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Canadian Agricultural
Human Resource Council



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BENCHMARKING AGRICULTURAL COMPENSATION: **2024 SURVEY OF COMPENSATION PRACTICES IN CANADIAN AGRICULTURE**





Overview

Across Canada, the highly competitive nature of the talent marketplace has made it an increasingly difficult landscape for agricultural producers to navigate. This salary survey and human resource benchmarking initiative equips producers with relevant and practical data resources to better compete in today's workplace.

Labour Market

The Canadian agriculture labour market experiences challenges somewhat counter to the overall Canadian job market. Forecasts expect the Canadian job market to slow down in 2024, with increasing unemployment rates from labour availability. However, in agriculture a labour shortage exists. Producers find it difficult to fill vacancies to meet commodity demand in both the domestic and global food chain. Recruiting difficulties like finding applicants with the required skills was reported as a top challenge by Canadian agriculture and food companies according to the 2022 AgCareers.com Agriculture & Food HR Review. This has resulted in an increased focus for agricultural employers to retain existing talent with strategies such as higher compensation, training and development and workplace flexibility reported in 2023. This also requires agriculture employers to be armed with compensation data and trends to effectively compete with strong wage rates and benefits when hiring critical talent.



Summary of Findings

The summary of findings provides an analysis of the collected data in the following categories:

- Compensation Trends – Data discoveries and tabulated results by role and industry
 - Data Discoveries – Farm Manager, Farm Supervisor, Farm Worker, Farm Labourer and Specialized Roles
 - Tabulated Results – By role and industry, including benchmarks for Weighted Average, 25th percentile, Median and 75th percentile
 - Insights by Role – Comparison of roles across all industry/commodity types
- Non-Monetary Compensation Highlights – Benefits data by industry/commodity
- Areas of Improvement – Opportunities for talent growth and impact

Compensation Trends

Data Discoveries

Data was collected from a total of 140 organizations participating in the survey. There were 609 individual employees captured by the survey for compensation benchmarking. Due to the number of responses, data captured is reported only by occupation and industry. Across all roles, the weighted average and median hourly rate increased with each level of increased role responsibility. In comparing industry/commodities, the weighted average for the farm manager role ranged from \$29.56 to \$37.95 and the median ranged from \$30.00 to \$39.90. Grain & oilseed paid the highest weighted average and median for farm managers, followed by finfish. Dairy paid the lowest farm manager wage across all industries by an estimated \$4.00 an hour. Farm supervisor pay ranged from \$20.25 to \$31.00 median and \$21.32 to \$31.20 for the weighted average. The highest paying commodity group was grain & oilseed; the lowest was dairy.

Farm worker pay ranged from \$18.00 to \$28.00 median and \$18.72 to \$27.19 for the weighted average. Apiculture paid the lowest hourly rate (\$18.00 median) for farm workers, while grain & oilseed paid the highest (\$28.00 median). Farm labourer roles were paid the least and consistently ranged from \$16.50 to \$21.67 median and \$16.60 to \$21.50 for all the industries. Apiculture paid the lowest hourly rate (\$16.50 median) for farm labourers, while grain & oilseed paid the highest (\$21.67 median). Specialized roles hourly rates were \$25.00 median and \$26.75 weighted average, and ranged from \$22.00 in the 25th percentile to \$30.00 in the 75th percentile. For finfish farming, Manager positions ranked highest in the 75th percentile wage earnings and closely followed in all other categories, second only to grain & oilseed.





Tabulated Results

Definition of Key Terms	
No. of Orgs	The number of contributing organizations for the complete data set.
No. of EEs	The number of employees included in the data set.
Weighted Average	Weighted company average is each companies' simple company average times the number of company incumbents over the total number of incumbents.
25th Percentile	The 25th percentile represents what the bottom 25 per cent of companies would pay for the selected benchmark position. For the data set, 25 per cent would pay below this point and 75 per cent would pay above this data point.
Median	The median, or 50th percentile, represents the middle data point of what companies pay for a selected benchmark position.
75th Percentile	The 75th percentile represents what the bottom 75 per cent of companies would pay for the selected benchmark position. For the data set, 75 per cent would pay below this point and 25 per cent would pay above this data point.



Farm Manager	A farm manager is essential to overseeing activities related to planting, cultivating and harvesting plants or animals.					
Industry	No. of Orgs	No. of EEs	Weighted Average	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile
Grain & oilseed	7	15	\$37.95	\$37.75	\$39.90	\$40.00
Dairy	11	27	\$25.77	\$20.84	\$26.00	\$29.50
Swine	6	20	\$31.69	\$27.10	\$30.69	\$34.83
Finfish	5	13	\$36.73	\$34.50	\$39.00	\$42.00
Apiculture	8	16	\$29.56	\$22.75	\$30.00	\$36.00

Farm Supervisor	Supervises farm activities related to planting, cultivating and harvesting crops and growing, raising and harvesting marine plants and animals.					
Industry	No. of Orgs	No. of EEs	Weighted Average	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile
Grain & oilseed	5	10	\$31.20	\$29.38	\$31.00	\$35.00
Dairy	8	13	\$21.32	\$17.50	\$20.25	\$25.00
Swine	6	21	\$22.95	\$22.00	\$22.60	\$23.50
Finfish	5	6	\$25.40	\$17.46	\$29.99	\$30.41
Apiculture	16	43	\$22.77	\$18.00	\$23.00	\$27.00



Farm Worker		Performs activities related to planting, cultivating and harvesting crops; growing, raising and harvesting plants and animals; and operating farm machinery and equipment.				
Industry	No. of Orgs	No. of EEs	Weighted Average	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile
Grain & oilseed	13	32	\$27.19	\$25.00	\$28.00	\$29.75
Dairy	21	73	\$21.17	\$17.00	\$20.00	\$25.00
Swine	7	40	\$20.60	\$19.00	\$20.00	\$21.38
Finfish	5	11	\$22.31	\$16.53	\$24.81	\$26.32
Apiculture	25	121	\$18.72	\$17.00	\$18.00	\$20.00

