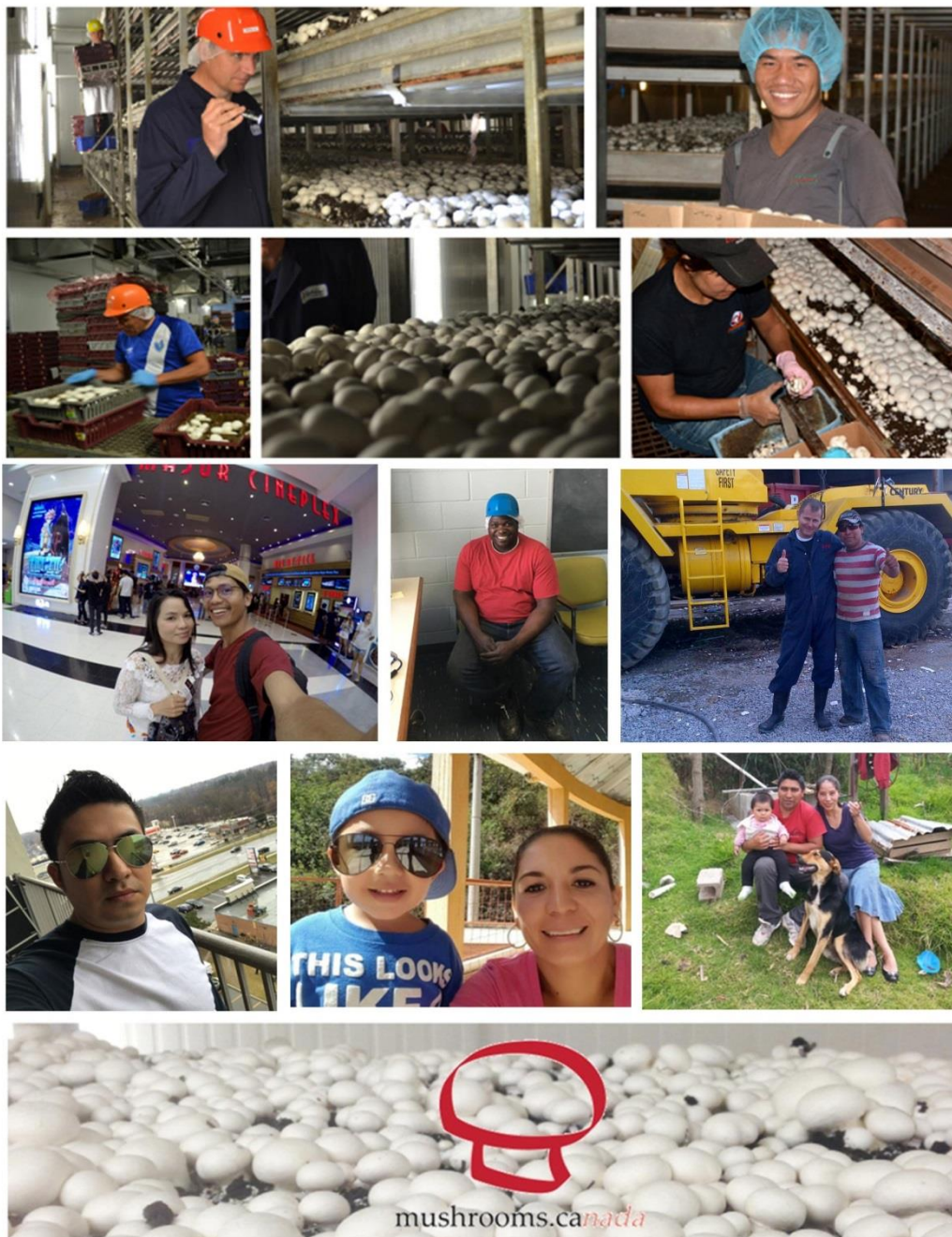


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Multiplying Mushroom Sector Opportunities with Rural Canadian Population Growth

RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY:



CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL
HUMAN RESOURCE COUNCIL
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Executive Summary



mushrooms.canada

sophisticated in approach.

This report provides new evidence that clarifies high growth facts about the sector. The report also includes new labour market information regarding mushroom farm vacancies, wages and unemployment and explores mushroom farm human resource management and recruitment strategies that are multi-faceted and



High Growth and High Demand sector

The mushroom sector contributes over \$900 million to the Canadian economyⁱ in direct impact sales and downstream economic activity. Close to 134,000 tons of mushrooms are produced in Canada each year.ⁱⁱ 50% of the production is in Ontario, 35% in British Columbia, 10% in the Prairies and 5% in Quebec and the Maritimesⁱⁱⁱ. According to the Census of Agriculture there are 194 mushroom farms in Canada in 2016^{iv} and the sector provides year-round, permanent jobs in rural Canadian communities for over 4,330^v workers.

Production, sales and exports are increasing. The top export market for fresh Canadian mushrooms is the United States (\$194,996,410^{vi}) and the second largest market is Japan (\$18,398,779^{vii}). Labour costs make up between 35 to 51 percent of total mushroom farm expenses; making labour the single largest cost for Canadian mushroom farm operations^{viii}. Mushroom growers are investing in and adopting innovative technologies as they are available and they would like to expand their farm operations but many growers are reporting a high number of vacancies, restricting their ability to retain current markets and to expand their mushroom farm operations.

Canadian Farms Making Dreams Come True

“Canadian mushroom growers’ labour shortage makes our workforce our greatest challenge but also our greatest asset.

“We love to help our workers **fulfill their dreams** and by doing so support their families while making a positive contribution to the Canadian economy and their communities. Our sector is perfectly positioned to meet the needs of future generations through the production of wholesome and healthy food from sustainable sources.”

September 2017
George Graham, President
Mushrooms Canada



Canadian Mushroom AgriWorkforce New Labour Market Information

A survey examining mushroom farm vacancies and wages was completed by Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) from March to May 2017 that included seventeen mushroom enterprises, representing 25 mushroom producing farms and 2,917 workers, or 67% of Canada's mushroom sector workforce. The results found that mushroom farm population is made up of 73% Canadian workers. The new research also indicates there is a 9.7% national job vacancy rate at mushroom farms across Canada.

Rural Quality Living Wage

The same survey gathered extensive information regarding wages paid on mushroom farms which offer a quality of living wage in rural Canada. Mushroom farm wages and salaries provide a direct impact to the Canadian economy of \$163,876,561 per year^{ix}. The report includes wage research analysing comparable wages of other agricultural commodities and also the broader economic context. A rural cost of living comparison to urban centres is also included. New wage information was collected by CAHRC in 2017 for mushroom Managers, Supervisors, Workers, Labourers, and Harvesters. Research found wages in 2017 to be the following:

- **Harvester Wage:** Minimum wage-\$29.88/hr
- **Supervisor Salary:** \$35,000-\$80,600/yr
- **Manager Salary:** \$42,500-\$171,000/yr



Welcome to Rural Canada

Mushroom farms hire Canadians first. Mushroom growers value their workforce providing a quality living wage and good benefit packages. They utilize a multi-layered, sophisticated human resource strategy, work with immigrant settlement agencies, hiring new Canadians and refugees, promoting the benefits of working on their farms to agencies and to new immigrants directly. Immigrants stay working on mushroom farms on average 11 years. Many farms report that immigrants who work on their farms remain employed for 20-30 years.

When Canadians cannot be found, mushroom farms turn to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP), using the Agricultural Stream which is highly regulated with strict rules and many associated costs, details of which are provided in this report. Mushroom farms provide on-the-job training and many benefits for all their workers, including Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs). Mushroom growers care about all of their workers; they are proud to provide settlement support such as language training, community integration, TFW housing and many other supports to their workforce.

To fill current vacancies and to meet high growth plans provided by new trade deals, mushroom farms would like to welcome 870 TFWs to become new immigrants on their farms across Canada.



Mushroom Workers: Stories From the Farm

Canada's Multicultural Mushroom AgriWorkforce

Marlon Gordon from Wellington, Ontario: Marlon was a pig farmer in St. Mary's, Jamaica. Marlon arrived in Canada as a Temporary Foreign Worker, beginning his Canadian agricultural career as an entry-level mushroom harvester 15 years ago. Today, Marlon is now a Maintenance C Trainee. He has been with the maintenance department for two years.



Marlon explains, "I came to Canada with \$150 that [my employer] gave me. I now have a house, helped my parents, helped my sisters through college, and my son [through high school]. It is amazing for me."

Marlon's suggestions to improve programming for farm workers include: "Make it [the program] more accessible for people to get a work permit and for companies to have more workers involved. When we came here, we came under harvesters. We are on a farm, if your permit says harvester, you can only be a harvester, but there are other jobs on the farm that need doing. It is limited; you cannot grow in the company even though the opportunities to grow are there. You can't even apply for supervisor even if you are capable of the job because of the restrictions."

Voluntary Online Mushroom Farm Employee Review:

"[Our farm has a] down to earth and small town feel in spite of how big our company is growing. The CEO will stop and talk to any employee. They have strong community partnerships. It is truly an ethical place to work."

Kamson Sawetwong from Ashburn, Ontario: Kamson arrived in Canada in 2006 as a Temporary Foreign Worker and began her career on the mushroom farm as an entry-level harvester. Before coming to Canada, Kamson was a housewife and babysitter in her home country of Thailand.



After beginning her career as an entry-level harvester eleven years ago, Kamson is ready for the next step of becoming a harvest supervisor. Kamson has participated in several training opportunities including: English language training and safety training. Kamson would be a good fit and well positioned to train harvesters. Over the past 11 years Kamson has sent her children to school and to college and she saved up enough money to buy a house in Thailand. She is interested in immigrating to Canada and to continue her career at Greenwood Mushroom farm. She has tried to immigrate several times but has not been successful.

June 2017 CAHRC,
AgriWorkforce Roundtable,
Tips From the Frontline

Kamson is nervous about her Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) renewal. Will she be approved? And she is hoping she will be successful within the new Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program in-demand stream and be able to meet the criteria. Will Kamson find her pathway to permanency and find a way to immigrate where she is filling a critical job vacancy in rural Canada, or will she be forced to return to Thailand? **To read more mushroom worker stories refer to the Appendices.**

Labour Market Information: Mushroom Farm Vacancies Wages and Unemployment

CAHRC Survey

An online wage and vacancy survey was conducted by Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) with mushroom growers from March to May, 2017. This report presents the information gathered from 17 mushroom farm enterprises representing 25 mushroom farm locations and 2,917 workers, or 67% of Canada's mushroom sector workforce. The survey was commissioned to provide detailed compensation information about wages, and to clarify vacancies on mushroom farms in 2017. Research is also provided in this section regarding unemployment in high demand mushroom categories.

Mushroom Farm Job Vacancies

Over 76% of mushroom farms participating in the survey could not find all the workers they needed in 2016-17 (**See Table 1**). Mushroom growers participating in the study reported a total of 283 vacancies; representing a national job vacancy rate of 9.7% on Canadian mushroom farms (national average of other Canadian industries is 1.8%^x).

