200 workers to meet its output targets by 2029. But the domestic labour supply is predicted to shrink by an average of 1.0% per year, until only 12,800 domestic workers are available in 2029.

In other words, the industry will need to find 2,400 jobs beyond those that the available domestic labour force can fill. If these workers can't be found, it will impact the industry's production ability to grow and thrive.

Ontario and Quebec will be most seriously affected by labour challenges in the coming decade. More than one third of the labour gap, equivalent to 840 jobs, will be located in Ontario. Quebec's 'poultry and egg' industry will see the second-largest share of the labour gap, with 450 jobs at risk.

From an occupational perspective, the 'poultry and egg' industry will have the most trouble filling general farm workers and managers in agriculture jobs (which include owner-operators and employed farm managers). Indeed, by 2029, an additional 1,000 jobs for general farm workers and an additional 400 jobs for managers in agriculture will either go unfilled or require foreign workers to fill them because enough domestic labourers are not available.

The Labour Gap Widens for the 'Poultry and Egg' Industry



Based on our 2018 survey of the industry's employers:

- **36%** could not find enough workers;
- **40%** of employers who experienced labour shortages lost sales as a result;
- **33%** reported zero Canadian job applicants for job postings.



Meeting the Challenge

The 'poultry and egg' industry faces relatively few labour challenges compared to other industries in the agriculture sector. Currently, it has one of the most balanced labour markets within the sector, and while the labour gap is predicted to widen over the next 10 years, it will remain small relative to the labour gaps other agricultural commodities will face during this time.

However, the widening gap still has the potential to limit the industry's ability to grow and meet the market demand for its products. To maintain a stable and balanced workforce, the 'poultry and egg' industry will need to address these issues:

- The industry has a high voluntary turnover rate, which creates considerable cost and strain for employers.
- There is a need to communicate the benefits of agricultural work to a younger demographic to attract more young workers.
- Labour shortages will heavily affect specific provinces, especially Ontario, Quebec, and Alberta.
- Labour shortages will affect specific, core occupations, including agricultural managers and general farm workers.

To meet these labour challenges, the industry has

several strengths it could leverage:

- It has a below-average retirement rate.
- Below-average seasonality and variability in hours create a more stable, attractive workplace.
- Providing advancement opportunities could help make work in the industry more attractive and improve retention.

By working to find solutions to these specific challenges, the industry can protect against labour shortages and thrive in the years to come.

To read the accompanying report, or to access additional provincial, commodity, or national fact sheets and reports, please visit www.AgriLMI.ca.



About This Fact Sheet

The data cited in this fact sheet is based on an update to the Labour Market Information (LMI) study that the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) undertook between 2014 and 2016. Information was collected by modelling labour demand and supply by province, commodity, and occupation; conducting a survey of more than 1,700 sector stakeholders; and validating the results through webinars as well as an advisory group presentation.

The study was initiated by the Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council (CAHRC), a national, nonprofit organization focused on addressing human resource issues faced by agricultural businesses across Canada. For more information about the Council and its products and services for Canada's agriculture sector, please visit www.cahrc-ccrha.ca.

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