Farm Labourer		Assists with activities related to planting, cultivating and harvesting crops and growing, raising and harvesting plants and animals. May operate farm machinery. Fully supervised.				
Industry	No. of Orgs	No. of EEs	Weighted Average	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile
Grain & oilseed	5	6	\$21.50	\$19.25	\$21.67	\$23.83
Dairy	14	40	\$19.02	\$16.55	\$18.00	\$20.00
Swine	6	30	\$18.97	\$17.50	\$18.27	\$20.00
Finfish	5	5	\$18.68	\$16.86	\$17.00	\$21.35
Apiculture	14	41	\$16.60	\$16.00	\$16.50	\$17.45



Insights by Role – All Commodity Types

Of the 609 employees benchmarked by the survey the most data was provided for farm workers, by 71 organizations, reporting 277 employees. There were more than 90 employees benchmarked for each role, with 37 or more organizations contributing data for each. The only exception occurred for specialized roles, where 26 employees were benchmarked by 12 organizations.

In terms of median wages, the farm labourer had the lowest hourly rate at \$17.57, followed by the farm worker at \$20.00. The farm supervisor was paid slightly more than the farm worker at \$23.00 per hour. The farm manager was paid significantly more than the labourer, worker and supervisor roles at \$32.00. Specialized roles paid more than most farm roles with the exception of the farm manager at \$23.00, compared to \$32.00 per hour.

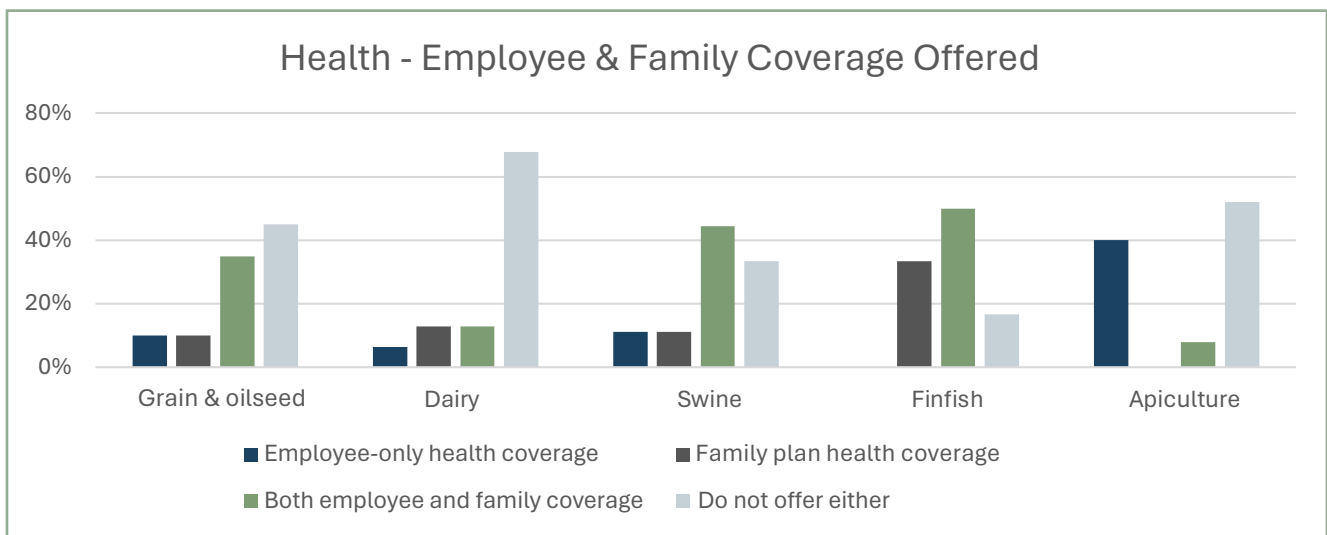
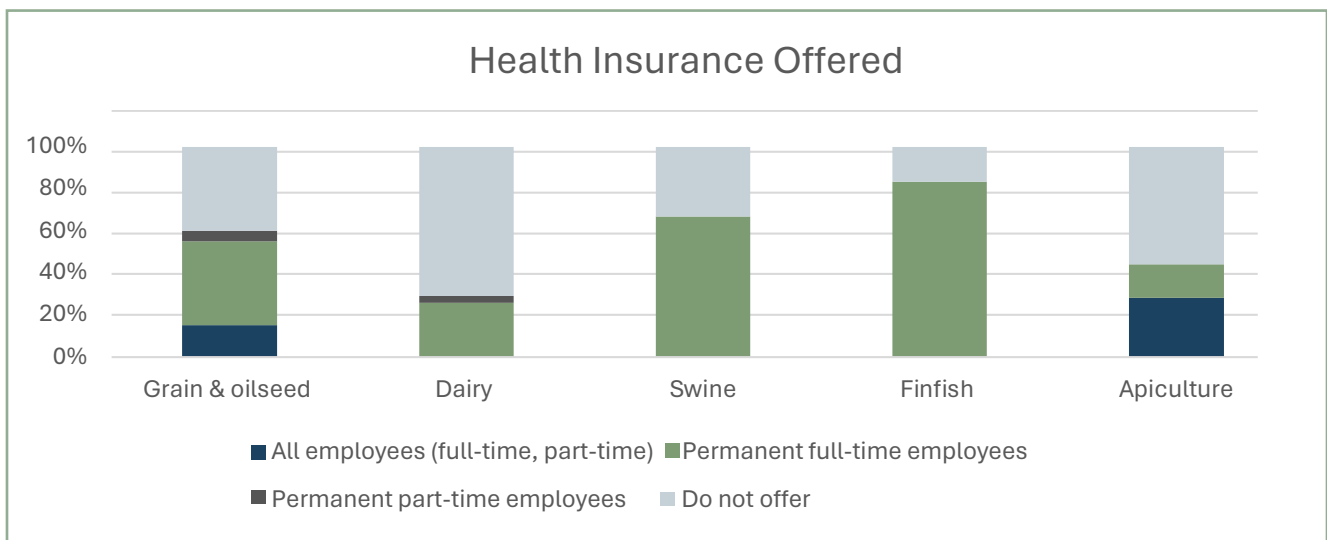
Role	No. of Orgs	No. of EEs	Weighted Average	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile
Farm Manager	37	91	\$31.69	\$25.00	\$32.00	\$38.00
Farm Supervisor	40	93	\$23.68	\$18.50	\$23.00	\$27.00
Farm Worker	71	277	\$20.81	\$17.50	\$20.00	\$23.00
Farm Labourer	44	122	\$18.23	\$16.50	\$17.57	\$20.00
Specialized Roles	12	26	\$26.75	\$22.00	\$25.00	\$30.00