Table 1, Mushroom farms unable to find all workers they needed 2016-17

Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	23.5%	4
No	76.5%	13
Totals: 17		

These vacancies are putting 4,330 mushroom sector jobs throughout Canada at risk and also placing 2,917 jobs in these farms in jeopardy. Mushroom growers report the labour shortage is affecting sustainability of the Canadian mushroom sector, restricting growers' ability to fill current orders, and to grow their farms. This is increasing costs for Canadian consumers, and it is also limiting Canadian mushroom growers' ability to export.

When growers were asked, "What kind of positions are you needing to fill the most for your farm?" the top two in-demand occupations identified were: 1) Harvesting positions - 83% of the respondents identified the harvester role as the most needed on their farm and 2) Supervisory positions - 42% of respondents stated that they required supervisors for their farm (**See Table 2**).

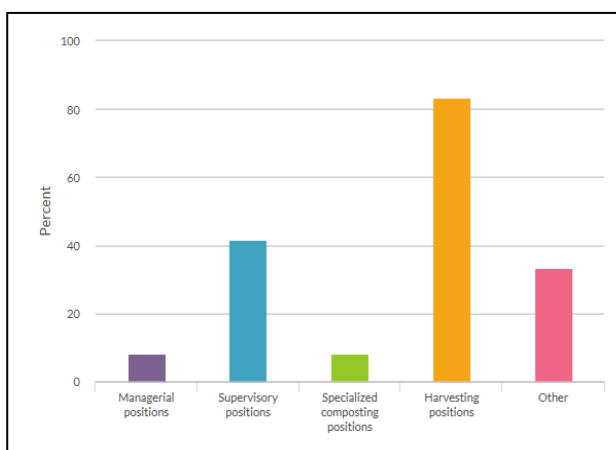


Table 2, Harvesting and Supervisory positions are the two most in-demand occupations

Wages

Current and complete wage data for the sector is an important part of the overall picture for Canada's agricultural labour market, and could help address labour issues more effectively by being able to communicate mushroom farm job opportunities, career progression and quality wages the sector supports. Little data has been collected on mushroom farm wages up to this point in time. The Statistics Canada Job Vacancy and Wage Survey provides basic information, but does not provide the level of detail needed to help mushroom employers or job seekers make informed decisions. A majority (12 of 17) of respondents were located in Ontario. Due to confidentiality issues, the small number of respondents located in other provinces prevents us from divulging their location.

The job categories included: Mushroom Manager, Mushroom Supervisor, Mushroom Worker, and Mushroom Labourer. Salaries and wages for the purpose of this survey were calculated on an annual basis (40 hours, 52 weeks). Additional information about wages and performance incentives for the Mushroom Harvester role was obtained through follow up interviews. In the survey, the harvester role is included in both the worker and labourer categories. **Detailed wage information for 2017 is provided in the Human Resources Management Strategies section of this report.**

Harvesting Labourers, General Farm Worker and Supervisor Unemployment

CAHRC researched the Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey 2017 unemployment numbers for the National Occupation Classification Codes that are the most in-demand on mushroom farms and the findings show^{xi}:

- **NOC 8611 Harvesting Labourers (D):** There are seasonal fluctuations within this category and too few unemployed to generate an estimate or a graph of the unemployment rate.
- **NOC 8431 General Farm Workers (C):** Unemployment for Canadian General Farm Workers has been below the national average since 2010. Since that time, unemployment for this National Occupation Classification (NOC) code has fallen from 7.6% in 2010 to 3.9% now in 2017.
- **NOC 8252 Agricultural Service Contractors, Farm Supervisors and Specialized Livestock Workers (B):** Here too there are too few unemployed in the Labour Force Survey to generate an estimate of the unemployment rate.

The unemployment in these categories provide strong evidence of labour shortage or labour market tightness for three of the most in-demand occupations needed on mushroom farms.



Mushrooms: A High Growth and High Demand Sector



Overview of Mushroom Farm Economic Impacts to the Canadian Economy

The mushroom sector contributes over \$900 million to the Canadian economy^{xii} in direct impact sales and downstream economic activity. Close to 134,000 tons of mushrooms are produced in Canada each year:^{xiii} 50% of the production is in Ontario, 35% in British Columbia, 10% in the Prairies and 5% in Quebec and the Maritimes^{xiv}.

Production, sales and exports are increasing. According to the Census of Agriculture there are 194 mushroom farms in Canada in 2016^{xv} and the sector provides year-round, permanent jobs in rural Canadian communities for over 4,330^{xvi} workers.



Exports: Mushroom exports increased from \$115,972,000 to \$220,392,027 million from 2012 to 2016.

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
115,972,008	130,780,219	141,613,679	189,193,619	220,392,027

Source: Trade Data Online, Statistics Canada and US Census Bureau, Total Exports Mushrooms^{xvii}

Top Export Markets: The United States and Japan are Canadian mushroom growers' two top export markets. In 2016, Canadian mushroom exports to the US were valued at \$194,996,410^{xviii} and exports to Japan were valued at \$18,398,779^{xix}. Canada imports 45 million lb. (20,600 tons) of canned or processed mushrooms, mostly from China.^{xx}



Employment: The mushroom sector employs 4,330^{xxi} employees and is made up of 73% Canadian workers. Mushroom farm wages and salaries provide a direct impact to the Canadian economy of \$163,876,561 per year^{xxii}. Labour costs make up between 35 to 51 percent of total

mushroom farm expenses; making labour costs the single largest expense for mushroom farm operations^{xxiii}. Mushroom growers require a dependable, skilled and experienced workforce. An ongoing chronic worker shortage contributes to producers being unable to meet current production targets for domestic consumer demand and expand operations to allow growers to meet trade and marketing opportunities.

Benefits to Rural Canada: Mushroom farms are located in rural Canada due to the farming and composting activities that need to take place where there is less population, and where there is also less of a labour pool to draw on. Mushroom farms are often the largest employer and provide significant economic benefits to the rural towns and areas where they are located. Mushroom farms are located in rural communities such as: Abbotsford, Crossfield, near Winnipeg, Hartsville, Verchere, and many towns across Ontario such as Moose Creek, Stoney Creek, Hamilton, Burlington, Osgoode, Ashburn, Leamington, Kingsville, and Wellington.



Technology Investments: Canadian mushroom farms are working with academic institutes, computer science agencies, and equipment suppliers on robotic technology that could reduce labour requirements. The mushroom industry is investing in robotic picking technology today that is expected to take over ten years to develop for commercial growers. This demonstrates a significant response to labour shortage issues that mushroom growers are facing. This is positioning Canada as a mushroom robotics leader on the world stage. These innovations will help to create new technology focussed employment for Canadians. With the Canadian mushroom sector pegged as a close to \$1 billion sector^{xxiv}, and the United States producing even 10 times more mushrooms, there is great potential for robotics in the mushroom industry worldwide. Mushrooms Canada's President George Graham explains, "We are striving tirelessly to reduce our dependency on labour but the capacity of the Industry remains restricted due to a deficit of farm workers."



Expansion Plans: In the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council study, 10 of the companies interviewed reported having expansion plans, including upgrading their farm equipment and increasing investments in innovation. These companies cite access to labour as their major expansion constraint.

Mushroom Sector Human Resource Management Strategies

A. Mushroom Jobs



William Isai Valasquez, from the Ontario Mushroom Company, has specialized supervisory compost skills. He was forced to leave because of the cumulative duration rule and he is seeking a way to return to his job where he is needed.

There are many different types of jobs on a mushroom farm. The type of mushrooms grown and the size of the mushroom farm have an effect on the type of jobs offered and the number of workers needed for any given operation. The following is an extensive list of job occupations that mushroom farms can offer: General Line Worker, Runner, Quality Control Technician, Scanner, Tugger, Box Machine Operator, Housekeeper, Inter-Farm Truck Driver, Specialized Equipment Operator, Watering & Disease Control, Maintenance, Housekeeping Leader, Packing Line Operator, Shipping, Shipper Receiver, Wash Line Operator, Grower, Assistant Grower, Harvester,

Harvesting Trainer/Hourly Supervisor, Packing Lead hand, Net Mender, General Farm Worker, Heavy Equipment operator, Night Watchperson, Farm Driver, Local Driver, Casing Preparation Specialist, Driver Team Leader, Material Application Specialist, Tunnel Specialist, Packing Maintenance, and Licensed Maintenance.

B. Mushroom Workforce Recruitment and Requirements

Recruitment

The mushroom farm population is made up of 73% Canadian workers according to new CAHRC research. Mushroom growers report they participate in ongoing and continuous recruitment activities, both locally and nationally and they hire Canadian workers first. Mushroom farms report they participate in extensive ongoing advertising strategies with advertisements posted on multiple job boards, utilizing a multi-layered, sophisticated human resource strategy that includes providing a quality living wage in rural Canada and good benefit packages. The farms work with immigrant settlement agencies, hiring new Canadians and refugees already in Canada, promoting the benefits of working on their farms to agencies and to new immigrants directly. One example of success in this area is Highline Produce that was recognized in 2016 by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada Minister John McCallum for its work with new immigrants and refugees. Immigrants stay working on mushroom farms on average 11 years. Many farms report that immigrants who work on their farms remain employed for 20-30 years. Mushroom farms offer extensive recruitment and HR support including:

- Participating in extensive ongoing advertising strategies with ads posted on multiple job boards and local newspapers
- Hosting and participating in regular job fairs and farm tours to new immigrants and settlement staff
- Providing New Hire Orientation
- Providing Social activities geared to cultural communities working at their farms. For example, farm managers participate in local community events and this ends up bringing new recruits
- Provide training such as language training 2 days per week on site after work on many of the farms
- Housing support for Temporary Foreign Workers
- Supplying quality benefit packages, including extended health benefits, including dental, prescription drug, chiropractic, massage, life insurance, pension and retirement plans
- Promoting a diversified workforce by having frontline supervisors appreciate and support employees coming from different cultures
- Providing an employer referral incentive for recruiting new workers (up to \$1000 per referral)
- Providing Travel Allowance to support employees commuting to farm
- Granting Employee Awards and hosting annual company family picnics
- Providing Supervisory and Leadership Development

Requirements of the Job

Mushroom growers report, however, that there are many unique workforce challenges on their farms:

- Mushroom activities **such as composting** need to take place in **rural locations** due to town and city municipal regulations
- The handling of perishable products related to live plants that **need timely and ongoing attention**
- Mushrooms **grow 4% an hour** and are harvested daily so this requires lots of employees working on a shift basis, providing lots of quality full-time, year round jobs
- Mushroom harvesting is a **highly trained skill set**, requiring up to a year to become proficient
- Mushrooms need to be harvested and **picked when ready to avoid spoilage** and to maximize yields



C. National Occupation Classification Codes (NOCs), TFWP and Immigration

Mushroom farms were added to Temporary Foreign Worker Program's (TFWP) National Commodity List (NCL) in 2015 and now have access to the Seasonal Agriculture Worker Program (SAWP) and the Agricultural Stream. Within the survey, growers were asked their preferred program to recruit Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW) and the findings are that the Agricultural Stream is the main provider of Temporary Foreign Workers on Canadian mushroom farms when Canadians are not available. **(See Table 3).** However, SAWP and lower-skilled Temporary Foreign Worker Program streams are also used for recruiting purposes when Canadians are not available.

Table 3, Mushroom growers preferred programs to recruit TFWs 2017

	Number n=9	%
SAWP	1	11%
AG Stream	7	78%
Low-Skilled	3	33%
High-Skilled	0	0%

The following National Occupation Classification (NOC) codes are used to access the Temporary Foreign Worker Program:

- NOC 8251 Farmers and Farm Manager (B);
- NOC 8252 Agricultural Service Contractors, Farm Supervisors and Specialized Livestock Workers (B)
- NOC 8431 General Farm Workers (C); and
- NOC 8611 Harvesting Labourers (D).

According to stakeholder feedback, General Farm Worker NOC 8431, and Harvesting Labourers NOC 8611 are used the most by mushroom farms as these are the labour intensive occupations. As Table 2 identified, workers for supervisory jobs, however, are also in high demand. Mushroom stakeholders report that it is currently difficult to get Labour Market Impact Assessments (LMIAs) approved for these supervisory and managerial roles and there are also limited options for immigration. One of the reasons for LMIA issues for the supervisory level could relate to the 2011 NOC used for supervisory jobs – NOC 8252 - Agricultural service contractors, farm supervisors and specialized livestock workers, since “mushrooms” is currently not included on the list of commodities for this supervisory NOC. Additionally, education requirements could potentially be creating an obstacle since on-the-job training is how the job knowledge is transferred, but on-the-job training is not currently recognized within the supervisory NOCs. ^{xxv}



The 2016 National Occupational Classification (NOC) has updated the classification of agricultural work. The 2016 NOC codes for mushroom occupations include: 0821 Manager in Agriculture; 8252 Agricultural Service Contractors, Farm Supervisors and Specialized Livestock Workers; 8431 General Farm Worker; and 8611 Harvesting Labourer. These NOCs could become fully used by both the TFWP and immigration streams in the future.

In August 2017, the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) added the General Farm Worker and the Harvesting Labourer NOCs to a new in-demand stream, included in Ontario's new allotment of 6,000 economic immigration spots, an increase from its 2,500 allotment the year previously^{xxvi}. This new in-demand immigration stream will provide some new options for mushroom workers in Ontario. The criteria for these new NOC additions to the OINP, however, needs to be reviewed carefully to ascertain how many farm workers will be able to qualify with current criteria. Also, the level B, supervisory and managerial NOCs were not included as a priority in the new high demand stream.

If NOCs for Farm Manager NOC 8251, and Agricultural Service Contractors, Farm Supervisors and Specialized Livestock Workers Agricultural NOC 8252 are not also included as a priority for this new in-demand stream, then the Temporary Foreign Workers that have grown into supervisory roles, and have been approved as such through new Labour Market Impact Assessments, may not be drawn through this new OINP stream and stakeholders report having trouble accessing other existing streams. Additionally, there is no federal immigration option for these semi-skilled workers who have Canadian training needed for these specialized jobs that are advertised regularly, which Canadians have chosen not to apply for. This is an example of interdepartmental and federal-provincial TFWP and immigration issues related to the NOC codes that are restricting workforce progression for mushroom farm workers and access to the global talent that mushroom farms need. Stakeholders report these as obstacles for a pathway to permanency for mushroom workers.

D. Wages

Mushroom Farm Wage Benefits for Rural Canada

Mushroom farms are located in rural communities across Canada in areas such as: Abbotsford, Crossfield, near Winnipeg, Hartsville, Verchere, and many towns across Ontario such as Moose Creek, Stoney Creek, Hamilton, Burlington, Osgoode, Ashburn, Leamington, Kingsville, and Wellington. According to research conducted by the George Morris Centre in 2013, mushroom farm wages and salaries provide a direct impact to the Canadian economy of \$163,876,561 per year^{xxvii}. These salaries support the rural economies where the mushroom farms are located. One example of rural economic benefits for the Leamington, Ontario area where many mushroom farms and greenhouses are located, was highlighted in an October 2017 Toronto Star article by Mayor John Patterson who explained that agricultural workers are estimated to spend approximately about \$15 million annually in the community^{xxviii}. This has “transformed the local economy,” explained the Mayor.



Quality Living Wage in Rural Canada

Salaries and wages for all occupations in the mushroom sector provided in this survey are comparable to similar occupations in Canada. The wages and the full benefit packages that mushroom workers earn combined with the relative cost of living in rural communities allows workers to enjoy a high quality of life. For example, in Leamington, Ontario the median total income of an one-person household in 2015 was \$33,045^{xxix} which is only slightly less than the median wage in Ontario at \$36,900^{xxx}. The average purchase price of a home in Toronto in September 2017 was \$775,546^{xxxi}. In Windsor-Essex County that includes Leamington and other rural communities where several mushroom farms are located, however, the average home price was \$253,465^{xxxii}. Another indicator of home affordability, in Windsor-Essex area, 1,665 homes were purchased for under \$140,000^{xxxiii} from January to September 2017. This demonstrates that a good salary is defined not only by annual income, but also by the purchasing power of that income in the area you live.

Wages for Mushroom Managers: The salary range for **Mushroom Managers** is **between \$42,500/year to \$171,000/year.**



xxxiv

Mushroom managers manage farm operations, including strategic planning, human resources, finances and administration. Managers also manage activities, people, equipment, supplies, products, evaluate production data and records, operate farm machinery and equipment. No formal education is required, and they may acquire skills and knowledge through on-the-job training. Education and training can include formal and informal learning experiences; extensive specific work experience, and a bachelor's, master's or doctorate degree.

Wages for Mushroom Supervisors: The salary range for **Mushroom Supervisors** is **between \$35,000/year to \$80,600/year.**



xxxv

Mushroom supervisors supervise mushroom growing, harvesting, and post-harvest activities, and coach and train employees to perform these activities. Supervisors also



supervise the maintenance of equipment and supplies, review production data and records and operate farm machinery and equipment. No formal education is required, and skills and knowledge can be acquired through on-the-job training. Education and training can include a mix of formal and informal learning experiences, such as two to three years of post-secondary education at a community college, institute of technology, CEGEP, two to five years of apprenticeship training, three to four years of secondary school and more than two years of on-the-job training, and specialized training courses or specific work experience.

Comparable Salaries for Mushroom Managers and Supervisors

Canadian occupation comparable wages for mushroom farm Supervisors and Managers job categories include the National Occupation Classification codes for Supervisors and Managers for other agricultural commodities. These wage comparable occupations are from Statistics Canada's Job Vacancy and Wage Survey for 2016. Employers participating in the JVWS have two employees or more and the agricultural manager category only includes hired managers, no business owners.

- **Supervisor:** The NOC 8252 for Agricultural Service Contractors, Farm Supervisors and Specialized Livestock Workers average wage paid in 2016 was between \$17.60 and \$20.20^{xxxvi}. This is aligned with the Mushroom Supervisor category in this wage survey however, with a salary range between \$35,000 and \$85,600 that computes to between \$16.80/hr and \$38.75/hr. Experienced mushroom supervisors can earn over \$18.00/hr more than other supervisors in NOC 8252.
- **Manager:** The NOC 0821 for hired Farm Managers in Agriculture average wage paid in 2016 was between \$19.20/hr and \$21.05/hr^{xxxvii}. The survey results for Mushroom Managers category indicates a salary range between \$42,500/year and \$171,000/year which computes to \$20/hr to \$82/hr average wage is more than other agricultural managers in the managerial NOC.

Non-agricultural Salaries: Comparable salaries include managers in food service and accommodation occupation that earn on average between \$18.05 and \$20.65^{xxxviii}. Another average salary comparable is an Ottawa Parliament Hill Legislative Assistant who earns on average \$45,000/yr.^{xxxix}



Wages for Mushroom Workers: Workers are paid hourly wages **between \$11.27 and \$28.00**. On an annual basis (40 hours, 52 weeks), this could represent between \$23,500 and \$58,200 annually. The lowest wage provided to farm workers was in line with the applicable minimum wage in 2016. **This can be supplemented by performance bonus incentives.**



xi

Mushroom workers assist with planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops. With minimal or no supervision, they prepare compost for growing mushrooms, add casing material to the compost, harvest mushrooms, perform post-harvest activities, and may operate farm machinery and equipment. No formal education is required, and skills and knowledge can be acquired through on-the-job training. Education and training can include a mix of formal and informal learning experiences, such as some secondary school, up to 2 years of occupational training, training courses or specific farm experience.

Wages for Mushroom Labourers: Labourers are paid hourly wages **between \$11.15 and \$20.60**. On an annual basis (40 hours, 52 weeks), this could represent between approximately \$23,000 and \$43,000. The lowest wage paid to farm labourers was in line with the applicable minimum wage in 2016. **This can be supplemented by performance bonus incentives.**



xlii



Mushroom labourers assist with planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops. They prepare compost for growing mushrooms, add casing material to the compost, harvest mushrooms, perform post-harvest activities, and may operate farm machinery and equipment. No formal education or prior farm experience is required, and skills and knowledge are often acquired through on-the-job training. Mushroom labourers are fully supervised.

Comparable Wages for Mushroom Workers and Labourers

The wage data for this survey in the mushroom Labourer and Worker categories is aligned with Statistics Canada's Job Vacancy and Wage Survey, where Harvesting Labourers NOC 8611 hourly average lowest/highest wages paid in 2016 is \$13.25 to \$16.80 for paid employees who are full-time (work 30 or more hours per week). And nursery and greenhouse workers make \$13.25 an hour^{xlii}.

Non-agricultural Canadian occupations comparable wages for mushroom farm Labourer and Worker job categories include^{xliii}:

- Bartenders \$11.50
- Food and beverage servers \$11.85
- Maîtres d'hôtel and hosts/hostesses \$12.85
- Service station attendants \$13.05
- Hairstylists and barbers \$13.75
- Cashiers \$13.95
- Food counter attendants, kitchen helpers and related support occupations \$13.05

Some other comparable wage examples include Statistics Canada Census Enumerators who earn \$15.00/hr as a starting wage^{xliv} and the average full-time hourly wage for a real estate rental and leasing agent which is \$14.05^{xlv}. These other occupations listed, however, do not have the same opportunity to earn the progressive performance bonuses that experienced harvesters make, details of which are provided in the *Wages for Mushroom Harvesters* section upcoming of this report. And as outlined earlier, the cost of living in rural Canada is generally significantly less than in urban centres.

Subsidized Housing for agricultural Temporary Foreign Workers: As clarified earlier in the report, the Labourer and Worker job categories used in this survey that include the Harvesting Labourer (8611) and the General Farm Worker (8431) NOCs are the most in-demand job categories. These positions are filled by TFWs if Canadians cannot be found. These TFWs receive subsidized housing from the mushroom farms and other non-monetary benefits, in addition to their wages. Housing for Agricultural Stream and SAWP workers is a regulated requirement of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. The costs of subsidized housing and other costs of the TFWP for mushroom farms are significant and also provide workers with non-monetary benefits. These Agricultural Stream costs are fully itemized in the upcoming **Benefits** section.