Non-Monetary Compensation Highlights

Health Insurance

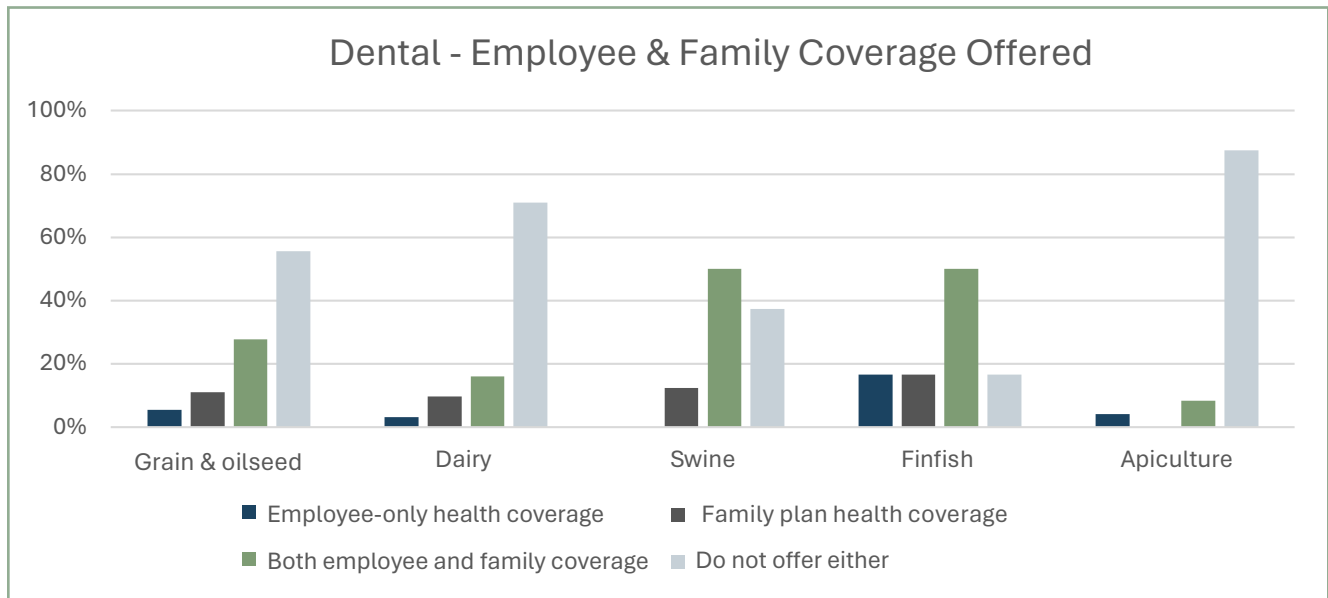
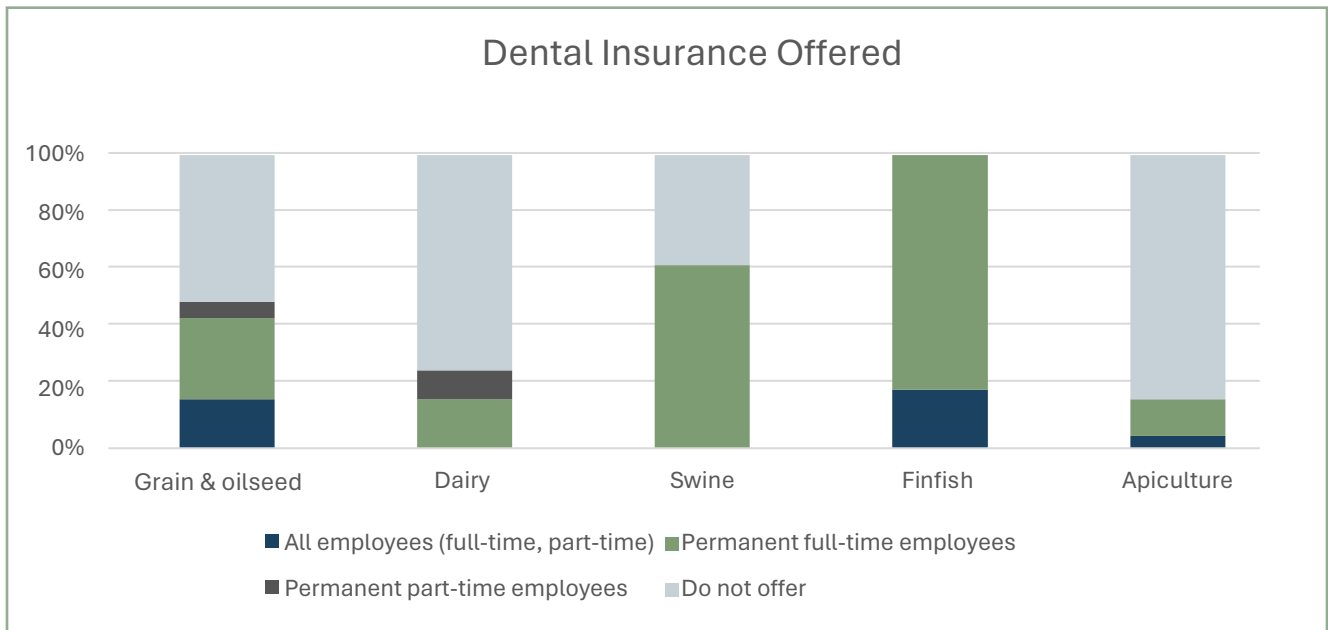
Overall, health insurance was offered by an average of 57 per cent of participants across all industries. Out of all industries surveyed, finfish was most likely to offer health insurance to employees, and 50 per cent offered both employee and a family coverage health plan. Swine employers were the next most likely to offer health insurance coverage with both employee and family coverage. Dairy was the least likely to offer health insurance, 71 per cent of participants report.