Wages for Mushroom Harvesters: The Mushroom Harvester job category is the most in-demand role



required by Canadian mushroom farms, as clarified earlier in the report. The harvester role is filled by TFWs, if Canadians are not available. Mushroom harvesters learn unique and special skills, receiving on-the-job training. The highly developed skills and competencies include: dexterity, speed and judgment regarding quality. There is no technology available to replace the human hand in mushroom harvesting currently. It takes 3 to 12 months to train an entry level harvester to become

proficient in this role. Once a harvester achieves an experienced skill level, these employees are very valuable, a human capital asset, to the farm and very difficult to replace.

Mushroom Harvester Base Wage and Performance Bonus: A total of 10 mushroom growers were



surveyed over the telephone to further inquire about the wage level for harvesters. Harvesters are paid a progressive performance bonus called piece rate. This is paid over and above the guaranteed base salary which is the provincial minimum wage or the National Commodity List mushroom wage rate set by Employment and Social Development Canada (In Quebec, the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion regulates TFW wages). The piece rate performance bonus allows harvesters to receive payment for

the work they complete and is dependent on the worker's performance. This bonus allows the workers to earn significantly more than minimum wage and it allows the farm to increase its productivity enabling it to pay its workers the bonus amount. In the mushroom sector, the amount is generally calculated on a 'per pound' or 'per package' basis. The growers view the base salary as "make up pay" and the harvester bonus as "commission."

Each farm operates differently with distinct growing systems and/or produces different types of mushrooms or mushroom products which require different levels of workforce effort and different labour requirements. For example, some of the respondents harvest mushrooms in bulk packages, whereas others package their products in much smaller cartons depending if they are the white "button", brown "crimini", portabella or exotic varieties. This ultimately impacts the amount that may be harvested in an hour. In order to compare data to the lowest common denominator, piece rate data paid to workers to fill five-pound bulk boxes was collected from the respondents.

- **Entry Level Harvesters** earn minimum wage or the TFWP Agricultural Stream wage while they receive extensive on-the-job training for the harvester role which requires dexterity, speed and judgment regarding quality. It can take 3 months to over a year of training for Entry Level mushroom harvesters to move up to the Experienced skill level.
- **Experienced Level Harvesters** earn a progressive performance bonus which can be up to \$29.88 an hour or over \$50,000 annual salary. They have a guaranteed base salary which is the TFWP Agricultural Stream regulated wage rate or minimum wage if they don't reach their performance targets.



The survey results for Harvesters are highlighted in the following (**See Table 4**).

Table 4, Wage level for harvesters

	Low	High	Average
Piece rate (\$/lb)	\$0.18	\$0.26	\$0.22
Harvesting efficiency (lbs/hr)	35	84	64
Computed hourly wage rate (\$/hr)	*\$10.46	\$29.88	\$14
Computed annual salary (2,400 hours/year)	\$28,800	\$52,800	\$33,600

**\$10.46 is 2016 minimum wage that is no longer used.*

Harvester Base Wage: Comparison of TFWP National Commodity List Wage Rate and Minimum Wage

For the provinces where the National Commodity List (NCL) federally regulated wage is higher than the minimum wage (**see Table 5**), such as Ontario, New Brunswick, and Alberta, mushroom growers report that the NCL wage rate is causing an HR management issue where TFWs are being paid more than Canadian workers. Mushroom growers have been seeking support from Employment and Social Development Canada to clarify what actual sources are being used to determine this NCL wage rate for their sector because growers want to ensure the accuracy of the federal wage rates and they want to provide equal compensation to Canadian workers and TFWs. Stakeholders also asked, “Why can’t the minimum wage be used in each province rather than the NCL?” If the NCL were consistent with the provincial minimum wage in each province, this would simplify the NCL wage calculation and it would also support consistency so the base pay paid during the harvester training phase would be consistent for new Canadian workers and Agricultural Stream TFWs.

Table 5, Minimum wages in every Canadian province and National Commodity List Federal Regulated Wage Rate for mushrooms, 2017^{xlvi}

	Minimum Wage (Canadian Base Wage)	National Commodity List Federal Regulated Wage (TFW Base Wage)	
		Farm labourers	Farm workers
		\$/hour	
British Columbia	10.85	10.85	15.00
Alberta	12.20	13.00	18.00
Saskatchewan	10.72	11.73	18.00
Manitoba	11.00	11.73	16.00
Ontario	11.40	12.00	14.00
Quebec	11.25	11.25*	11.25*
New Brunswick	11.00	13.00	13.79
Nova Scotia	10.85	11.76	12.00
Prince Edward Island	11.25	13.00	13.00
Newfoundland and Labrador	10.75	11.00	13.00



- Quebec wage rates are not regulated under the National Commodity List Federal Regulated Wage but by the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion (Québec).
- Note: National Commodity List Federal Regulated Wage applicable since January 1, 2017. All minimum wages and Québec's base wages for TFWs are effective as of May 1, 2017.

Other Wage Facts

- Several respondents explained they lost many workers in 2015 due to the cumulative duration rule (4 in 4 out) and it will take a significant time to build that experience again in numbers and with training. This has negatively affected their farms' productivity levels.
- Farm labourers make up the largest percentage of the surveyed workforce: they represent 63% or an average of 39.1 farm labourers per farm.
- Farm workers are the second largest group: they represent almost 25% of the workforce or an average of 19.8 labourers per enterprise that reported hiring farm workers.
- The vast majority (92%) of TFWs work as farm labourers: an average of 89.9 TFW farm labourers per farm for those that reported hiring TFW labourers.
- TFW farm labourers represent 53% of the total full-time workforce of sector farm labourers.
- Managers and supervisors may receive annual incentives, such as a percentage of the annual salary or lump sum.
- Impacts were not analysed for minimum wages and mandatory benefits raised in 2017 or minimum wage increases that will be increasing in 2018.

E. Benefits

Agricultural Stream Regulated Costs Support TFW Labourer and Worker Job Categories

The George Morris Centre estimated labour costs for mushroom growers to be between 35% and 51% of total mushroom farm expenses; making labour costs the single largest expense for mushroom farm operations^{xlvii}. The cost associated with the TFWP is part of the mushroom farms' labour costs as mushroom growers use the TFWP's Agricultural Stream to fill vacancies when Canadians do not apply for job advertisements.

Mandatory regulations and requirements are stipulated by Employment and Social Development Canada to ensure Temporary Foreign Workers who work on Canadian farms are protected. To make sure their TFWs are well supported, many mushroom farms also provide voluntary support, such as hiring a "Temporary Foreign Worker Manager" who speaks the host country language. One of the mandatory requirements of the Agricultural Stream is that housing is to be provided for workers. However, housing standards are overseen by provincial regulations. For example, the Ontario Ministry of Health stipulates that the minimum standards for housing agricultural workers are (i) living space per worker = 80 ft², (ii) maximum number of workers per washroom = 10. Mushroom farms, however, exceed these Ontario standards. According to the George Morris Centre report, the average living space per worker mushroom farms provided was 189 ft² and the number of workers per washroom was 4.5^{xlviii}.



Respondents to the 2017 CAHRC survey reported that the TFWP regulated mandatory requirements, as well as other voluntary initiatives, can cost a single mushroom farm over \$1 million a year.

The Temporary Foreign Worker Program costs to a mushroom grower to hire one Agricultural Stream worker is estimated to be \$8,470 as shown in **Table 6**. These Agricultural Stream associated costs should dispel “cheap labour” misconceptions.

Many of these costs are also **non-monetary benefits** for the Agricultural Stream workers.

Table 6, TFWP Agricultural Stream Annual Cost to Employer for 1 Worker		
Agricultural Stream Requirements		Cost
Subsidized Housing (mandatory)	Ag Stream employers pay for TFW housing. Employee contribution is \$1,560/yr (\$30 per week X 52 weeks). Farmer pays for the rest.	\$3,000
Bridging Private Insurance (mandatory)	Provincial workplace insurance is mandatory through Workers' Compensation, however, other private insurance is necessary for TFWs and is paid for by the employer until the TFW is able to qualify for workers' compensation.	\$450
Airfare (mandatory)	Return Airfare between TFW's country of residence and Canada is paid for by the farmer (based on 2 year contract).	\$750
Other Transportation (mandatory)	Mandatory transportation required between workers' Canadian address and work location (50 weeks at 5 days a week).	\$3,120
Newspaper/Job Board Ads (mandatory)	Mandatory 2 week advertising requirement, however, most growers report ongoing and continuous advertising.	\$300
TFW Manager (voluntary)	Manager hired to manage the additional recruitment, handling, administrative and personal needs of the TFWs such as managing health dept. inspections, dealing with the landlords etc.	\$450
Referral Fee (voluntary)	Payment to workers or recruitment agency to find interested worker.	\$400
Estimated Annual Cost of for one worker Agricultural Stream		\$8,470

Mushroom Farms Benefit Programs

Canadian mushroom farms provide extensive benefit programs for both Canadian and Temporary Foreign Workers. Most mushroom farms offer health insurance, life insurance, paid sick leave, transportation, and many other benefits including retirement plans.



Health-related Benefits

Health benefits may include:

- Mandatory Workers Compensation for Canadian workers and TFWs (in most provinces)
- Health and life insurance are the most common non-monetary benefits offered to Canadian workers. Most of the enterprises (66%) that hire farm managers and farm supervisors provide these benefits to employees in these occupations
- Private bridging health insurance for TFWs to support Agricultural Stream workers, before they are added to provincial health insurance plans

Transportation-related Benefits

Many agricultural operations assist employees with transportation costs or specific transportation-related needs. Transportation-related benefits include:

- Labourers and Workers receive transportation to and from work
- Managers and Supervisors can receive company vehicles

Retirement plans for Canadian workers

Retirement plans for employees are provided by 33% of Canadian mushroom farms. Farm managers and farm supervisors most often receive retirement plans. Most of the time and always for farm workers and farm labourers, the employers contribute to the retirement plans (**See Table 6**).

		Retirement plan	Employers who contribute
Farm managers	n=15	5	80%
Farm supervisors	n=12	5	80%
Farm workers	n=15	4	100%
Farm labourers	n=15	4	100%

Table 7, Number of Canadian mushroom growers that provide and contribute to retirement plans for Canadian workers by position, 2017

Other Benefits

Both Canadians and TFW employees can also receive other benefits including: an employer referral incentive for recruiting new workers (up to \$1000 per referral); profit sharing; birthdays off (and paid); education reimbursement; and free birthday mushroom packs. Managers can receive cell phones and use of company vehicles. To see more information regarding common mushroom sector benefits refer to the **Mushroom Farm Case Study provided in the appendices**.



Employee Handbook and Compensation Policy

Almost two-thirds (63%) of farm enterprises have an employee handbook that guides and informs employees on their duties and rights. One-third of the enterprises (31%) have implemented a formal written compensation policy. The others mostly determine wages based on their knowledge of the markets.

Training

A. On-The-Job Training Provided on Mushroom Farms

Farm operations all offer on-the-job training relating to Canadian modern mushroom production practices. On-the-job training can include job shadowing and a buddy system, introducing recruits to best management practices on the farm, occupational health and safety rules, as well as equipment operation procedures. Mushroom sector employees also receive formal occupational, health and safety training as well as food safety training. Many farm operators have a yearly training provision which covers necessary training such as First Aid, Occupational Health and Safety, CPR, and WHMIS.

Farm employers also offer new hire orientation which can include having community partners do presentations on settlement issues, and promotion of local community activities for new Canadians to participate in.