Dental Insurance

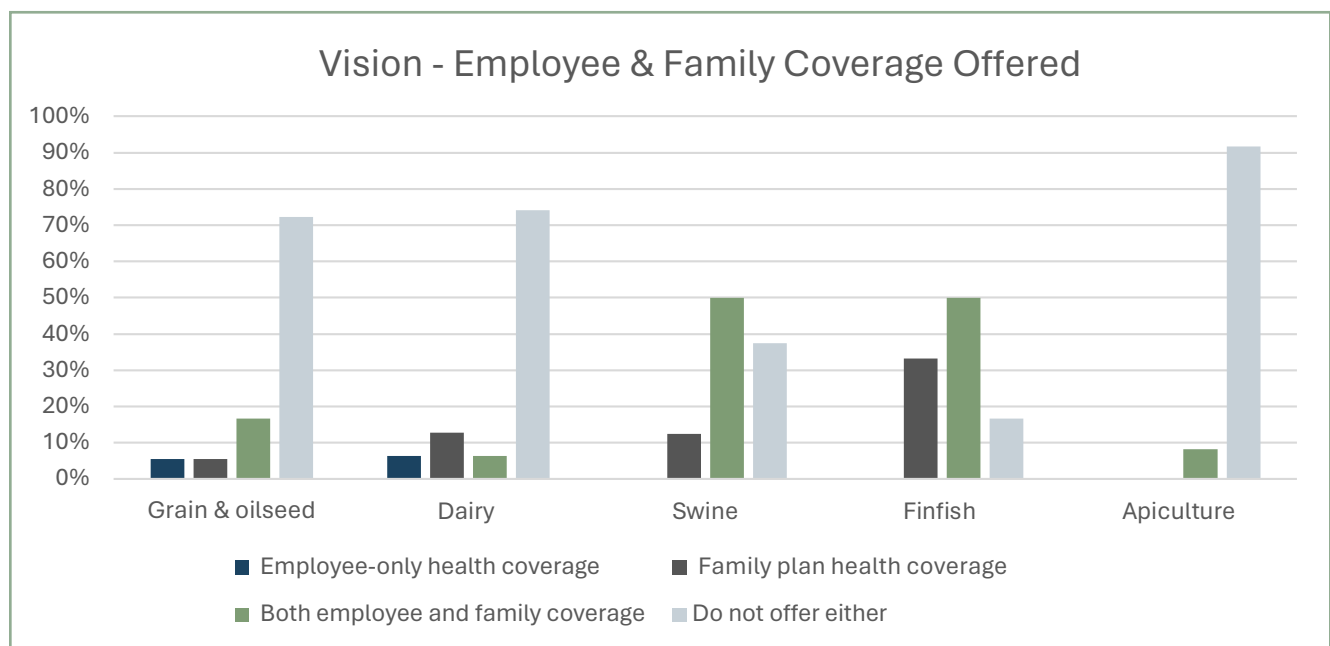
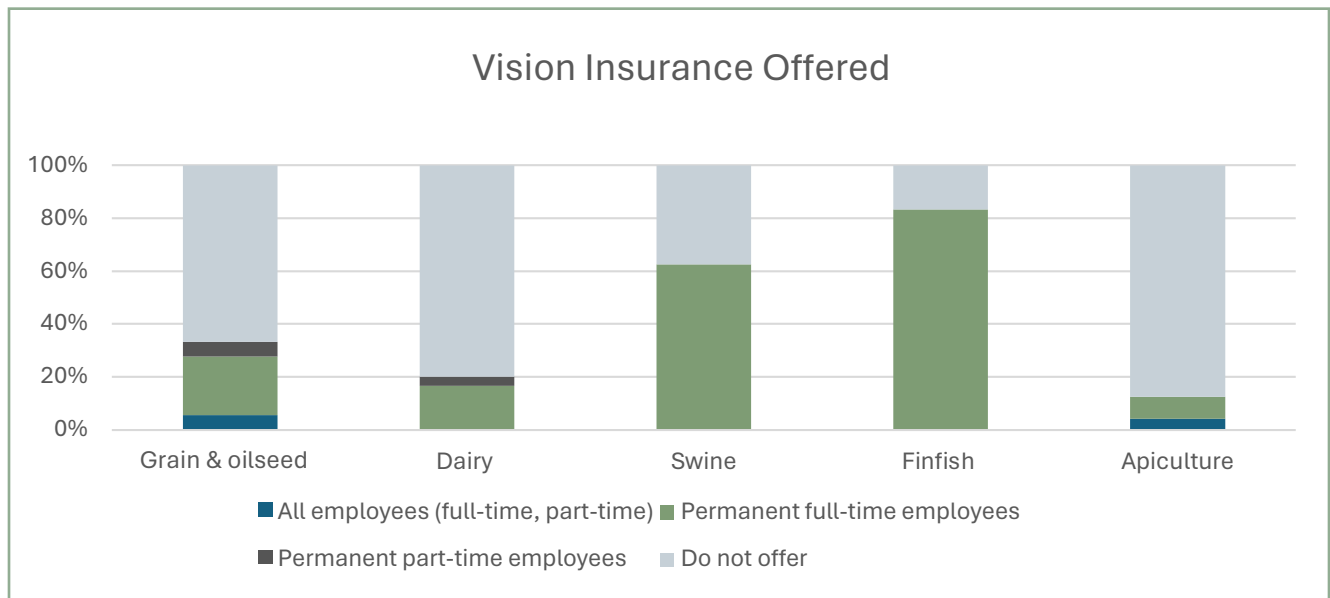
While it was not as common to offer dental insurance, 51 per cent on average noted that they do offer the benefit. The finfish and swine industries were most likely to offer benefits to permanent full-time employees, and they noted they offer both the employee and family coverage of the benefit. Apiculture (83 per cent) was least likely to offer dental insurance followed by dairy (73 per cent). Both finfish and swine employers were 50 per cent likely to offer both employee and family dental coverage plans.





Vision Insurance

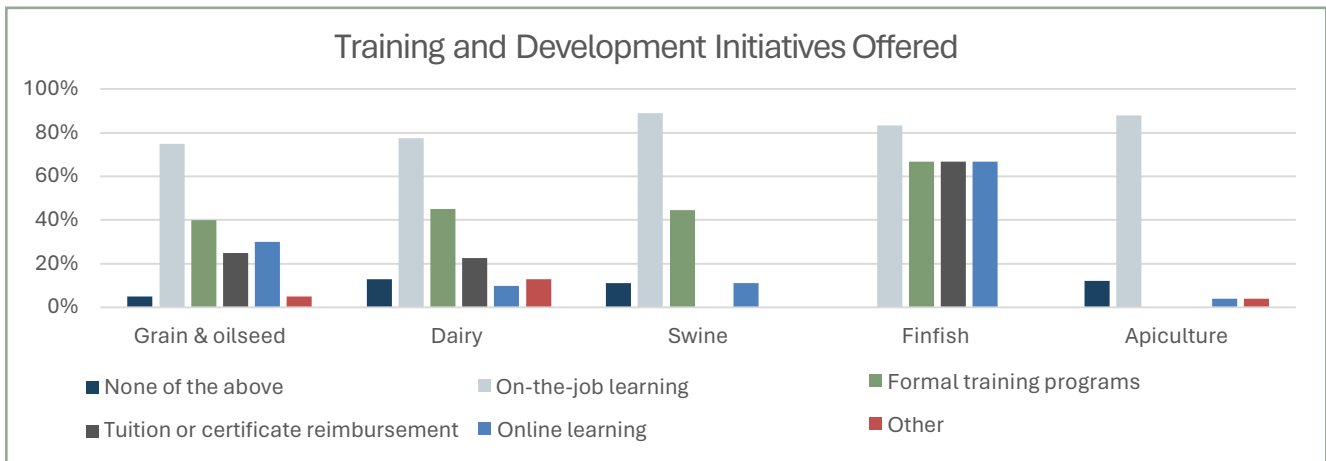
Fewer industry employers offered vision insurance than health and dental coverage, on average only 42 per cent. Finfish and swine were more likely to offer coverage and least likely to offer vision insurance. Apiculture and dairy, with 88% and 80% respectively not offering this benefit, were the least likely to offer vision insurance. Both finfish and swine employers, were 50 per cent likely to offer both employee and family vision coverage plans.