Second language training is offered on many farms that hire new immigrants and Temporary Foreign Workers. Farm employers often pay the costs related to this training and can provide time off for classes if shifts run late. Farm employers with new immigrants and TFWs often translate communications into multiple languages other than English and French. **Refer to the Mushroom Farm Case Study in the Appendices to see how one mushroom farm translates materials into 12 different languages for workers that originate from 20 different countries.**

Some farms also offer an educational reimbursement to their employees while others offer one-time scholarships to the children of their employees who are pursuing agricultural-related degrees or diplomas.

B. CAHRC Supporting Development of Mushrooms Canada Training



Mushrooms Canada is investing in an e-learning training program for harvesters based on the National Occupation Standard (NOS) that the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council has developed collaboratively with mushroom growers. The NOS is a national employee benchmark that defines the knowledge and competencies required for job success.



E-learning training programs are one of the many offerings under CAHRC's AgriSkills program. The e-learning training will fit the needs of mushroom farms, as it is based on real-world best practices used on Canadian mushroom farms. Traditional training can disrupt a worker's schedule by requiring them to attend classes off-site. The AgriSkills e-learning programs are developed in consultation with industry and subject matter experts across Canada which are customized to offer online training that fits into the mushroom employees' daily work schedule. The training will use a combination of self-guided work activities that are self-paced.



Welcome to Rural Canada

A. New Immigrant and Refugee Settlement Support

The mushroom sector has significant experience in supporting settlement for Temporary Foreign Workers, as well as new immigrants and refugees. Many of the farms do extensive work with settlement agencies as part of their recruitment strategy. One example of success with immigrants is Highline Produce Ltd. that was recognized for their effort when they received an Employer Award for Refugee Employment Integration of Refugees from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) in March 2016.



Settlement support that many mushroom farms offer includes:

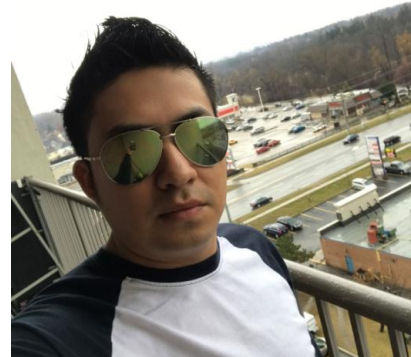
- Providing on-site English as a Second Language classes, i.e. two days per week on site after work (the company may pay costs related to the training)
- Encouraging community partners to do presentations on settlement issues
- Promoting local activities for new Canadians
- Maximizing ongoing work with community partners
- Coordinating new hire orientation, training and mentorship support
- Providing transportation and/or subsidizing travel to work for employees commuting long distances
- Making themselves attractive to new Canadians by providing good and meaningful work at fair pay
- Making efforts to communicate with new Canadians so that they feel at home in the workplace
- Making communications available in the languages of new immigrants
- Offering medical, pension programs, as well as scholarship opportunities



B. Mushroom Sector TFWs Excellent Immigration Candidates

Mushroom farm workers are employed in full-time, permanent, year-round jobs with wages that provide a good quality of life in rural Canada. Farms provide settlement services in rural Canada to new immigrants they find through settlement agencies and job fairs. They also are providing these same services to support Temporary Foreign Workers in the local rural community.

Retention of TFWs and Immigrants: Retention on these farms for Temporary Foreign Workers ranges from 1.75 years to 6 years with an average retention of 3.25 years. This is reflective of TFWP current programming timelines, consistent with 2 year work permits. In December 2016, the cumulative duration rule, was removed by the Federal Government. Stakeholders report that both workers and employers were very pleased with this positive policy change that means workers can remain working on their jobs and do not have to leave after 4 years. Before the workers were forced to leave in 2015, growers report that **experienced TFW harvesters with over 10 years of experience on their mushroom farms were common** and that many of these experienced workers are now once again seeking to return to their former jobs on Canadian mushroom farms. Respondents also reported that **immigrants** recruited from settlement agencies and other sources **stay on their farms for an average of 11 years**. Stakeholders also report that when mushroom farm workers had opportunities to immigrate in the 1980's, these immigrant workers remained on their farm for 20 years or longer, but these workers will be retiring soon.



Now that the cumulative duration rule has been removed, it means that approximately **730 mushroom TFWs will need their Labour Market Impact Assessments renewed on mushroom farms this year and next year** unless a successful immigration pathway is found for them as these LMIA's and contracts need to be renewed every 2 years. **Both the workers and the growers are united in finding a successful and clear "pathway to permanency" for immigration for these valued employees with skills and experience these farms need.** The other approximately 140 TFWs reported by the growers, are needed to help mushroom farms provide a good work life balance for workers, enabling the growers to provide more time off, when requested and to support expansion plans.

Close to 85% of the farms participating in the study indicated that they would provide TFWs with settlement support that would help them fully integrate in their local communities. Farms that said they were not interested in providing settlement support are not currently using the TFWP.

C. Valuable Human Capital Assets in Rural Canada



At the time of the survey, many mushroom enterprises reported that there are no immigration options for their Canadian-trained employees at 13 of the 17 mushroom enterprises. At these farms only 34 Temporary Foreign Workers have been able to transition to permanent residency. Stakeholder response from mushroom employees indicates that one of the only ways for mushroom workers to become permanent residents is to marry a Canadian.

Mushroom growers report it is difficult, at this point in time, to have LMIAs approved at the supervisory level for workers. This is one of the issues restricting a pathway to permanency for workers. For one worker who did receive a supervisory LMIA approval, when the next application step was made for Ontario's Provincial Nominee Program, the worker was refused because the program was shut down due to oversubscription.

There are several provincial nominee program issues. In August 2017, the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program established a new in-demand stream where the General Farm Worker and the Harvester NOC job categories are included. This covers the entry-level mushroom farm job categories but not the supervisory level. Program criteria is being evaluated by Ontario mushroom farms to determine how many mushroom farm workers in Ontario will qualify to use this new immigration stream.

To fill current vacancies and to meet high growth plans provided by new trade deals, Mushrooms Canada growers would like to **welcome 870 Temporary Foreign Workers as new immigrants in rural communities** across Canada in 2017. Most of these have been in Canada for two years or longer and are due for LMIA renewals this year and next. Evidence shows that there is high retention for TFWs interested in working within the mushroom sector and mushroom farms already offer settlement support, a quality living wage, and good benefit packages. These TFWs have Canadian on-the-job training which makes them valuable human capital assets for mushroom farms located in rural Canada. These TFWs with the unique skills needed by the mushroom farms would be filling a critical labour gap. This in turn will continue to revitalize rural Canadian communities.



Mushrooms Canada members are open to participating in a future Agriculture and Agri-Food potential pilot program with Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada to help their TFWs transition to permanent residency.



Mushroom AgriWorkforce Obstacles and Solutions

When asked about the main challenges they are expecting in the next few years, almost every enterprise identified the need to renew their workforce. They said that it will be difficult to replace the foreign workers that left their employment in 2015, due to the cumulative duration rule (4 in 4 out). Although this rule was reversed in December 2016, mushroom growers are continuing to feel the effects of the high number of workers that were forced to leave Canada. Some enterprises lost as much as 30% of their harvesters at that time.

Farms are also finding it difficult to replace workers who are due to retire, such as supervisors and managers. Another key challenge is finding employees with the skillsets that are needed. As workers retire, their experience becomes difficult to replace. Other challenges raised included employee retention, and wage competitiveness with trade competitors that do not have the same level of labour regulations as Canada.

A. Obstacles to a Pathway to Permanency for Mushroom Sector Employees

The following obstacles are affecting rural immigration growth and hindering Canadian job creation on mushroom farms. Mushroom growers are facing many obstacles when they try to find a Pathway to Permanency for their employees. Although some of the obstacles identified are specific to the mushroom sector, many of these restrictions are also affecting on-farm employees from many agricultural value chains.

- **National Occupation Classification Codes (NOCs):** are **1) being used to restrict access to provincial and federal immigration options** – NOCs C and D for mushroom farm workers are not accepted for federal or provincial immigration (August 2017, Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program released a new option that is being examined by industry). Mushroom farms, like all other sectors, want to promote from within their sector, however, the NOCs are **2) working against a pathway to permanency** for mushroom farm workers who have gained special skills through Canadian on-the-job training, yet they are not allowed to move up within the farm to a “lead hand” or supervisory level. These jobs are not clearly recognized in the NOC structure and **3) higher-skilled supervisory NOCs are currently difficult to get approved under a new LMIA.** If

the LMIA is approved, **the higher skilled NOC is not part of the new Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program in-demand stream.** And there is no federal immigration option for either the entry-level or these semi-skilled mushroom workers who have the Canadian training needed for these specialized farm jobs.

- **Lack of Immigration Options Provincial and Federal:** improved immigration options for TFWs with valuable Canadian on-the-job training, both provincial and federal, needs to be a priority since mushroom farms offer full-time permanent employment, competitive wages that support a good standard of living, and mushroom farms support settlement in rural communities. Ontario's new OINP in-demand immigration option criteria needs to be analysed to clarify if mushroom workers are able to utilize it.
- **Mushroom Farms Not Included as Priority Sector in Immigration Settlement Process:** current settlement processes send refugees and new immigrants to urban centres. The mushroom sector is seeking direct connection with new immigrants to be able to communicate the benefits of working on a mushroom farm and rural living prior to new immigrants being sent to the city.
- **Labour Market Impact Assessments (LMIAs) and Visa Work Permit Processing Issues:** processing of paperwork is unreliable, takes too long, and a lack of industry knowledge by officials results in delayed and inappropriate decisions. This includes several recent mushroom farm LMIA denials related to changing advertising requirements and other evolving criteria, not clarified prior to the LMIA application.
- **National Commodity List Wage Rates for Mushrooms:** are not aligned with the minimum wage in provinces such as Ontario, New Brunswick and Alberta. Stakeholders report that the National Commodity List wage rate is causing an HR management issue where TFWs are being paid more than Canadian workers. The minimum wage functions as the base wage for Canadian workers during the training phase of a mushroom harvester. Mushroom growers explain they want to be fair to Canadian workers and TFWs, paying the same wages to all workers on their farms.

B. Solutions for the Mushroom Sector

Feedback from the mushroom sector suggests the following solutions for mushroom growers and their employees which are aligned with the Human Resources, Skills and Social Development (HUMA) Parliamentary report's 2016 recommendations.

- **Improve Pathways to Permanency:** remove identified obstacles allowing access to immigration for agriculture and agri-food employees. (HUMA Recommendation 17, supported by Ministerial Mandate Changes February 2017). Mushrooms Canada members are open to working on solutions with:
 - ESDC and Service Canada to **speed up the processing of Agricultural Stream LMIAs and Work Permits** (HUMA Recommendation 2) and implement a **Trusted Employer Program** with the



objective of reducing LMIA processing timelines for employers who have demonstrated trustworthiness in their use of the TFWP. (HUMA Recommendation 3);

- IRCC & ESDC in any future federal potential **pilot program** to help trained TFWs to transition to permanent residents;
 - ESDC, IRCC and provincial nominee programs in an **interdepartmental collaboration with mushroom growers**, to develop new ways to help **workers' career advancement**, removing obstacles for progression and immigration for mushroom farm workers (HUMA Recommendation 17); and
 - IRCC to better connect with incoming refugees and new immigrants, for example **working on a joint business/government partnership to help settle new immigrants**.
- **National Commodity List Wage Rates:** Do not use the Federal Job Bank for wage rates for the National Commodity List wage rates; instead use the minimum wage for each province. Work with the sector to develop wage rates that are reflective of actual wage compensation Canadians receive. Using the minimum wage in each province simplifies the NCL wage calculation and supports consistency so the base pay that is paid during the harvester training phase is consistent for new Canadian workers and Agricultural Stream TFWs (**refer to the Harvester wage section pages 12-14**) .
 - **Agricultural Stream:** Adjust housing costs and requirements to support Agricultural Stream workers who are seeking Pathway to Permanency opportunities; and similar to SAWP, Agricultural Stream employers to participate in an annual review with a government Interdepartmental Advisory Council to make improvements to the program.
 - **Change the TFWP name to better reflect agriculture's use of program:** Mushroom growers support the Agriculture and Agri-Food Labour Task Force recommendation of the program to be called: *Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Workforce Program* for international workers. When Canadians cannot be found, the Agriculture and Agri-Food sector needs 3 distinct streams within this program to support its unique workforce requirements (HUMA page 9).
 1. **Seasonal Agriculture Worker Program** – remain an identifiable standalone program that deals with seasonal workers and employers in agriculture;
 2. **Agricultural Stream** – fixes needed with clear pathway to permanency for mushroom workers; and
 3. **Agri-Food Stream** for primary processors (Meat and Seafood) – new proposed stream with fixes and a pathway to permanency for agri-food.
 - **Implement the *Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Workforce Action Plan*** (HUMA page 19): Provide requisite funding for industry to address critical and chronic labour shortages with action items such as a National Career Awareness initiative for Canadians and outreach to new immigrants to better connect and match them with agricultural career opportunities.



Appendices



Mushroom Worker Profiles:

Mushroom Worker Profile: Eric Luna De La Rosa from Ashburn, Ontario (Greenwood Mushroom Farm)



Eric Luna De La Rosa Profile

Eric arrived in Canada in 2012 as a Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) and began his career at Greenwood Mushroom Farm as an entry-level harvester. Eric was a farmer in his home country, Guatemala.

Progression

After beginning his career as an entry-level harvester five years ago, Eric is now ready to take the next step and move up to become a supervisor at Greenwood. Eric has participated in several training offerings including: English language training and safety training. Eric is well positioned and looking forward to a supervisory role where he could train harvesters, if he is successful with Ontario's new Ontario

Immigrant Nominee Program in-demand stream which includes a new option for harvesters.

Working and Living in Rural Canada

Eric enjoys living in rural Canada. He has been able to make great changes in his life because of his work at Greenwood Mushroom Farm. His wife now goes to college. He bought a house in Guatemala and his son goes to a paid pre-school.



Wages and Retention

The work environment at Greenwood Mushroom Farm is excellent and job security is high. Eric likes working at Greenwood and is happy with the level of pay.

Comments

Eric arrived as a Temporary Foreign Worker in 2012. He is interested in immigrating to Canada but has not yet begun the immigration process. If he were successful in immigrating, he would stay working with Greenwood Mushroom Farm. Eric added that he had two sisters who also worked at Greenwood. They have since returned to Guatemala due to the 4-in-4-out rule; however, they were each able to buy their own home. In Guatemala, most women do not buy their own houses. "I am both happy and proud of my sisters," he says.



Mushroom Worker Profile: William Isai Velasquez Miranda from Ashburn, Ontario (Ontario Mushroom Farm)

William Isai Velasquez Miranda Profile

William came to Canada from Guatemala in 2010 as a Temporary Foreign Worker. He began his career at Greenwood Mushroom Farm as an entry-level harvester. William worked his way up to become a **Specialized Compost Supervisor** for the Ontario Mushroom Company, a cooperative company made up of Ontario mushroom growers. Unfortunately, in spite of William having received special on-the-job training and a competitive salary, he was forced to leave Canada in 2015 due to the cumulative duration rule (4 in 4 out) so he returned to Guatemala. He has been working on finding a way to return to Canada to work. The Canadian mushroom companies recognize William's global talent and have been actively seeking his return to Canada in order to return to his supervisory compost position because they require his specialized skill-set and experience.



The Canadian mushroom companies recognize William's global talent and have been actively seeking his return to Canada in order to return to his supervisory compost position because they require his specialized skill-set and experience.

Progression

William started working with Greenwood Mushroom Farm as an entry-level harvester in September, 2010. He assisted with the construction of the mushroom farm as well as a new compost facility, the Ontario Mushroom Company, in Toronto, Ontario. The Ontario Mushroom Company is a cooperative compost facility which includes Carleton Mushrooms, Greenwood Mushroom Farms, and Piccioni Bros. Mushroom Ltd. William was promoted to **Supervisor** of the compost facility in 2012, responsible for supervising a crew of four people and operation of heavy machinery. William was dedicated to the job and did not mind working the night shift that begins at 2:00 am. This facility has a precise program in place for hygiene and this is critical to the facility's success. If all hygiene steps and processes are not followed as prescribed, there could be food safety issues with the mushrooms affecting grocery store consumers. William has excellent skills and competencies such as attention to details which support this important role allowing him to become quickly recognized as a Specialized Compost Supervisor.



William Isai Velasquez Miranda Profile Continued

William has been living in Guatemala even though he is a Specialized Compost Supervisor with Canadian training and experience. **Unfortunately William's Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) under NOC 8252 Agricultural and Related Service Contractors and Managers (B) was originally denied.** The Ontario Mushroom Company and its cooperative farms, asked for his case to be re-assessed, and they finally received word **September 2017 that his LMIA has been approved** and William and his employers are excited to now be able to return to resume his compost supervisory role.

Training

While working at the Greenwood Mushroom Farm, William participated in several training offerings including English language training and on-the-job training. He also received valuable on-the-job training from Greenwood and Carleton Mushrooms for the Ontario Mushroom Company compost supervisory position. As a Supervisor, William also trained other members of his team for their jobs, including how to work safely and follow procedures and company policies.

Working and Living in Rural Canada

William enjoyed living in rural Canada and would welcome the opportunity to return as a Temporary Foreign Worker.

He said an advantage of living in rural Canada is that everyone in the community knows each other. He found the people to be friendly, helpful, and outgoing. He did not encounter any discrimination while living here; something he noted as very important.



Family

He is also seeking a Pathway to Permanency as he would also appreciate being able to immigrate to Canada with his family as his wife and daughter are also interested in immigrating.

Wages and Retention

William liked the friendly people and environment at the Ontario Mushroom Company. His supervisory salary provides him with a good standard of living. He also sees the benefits of the performance based pay structure which allows most harvesters to earn wages well above the minimum wage.



Mushroom Worker Profile: Adrian Steadman from Wellington, Ontario (Highline Produce Limited)

Adrian Steadman Profile

Adrian has been living in Canada since 2007. Adrian worked as a mason in his home country of Jamaica. Adrian arrived in Canada in January of 2007 as a Temporary Foreign Worker and began his career at Highline Produce Limited as an entry-level harvester.

Progression

In Jamaica, a government representative gives out 'farmer cards' every year. At the time, Adrian was not working so he asked for a card. Upon receiving his farmer card, it took six months for a call back and then two more years before arriving in Canada. After beginning his career as an entry-level harvester ten years ago, Adrian is now a Harvesting Supervisor. Adrian has participated in several training offerings including: Ladder Safety, WHMIS, MOL Worker Awareness Training, and Bullying and Harassment Training. He is awaiting Leadership training to support **his new role of Supervisor**.



Working and Living in Rural Canada

Adrian enjoys living in rural Canada. He said he also lived in the rural area in Jamaica. He likes rural living as it provides room to farm, fresh air, and a non-city atmosphere. Adrian, his wife, and his two children here in Canada (he has two others back in Jamaica) attend church, picnics, camping, bible study, and social nights. His son and daughter play soccer and he participated in a half-marathon in 2014.

Wages and Retention

The work environment at Highline Produce is excellent and job security is high. Adrian likes working in an environment with so many different people and cultures. He has learned to speak a bit of Spanish and Thai. Working at Highline enables Adrian to provide for his family, which is the greatest thing in his opinion. Adrian also likes the bonus structure and progressive pay compensation. He provides workers with something to aim for or to motivate them. "You make more if you put more effort into it."

Comments

Having been through the experience of the Temporary Foreign Worker program, Adrian offered some suggestions that might improve the process for others. He is still in the process of trying to get his two children from Jamaica to Canada. *"It is difficult if you are married [back home] and they don't have a VISA. They cannot come to visit you. I do not have any problem with the country's rules, but at least allow visits. The opportunity is great. What you can achieve is excellent. If I had to do it over again, I would. I never looked to move on. I don't need to travel far. It is just perfect."*



Mushroom Worker Profile: Arianne Dangkiw and Rose Chen Angligen from Queensville, Ontario (Holburne Mushroom Farm)

Arianne Dangkiw Profile

Adrianne has been living in Canada since July, 2015. Adrianne is from the Philippines. She is a self-motivated worker with the ability to work well under pressure. Adrianne arrived in Canada as a Temporary Foreign Worker in 2015 and began her career at Holburne Mushroom Farm as an entry-level mushroom harvester.

Rose Chen Angligen Profile

Rose has also been living in Canada since July, 2015. Rose was a farm worker in her home country, the Philippines. Rose arrived in Canada as a Temporary Foreign Worker in 2015 and began her career at Holburne Mushroom Farm as an entry-level mushroom harvester.



Progression

Both women are relatively new to Holburne Mushroom Farm; as such, they are still in the same roles of mushroom harvester. Since beginning their jobs just under two years ago, they have both participated in the company's orientation program including audio visual training for safety procedures.

Working and Living in Rural Canada

Adrianne enjoys living in rural Canada and is interested in immigrating. She said the advantages of living in rural Canada include little to no traffic, and low to no crime. Rose also enjoys living in rural Canada and would welcome the opportunity to immigrate. Her job enables her to save money which she considers a key advantage of living in rural Canada.

Wages and Retention

The work of a mushroom harvester at Holburne Mushroom Farm is not difficult, which Adrianne and Rose like. Both women like the bonus and progressive pay compensation offered by the farm.

Comments

Both women like that the Agricultural Stream allows for a longer period of work than the SAWP, and they would like the ability to become Canadian citizens, *"The federal government should give the Temporary Foreign Workers a chance to immigrate or live in rural Canada and provide more opportunities."*

Mushroom Worker Profile: Kamson Sawetwong from Ashburn, Ontario (Greenwood Mushroom Farm)



Kamson Sawetwong Profile

Kamson arrived in Canada in 2006 as a Temporary Foreign Worker and began her career at Greenwood Mushroom Farm as an entry-level harvester. Kamson was a housewife and babysitter in her home country of Thailand.



Progression

After beginning her career as an entry-level harvester eleven years ago, Kamson is ready for the next step of becoming a supervisor. Kamson has participated in several training opportunities including: English language training and safety training. Kamson would be a good fit and well positioned to train harvesters at Greenwood.