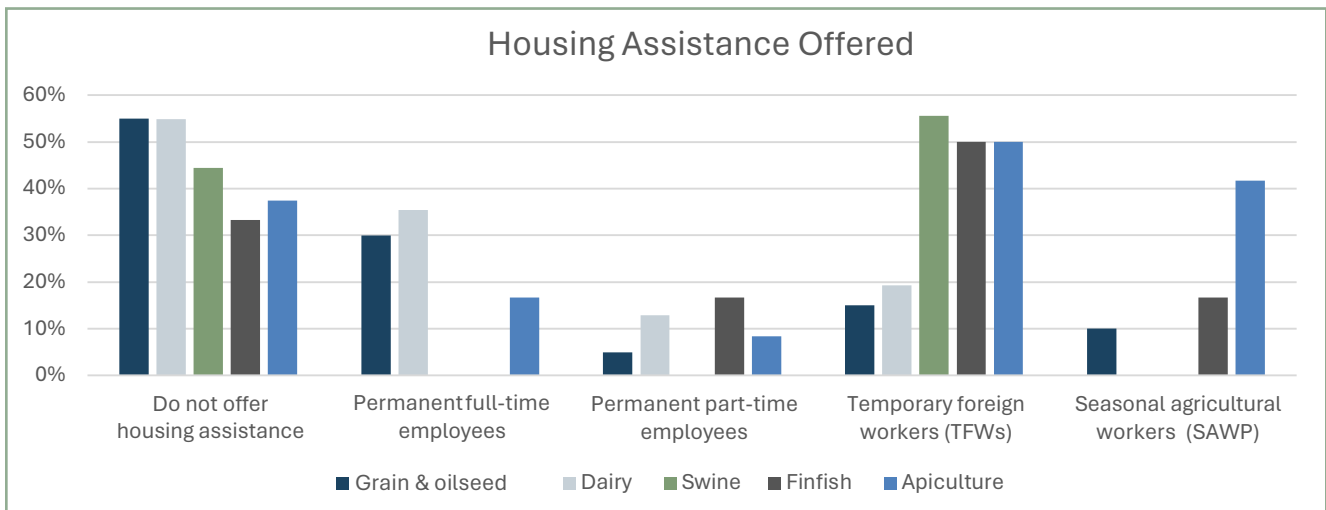
Training and Development Initiatives

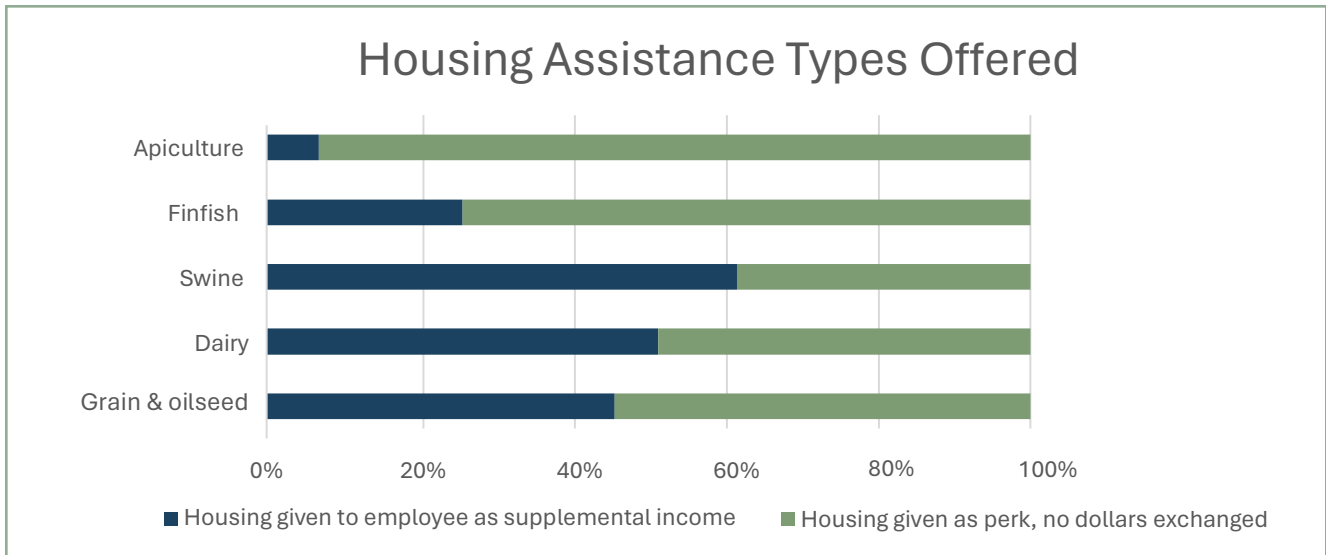
At least 87 per cent of industry employers offered some type of training and development for employees. Most of the industries reported offering on-the-job learning (75 per cent or higher). Finfish was most likely to offer a formal training program along with tuition/certificate reimbursement and online learning. Grain & oilseed, dairy and swine employers reported between 40 per cent and 45 per cent offered formal training programs as well. Thirty per cent of grain & oilseed employers offered online learning. Apiculture was less likely to offer training and development beyond on-the-job training.



Housing Assistance

An average of 55 per cent of employers across all industry types offered housing assistance. As mandated by law, housing assistance was made available to temporary foreign workers (50 per cent+) by swine, finfish and apiculture employers. Grain & oilseed and dairy offered housing 30 per cent+ of the time to permanent full-time employees. Apiculture was most likely to offer housing to seasonal agricultural workers (42 per cent).





Housing is typically given as a perk 63 per cent average (no dollars exchanged) within most industries, except dairy and swine. In those industries it is as common for the benefit to be offered as supplemental income. When provided to employees as income, housing ranged from \$100 to \$1,200 and was estimated to average \$517.50 per month.

Relocation Assistance

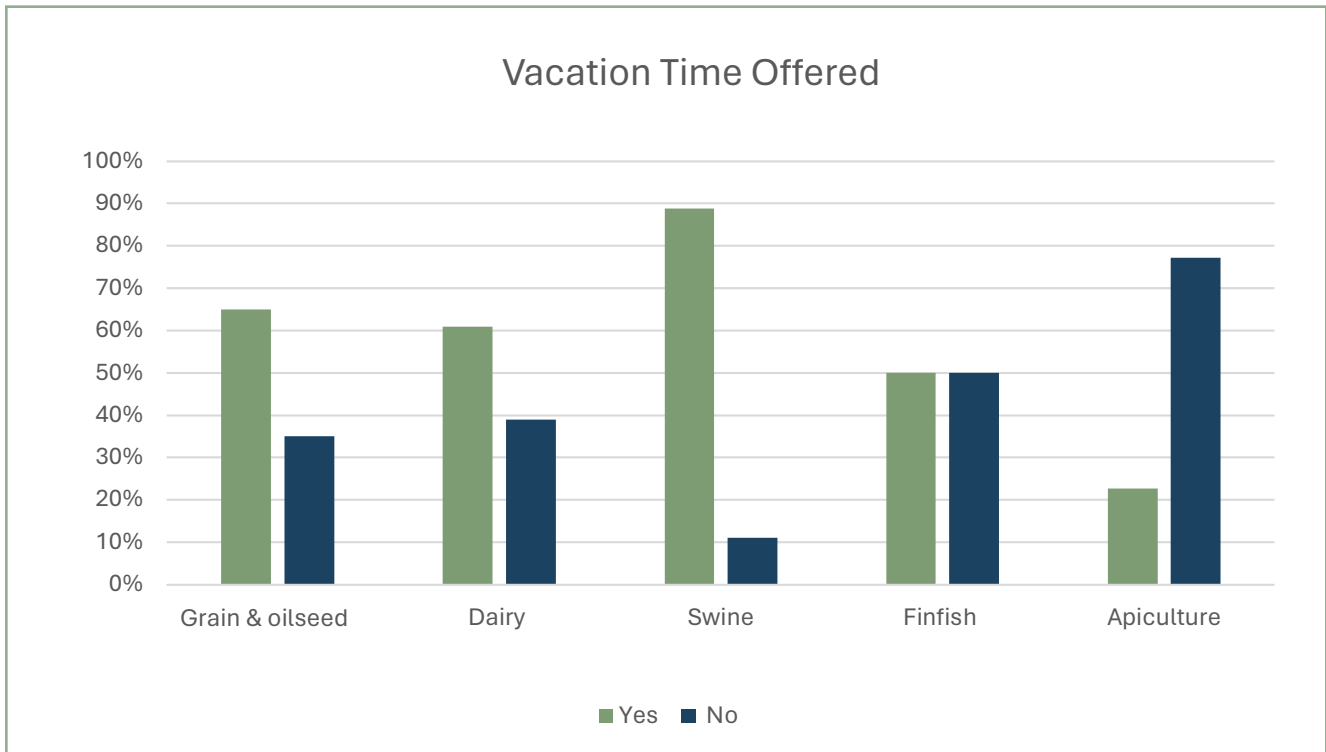
Although sparsely reported, three industry employers reported relocation assistance including grain & oilseed, dairy and finfish. The average relocation amount was \$2,025 and ranged from \$200 to \$5,000.