She is hoping she will be successful with Ontario's new Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program in-demand stream which includes a new option for harvesters.

Working and Living in Rural Canada

Kamson enjoys living in rural Canada and feels that Canada has so much to offer. Over the past eleven years, Kamson sent her children to school and to college. She has also bought a house in Thailand.

Wages and Retention

The work environment at Greenwood Mushroom Farm is excellent and job security is high. Kamson likes working at Greenwood and is happy with the level of pay.

Comments

Kamson arrived as a Temporary Foreign Worker in 2006 and has since tried to immigrate. She has not been successful. She will continue to apply as she is very interested in immigrating to Canada and continuing her career at Greenwood Mushroom Farm.



Mushroom Worker Profile: Claude Wilson from Blenheim, Ontario (Peeters Mushroom Inc.)

Claude Wilson Profile

Claude arrived in Canada in 2013 as a Temporary Foreign Worker and began his career at Peeters Mushroom Farm as an entry-level mushroom harvester. Claude was a mechanic in his home country of Jamaica.



Progression

After beginning his career as mushroom harvester just over four years ago. During his time with Peeters Mushroom Inc., Claude has participated in several training offerings including:

- Standard First Aid and CPR Training
- Workplace Harassment and Workplace Violence Training
- Chemical Safety Training
- Sanitation Training
- Various work safety and food safety training

Claude is also an active member of the Joint Health and Safety Committee. **Claude is ready to move up to become a Supervisor** as he has gained special skills and knowledge through on-the-job training while working on the Peeters Mushroom Farm which make him an ideal candidate for a supervisory role.

Comments

Claude's goal in coming to Canada was to find a job that would provide him with the opportunity to stay in Canada. As a mushroom farm worker, the Agricultural Stream is a good fit. Claude would like to see the processing of the paperwork faster, easier, and more affordable. Attempting to find an immigration pathway to permanency is challenging as the lawyer fees can be very expensive and there is a lot of paperwork to complete.



Mushroom Worker Profile: Hinre Yako from Leamington, Ontario (Highline Produce Limited)

Hinre Yako Profile

Hinre has been living in Canada since 1997. Originally from Duhok, Iraq, Hinre worked in construction there and then belt manufacturing in Turkey. Hinre arrived in Canada in July of 1997 and worked as a painter before hearing about an opportunity at Highline Mushrooms.



Progression

After beginning his career as a **Runner** twenty years ago, Hinre moved into the growing department as a **Helper** after one year and is now a **Senior Grower and Crew Department Manager** at Highline. In his role as Senior Grower, Hinre is in charge of growing mushrooms, controlling the quality and size of the mushrooms, and maintaining weekly production needs. As Crew Department Manager, he is responsible for scheduling to ensure the work is completed on a timely basis. Hinre has participated in several hands-on training opportunities including: Ladder Safety, WHMIS, Forklift Operation, CPR, Lockout Training, and Scissor Lift Training. He has also participated in language training, management courses, and leadership training.

Working and Living in Canada

Hinre enjoys living in Canada with his family. He is very involved in his church community, including fundraising activities, parties, picnics, and maintenance. He is also involved in the church's youth group. Hinre enjoys playing soccer and intends to coach youth team in the future.

Wages and Retention

Hinre likes that his job is different from one day to another. He has the opportunity to communicate with many people in different cultures and to works well with management. Hinre likes the harvester's performance bonus pay structure. It shows that hard work is appreciated and awarded by management and provides employees with the opportunity to share in some of the company's profits.

Comments

Hinre did not come to Canada as a Temporary Foreign Worker however he does have two suggestions for improvements from a new immigrant's perspective. These are:

- *Make the paperwork easier to understand. Language is a barrier; providing translations would be very helpful; and*
- *Have more Canadian offices available abroad. This would lead to less travel time to get paperwork completed. Some people travel 7-8 hours just to pick up one piece of paper.*



Mushroom Worker Profile: Marlon Gordon from Wellington, Ontario (Highline Produce Limited)

Marlon Gordon Profile

In February, 2018, Marlon will celebrate his twelfth year in Canada. Marlon was a farmer in St. Mary's, Jamaica. He farmed pigs, as did his father. Marlon arrived in Canada as a Temporary Foreign Worker (February 2006) and began his career at Highline Produce Limited as an entry-level harvester. He obtained his Permanent Residency in 2015.

Progression

After beginning his career as an entry-level harvester eleven years ago, Marlon is now a **Maintenance C Trainee**. He has been with the maintenance department for two years. Marlon likes that the work with Highline Produce is steady. The company grows mushrooms 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. He says, "The greatest thing about this company is showing you have a job - as long as Highline keeps its doors open, you have nothing to worry about."



Highline Produce provides training to its employees. Over his time with the company, Marlon has participated in Ladder Safety, Lock-out Training, Fire Safety, Forklift Operation, Loader Operation, Skyjack Operation, WHMIS, MOL Worker Awareness Training, Bullying and Harassment Training, Harvest Training, and Good Manufacturing Practices. He is also a member of the Safety Committee and a JHSC Representative.

Working and Living in Rural Canada

Marlon enjoys living in rural Canada because he gets to do what he loves most - farming. Marlon has the space to garden and grows his own vegetables rather than buying them. He boasts that he and his wife "have beans right through the summer, with garlic!" In addition to farming, Marlon volunteers at the local arena as a time keeper for hockey games. He and his family also attend church.

Wages and Retention

The work environment at Highline Produce is excellent and job security is high. When Marlon began with the company in 2006, everyone would say, "We are a family here," and over time you learn that it's true. The employees spend a lot of time together and make sure each other are okay. With respect to retention efforts, Marlon said: *"Highline Produce shows employees it cares by offering bonuses, and performance incentives like piece rate compensation, and profit sharing. They show you appreciation for hard work, for doing a good job. We look forward to the picnic and stuff. You get to share that time with the company, you get to spend time together and bring your family and everyone meets your wife and kids. It is a day when work is really fun."*



Marlon Gordon Profile Continued

Comments

Marlon's suggestion include: *"Make it [the program] more accessible for people to get a work permit and for companies to have more workers involved. When we came here, we came under harvesters. We are on a farm, if your permit says harvester, you can only be a harvester, but there are other jobs on the farm that need doing. It is limited; **you cannot grow in the company even though the opportunities to grow are there. You can't even apply for supervisor even if you are capable of the job because of the restrictions.**"*

Marlon added it is an honour to work in this program, as it was for his father.

"My dad worked in the program for years. Now he is a successful business man in my country. He built his business through working here. I did the same. I had my farm there. I was able to help my parents build the farm - they bought 30 more acres. My family has been able to advance. If I wasn't working, I could not ensure my son would be able to go to high school. Being here is what made my son be able to go to high school. I have helped my sisters go to college.

My parents did not have that money. For me, being here was one of the best things that happened to me and my family. I grow my savings 20% every year and I achieved more than I thought I ever could. This

program is excellent - job, Highline (excellent company), this is the best thing. It is not every time you can say you have permanent work. For us with farming is in demand - people need food. I came to Canada with \$150 that Highline gave me. I have a house, helped my parents, helped my sisters through college, my son... it is amazing for me."

I came to Canada with \$150 that Highline gave me. I now have a house, helped my parents, helped my sisters through college, and my son [through high school]. It is amazing for me."



Mushroom Worker Profile: Yuwadee Ketthanet from Leamington, Ontario (Highline Produce Limited)

Yuwadee Ketthanet Profile

Yuwadee has been living in Canada since 2007. Originally from Thailand, Yuwadee arrived in Canada in November of 2007 as a Temporary Foreign Worker and began her career at Highline Produce Limited as an entry-level harvester. Yuwadee is now a Permanent Resident of Canada as she married a Canadian citizen.



Progression

After beginning her career as an entry-level harvester ten years ago, Yuwadee has also held the roles of **Harvest QCT**, **Packing QCT**, and now **Shipping Clerk**. Yuwadee enjoys the office atmosphere and her interactions with drivers and customers. She has participated in many training opportunities including: MOL Worker Awareness, WHMIS, Food Safety, Bullying and Harassment, Harvest Training, on-the-job QCT training for harvesting and packing, and in-house training specific to shipping and receiving including computer training on shipping software.

Working and Living in Rural Canada

Yuwadee enjoys living in rural Canada. She thinks Canada is beautiful, particularly the land, and she and her husband love to travel on the weekends. She aspires to see more of Canada by exploring the country in a recreation vehicle.

Wages and Retention

Yuwadee likes that her workday is 8-9 hours and that she works in an office setting. She likes being able to work in a small group because you get to know each other well. She loves working on the mushroom farm because she is treated like a family member. While still working on her English, she feels comfortable talking to her co-workers and supervisors and feels that should she need something, she will be assisted. *"I like this job a lot and I like the challenges of learning new things. I like that Highline gives you the chance to achieve your dreams by being open and supporting us as we grow our career."*

Comments

Yuwadee also has experience working in Taiwan where she fulfilled a six-year work permit. The regulations in Taiwan state that you cannot be reapply to work there unless married so Yuwadee did not return. Following her experience in Taiwan, she wondered why people could not obtain Permanent Residency once they have worked and paid taxes for a certain amount of time (instead of having to get married). **The regulations in Canada are in fact similar to Taiwan in terms of marriage and Permanent Resident status.** However, as a happily married woman, leaving the country is not something Yuwadee needs to consider.



Mushroom Worker Profile: Jaime Antonio Divino Salud from Osgood, Ontario (Carleton Mushroom Farms Ltd.)

Jaime Antonio Divino Salud Profile

While working on a cruise ship, Jaime met a woman from Ottawa who has a good friend who works on a mushroom farm in Canada. As they talked more about his work and the opportunities in Canada, the woman told him about a neighboring farm that was looking for workers. The connection was made between Jaime and **Carleton Mushroom Farms**. Jaime came to Canada from the Philippines in 2011 through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. He began his career at Carleton Mushroom Farms as an entry-level mushroom grower on May 17, 2011. Jaime took the initiative and learned through on-the-job training while job shadowing the mushroom farm Grower. Forced to leave Canada in 2015 due to the cumulative duration rule (4 in 4 out), Jaime returned to the Philippines and his previous job working for a cruise ship line, Holland America Line. He is seeking to return to his grower position and seeking an immigration pathway to permanency option for himself and his family.



TRAINING

While working with Carleton Mushroom Farms, Jaime participated in several training offerings including English language training and on-the-job training. He received training specific to the chemicals used on the farm, is familiar with Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) and personal protective equipment. Jaime also helped his Production Manager to deliver training to other workers from the Philippines. Carleton Mushroom Farms has employees from many different countries around the world, ten different languages are spoken on the farm by the new immigrants and refugees working on the farm. **Jaime also brings huge value as he can communicate with many of the farm's employees.**

Progression

Jaime started working with Carleton Mushroom Farms as a General Farm Worker in May, 2011. He assisted with harvesting and learned a lot about the Grower occupation that is a very important job on a mushroom farm. The Grower makes the production decisions ensuring the mushroom crop is successfully grown and ensures all bio-safety rules are followed. Jaime received a vast amount of on-the-job training from Carleton Mushrooms where he gained **experience and special skills** needed to grow mushrooms. Jaime was very good at his job and was a valued employee. Jaime returned to the Philippines after he was forced to leave in 2015, and Carleton Mushrooms continues to seek his return because they value **Jaime's global talent and competencies** which includes keen interest and drive for the job, his attention to detail, and the on-the-job training he received while working for Carleton Mushrooms. With his job shadowing and training, Jaime is well positioned to **become an Assistant Grower** in the future.