Vacation

On average 57 per cent of participating employers offered vacation. Swine was most likely to offer vacation (89 per cent), followed by grain & oilseed (65 per cent) and dairy (61 per cent). Apiculture was least likely to offer vacation (23 per cent). An average of 12 days were offered by all industry employers. Swine provided the most vacation, 13 days, followed by grain & oilseed, 12.75 days. Dairy, finfish and apiculture reported offering between 11 to 12 days.

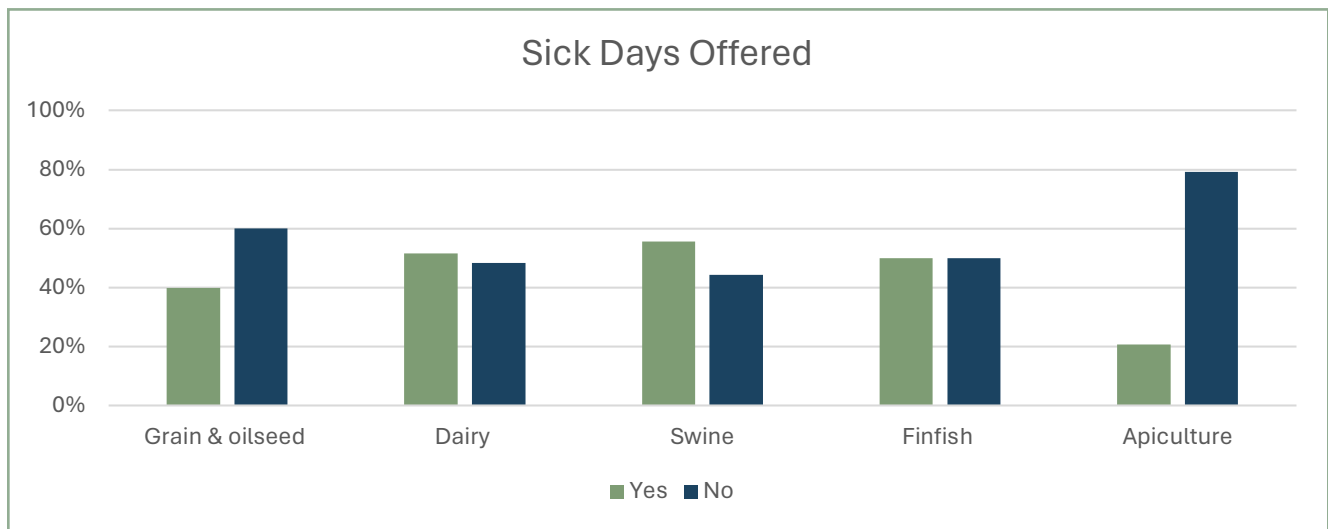


Industry	Average Vacation Days	Average Sick Days
Grain & oilseed	12.73	5.00
Dairy	11.56	7.90
Swine	13.12	3.75
Finfish	11.86	9.50
Apiculture	11.40	6.00



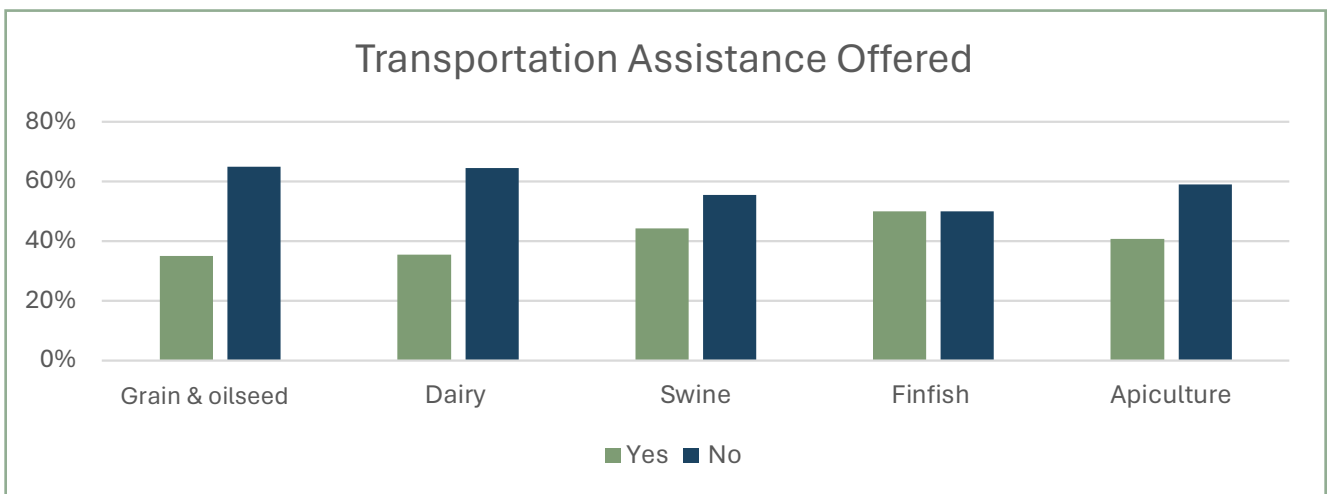
Sick Time

An average of 44 per cent of industry employers offered sick time. Swine was also the most likely to offer sick time (56 per cent) followed by dairy (52 per cent) and finfish (50 per cent). Apiculture was least likely to offer sick time (21 per cent). An average of 6.5 days were offered by all industry employers. Finfish and dairy reported offering the most days, between 8 and 9.5. Swine offered the least amount of sick time, 3.75 days.