Jaime Antonio Divino Salud Continued

Jaime is also interested in returning to Canada and would like to take his family with him. Jaime's Labour Market Impact Assessment was approved in April 2017 under the TFWP Agricultural Stream, as a **General Farm Worker NOC 8431 (C)** but as of **September 2017 (5 months later)** his **Work Permit is still not approved**. Jaime would be a good candidate for the province of Ontario's new in-demand immigration stream offered by the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) and Jaime and his employers are eager to try this new immigration avenue as they have tried many other times through the OINP.

Working and Living in Canada

Jaime enjoyed living in Canada and would welcome the opportunity to return as a Temporary Foreign Worker and/or a new immigrant. The Carleton Mushroom Farm is in the town of Osgoode, Ontario, 30 minutes away from Ottawa, a relatively short commute. Jaime identified several advantages of living in Canada, including: the peace and quiet, the weather, Dairy Queen, being able to stroll along the Rideau Canal, Parliament Hill, and the many parks in and around Ottawa. While living in Canada, Jaime was active in his local church and attended many community events.



Family

Jaime is seeking an immigration pathway to permanency for himself and he would also appreciate his family being able to immigrate to Canada as well: his wife, daughter and his son. His wife, Sally, possesses a Bachelor of Science degree in Hotel & Restaurant Management and his daughter is entering her eleventh year in school. His son, who is graduating college in October has just turned twenty-one-years-old which could exclude him from being able to immigrate with the rest of the family.

Comments

He was satisfied with the compensation and appreciated the company planned events such as family BBQ's for all employees and their loved ones, Christmas lunch and bonus each year, New Year's Day Off, and free access to wifi. Jaime explains what he liked best about Carleton Mushrooms, *"I liked working as a Grower Assistant and I am very interested in the job. I also appreciated Carleton Mushrooms management who are supportive and down-to-earth type of people. They look after their employees. For example, I remember one of our packers had an accident; the Farm Manager himself brought her to the hospital/clinic and paid for all the expenses incurred and made sure the worker was alright. In my work experience at different jobs around the world, I had never seen that sort of personal attention and compassionate concern the Carleton Mushrooms manager provided, shown by any other employer before. I still hope to return to my job at Carleton Mushrooms and my family would also like to immigrate"*

Mushroom Farm Case Study

Experience Employing Immigrants

A mushroom farm with 1,080 workers employs 60 new immigrants whom they recruited through immigration settlement agencies and 280 Temporary Foreign Workers through the Agricultural Stream. Their farm represents a diverse workforce with employees from 20 different countries who speak 12 different languages.



Recruitment, Hiring New Canadians and Refugees: The mushroom growers' human resources (HR) team approaches immigrant organizations to communicate that they have rewarding, meaningful work available at a fair wage. The farm has aligned itself with 2 immigrant organizations. The company makes an effort to communicate with new Canadians so they feel at home in the workplace. Frontline supervisors appreciate the fact that employees come from different cultures with different life experiences and demonstrate patience and a willingness to explain things a second way when necessary. By bridging partnerships with immigrant organizations, the grower has continued to be a front runner providing job opportunities for immigrants in the Haitian, Sudanese, Cambodian, Arabic, and Asian communities.

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

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

For many immigrants, the employer finds that they end up being the immigrant's first or second job in Canada. The average length of employment is 8 years, with some employees remaining employed with the company for 20-30 years. The company works very closely with community partners and has had a successful history of employing refugees. Some have stayed until retirement with their children working in



management positions; others have stayed for a time, learned English and then returned to school (while working part time) to pursue university degrees and professional designations.

Language Training: English as a Second Language training is provided 2 days per week on site after work. The company pays any costs related to the training. The farm translates all communications into 12 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. Typical items for translation include health and safety messages and the bi-weekly corporate newsletter.

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

Benefits: Aside from receiving a regular pay cheque, employees can also enjoy many other benefits, including:

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

Travel Allowance: 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.

Effective Human Resources (HR) Practices: The grower implements low cost, big return human resources practices. For example, they have a 'Values in Action' Program and they recognize employees who demonstrate the values at work and in the community. For example, employees who demonstrate flexibility around harvest work schedules and participate in community events such as the MS Walk have their names entered into a prize draw. Winners of monthly Values in Action Awards are issued ballots for a chance to win a day off with pay at the annual company family picnic.

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





mushrooms.canada

Mushrooms Canada High Growth Fact Sheet

Economic Impacts to the Canadian Economy

The mushroom sector contributes over \$900 million to the Canadian economy^{xlix} in direct impact sales and downstream economic activity. Close to 134,000 tons of mushrooms are produced in Canada each year:ⁱ 50% of the production is in Ontario, 35% in British Columbia, 10% in the Prairies and 5% in Quebec and the Maritimes^{li}. Production, sales and exports are increasing. According to the Census of Agriculture there are 194 mushroom farms in Canada in 2016^{lii}. The sector provides year-round, permanent jobs in rural Canadian communities for over 4,330^{liii} workers.



Exports: Mushroom exports increased from \$115,972,000 to \$220,392,027 million from 2012 to 2016.

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
115,972,008	130,780,219	141,613,679	189,193,619	220,392,027

Source: Trade Data Online, Statistics Canada and US Census Bureau, Total Exports Mushrooms^{liv}

Top Markets: The United States and Japan are Canadian mushroom growers' two top export markets. In 2016, Canadian mushroom exports to the US were valued at \$194,996,410^{lv} and exports to Japan were valued at \$18,398,779^{lvi}. Canada imports 45 million lb. (20,600 tons) of canned or processed mushrooms, mostly from China^{lvii}



Employment: The mushroom sector employs 4,330^{lviii} employees and is made up of 73% Canadian workers according to recent research conducted by the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC). Mushroom farm wages and salaries provide a direct impact to the Canadian economy of \$163,876,561 per year^{lix}. Labour costs make up between 35 to 51 percent of total mushroom farm expenses; making labour costs the single largest expense for mushroom farm operations^{lx}. Mushroom growers require a dependable, skilled and experienced workforce. An ongoing chronic worker shortage contributes to producers being unable to: meet current production targets for domestic consumer demand and expand operations to meet trade and marketing opportunities.

Rural Canada Impacts: Mushroom farms are located in rural Canada due to the farming and composting activities that need to take place where there is less population, and where there is also less of a labour pool to draw on. Mushroom farms are often the largest employer and provide significant economic benefits to the rural towns and areas where they are located.

Technology Investments: Canadian mushroom farms are working with academic institutes, computer science agencies, and equipment suppliers on robotic technology that could reduce labour requirements. The mushroom industry is investing in robotic picking technology today that is expected to take over ten years to develop for commercial growers. This demonstrates a significant response to labour shortage issues that mushroom growers are facing. This is positioning Canada as a mushroom robotics leader on the world stage.



Expansion Plans: In the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council study, 10 of the companies interviewed reported having expansion plans including upgrading their farm equipment and increasing investments in innovation. These companies cite access to labour as their major expansion constraint.



- ⁱ George Morris Centre, Economic Impact of Temporary Foreign Workers in the Canadian Mushroom Industry, October 2013, Al Mussell and Bob Seguin
- ⁱⁱ *ibid*
- ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.mushrooms.ca/production/>
- ^{iv} CANSIM table 004-0200, Census of Agriculture, farms classified by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), <http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a26?lang=eng&id=40200>
- ^v <http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a26?lang=eng&retrLang=eng&id=0010012&&pattern=&stByVal=1&p1=1&p2=31&tabMode=dataTable&csid=>
- ^{vi} *ibid*
- ^{vii} *ibid*
- ^{viii} George Morris Centre, Economic Impact of Temporary Foreign Workers in the Canadian Mushroom Industry, October 2013, Al Mussell and Bob Seguin
- ^{ix} George Morris Centre, Economic Impact of Temporary Foreign Workers in the Canadian Mushroom Industry, October 2013, Al Mussell and Bob Seguin
- ^x Industry vacancy rate average of 1.8% is based on research and results of Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council's Labour Market Information employer survey 2014
- ^{xi} Source: Statistics Canada. Labour Force Survey, special request Table Number 1017_10Table 1.ivt
- ^{xii} George Morris Centre, Economic Impact of Temporary Foreign Workers in the Canadian Mushroom Industry, October 2013, Al Mussell and Bob Seguin
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- ^{xxii} George Morris Centre, Economic Impact of Temporary Foreign Workers in the Canadian Mushroom Industry, October 2013, Al Mussell and Bob Seguin
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- ^{xxv} <http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3VD.pl?Function=getVD&TV=122372&CVD=122376&CPV=8252&CST=01012011&CLV=4&MLV=4>
- ^{xxvi} https://news.ontario.ca/mci/en/2017/08/new-immigration-program-to-support-agriculture-and-construction-sectors.html?utm_source=CAHRC+Partners+%2F+Partenaires+du+CCRHA&utm_campaign=9ca39ff0ed-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_08_31&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_826ed6df0e-9ca39ff0ed-451029745
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- ^{xxxii} http://www.wecartech.com/wecfiles/stats_new/2017/sep/
- ^{xxxiii} http://www.wecartech.com/wecfiles/stats_new/2017/sep/
- ^{xxxiv} * The reported median wage is the median of the extreme (min. and max.) wages paid by all farm enterprises.



- xxxv * The reported median wage is the median of the extreme (min. and max.) wages paid by all farm enterprises
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CANADIAN MUSHROOM AGRIWORKFORCE

MUSHROOMS

9.7%



National Job Vacancy Rate



CANADIAN MUSHROOM AGRIWORKFORCE

Mushroom farms hire Canadians first

WORKFORCE

73%
CANADIANS

194

mushroom farms in
Canada in 2016

4000

mushroom sector
jobs in Canada

PERMANENT, YEAR-ROUND WORK

HIGH GROWTH/ HIGH DEMAND



ADDS
\$900
MILLION
to the Canadian
economy

134,000 TONS
of mushrooms produced
in Canada

LABOUR COSTS = up to **50%** of farm expenses

Top Export Markets are US and Japan
RURAL CHALLENGE

RURAL QUALITY LIVING WAGE

Harvester Wage:
from minimum wage to \$29.88/hr
(Performance bonus allows
Harvesters to earn up to \$29.88/hr)

Supervisors
\$35,000-\$80,600/yr

Managers
\$42,500-\$171,000/yr

FARMS OFFER GOOD
BENEFIT PACKAGES



Welcome to rural Canada

Immigrants and international
workers **stay working** on
mushroom farms **on average**
11 years.

Mushroom Farms
are proud to offer
settlement support

► language training
& community
integration and
other support

Mushroom
Farms would like to
welcome **870 TFWs**
to become
new immigrants
in 2017 across
Canada



CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL
HUMAN RESOURCE COUNCIL
CONSEIL CANADIEN POUR LES
RESSOURCES HUMAINES EN AGRICULTURE



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