Transportation Assistance

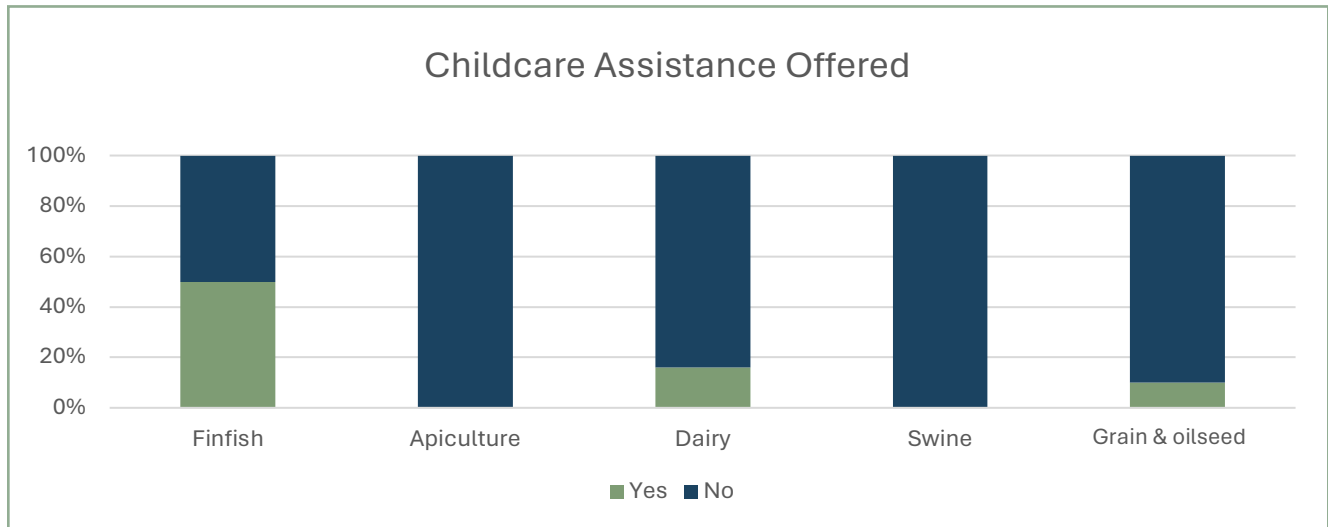
An average of 41 per cent of the participating employers offer transportation; roughly 35 per cent to 50 per cent offer this benefit.





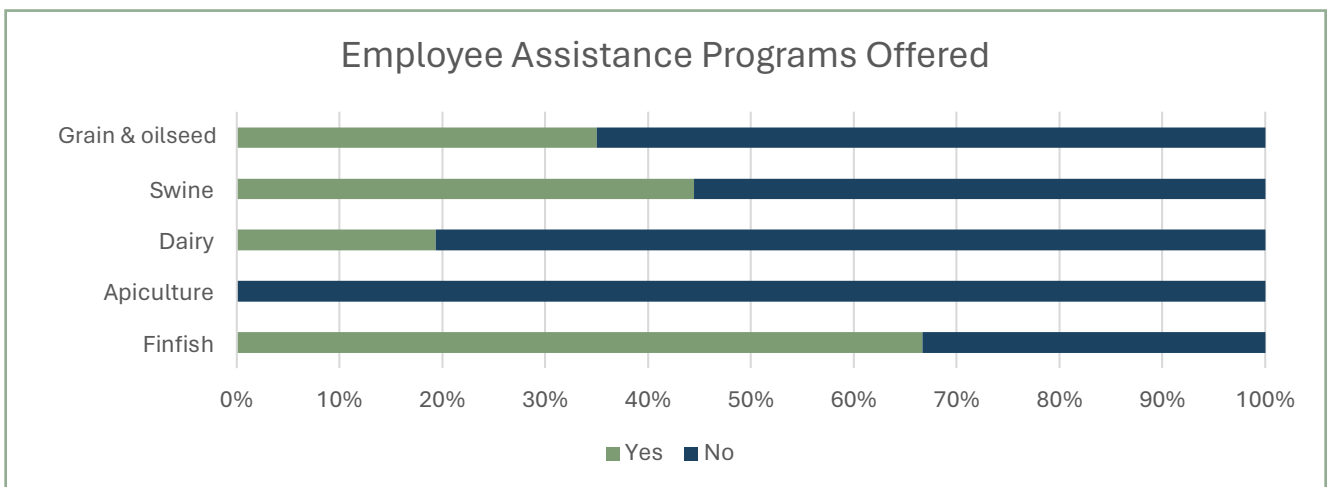
Childcare Assistance

While childcare assistance was not a common benefit offered across all industries, childcare assistance can eliminate a barrier that attracts employees to work. Finfish was equally split as 50 per cent of the respondents noted they provide this benefit, followed by dairy and grain & oilseed.



Employee Assistance Programs

Across all industries, excluding apiculture, employee assistance programs were noted to be offered. Overall finfish offered this benefit the most as noted by 67 per cent, followed closely by swine (45 per cent), grain & oilseed (35 per cent) and dairy (19 per cent). While apiculture did not report that offering this benefit, there is always an opportunity to enhance benefit offering with support to employees.





Flexible Schedules

All of the industries surveyed provided some form of flexible scheduling, but not all of the participating employers offered flexibility. The most prevalent approach was flexible schedules with core hours: dairy (55 per cent), swine (56 per cent) and grain & oilseed (60 per cent). Part-time or reduced schedules were also popular options: dairy (52 per cent), swine (44 per cent) and grain & oilseed (45 per cent). The next most-popular option was core hours, with flexibility outside of those core hours: swine (33 per cent), dairy (32 per cent) and apiculture (32 per cent). Finfish uniquely offered hybrid work schedules (on-site and home) at 50 per cent and compressed work week at 50 per cent. Forty-one per cent of apiculture employers reported not offering any of the options.

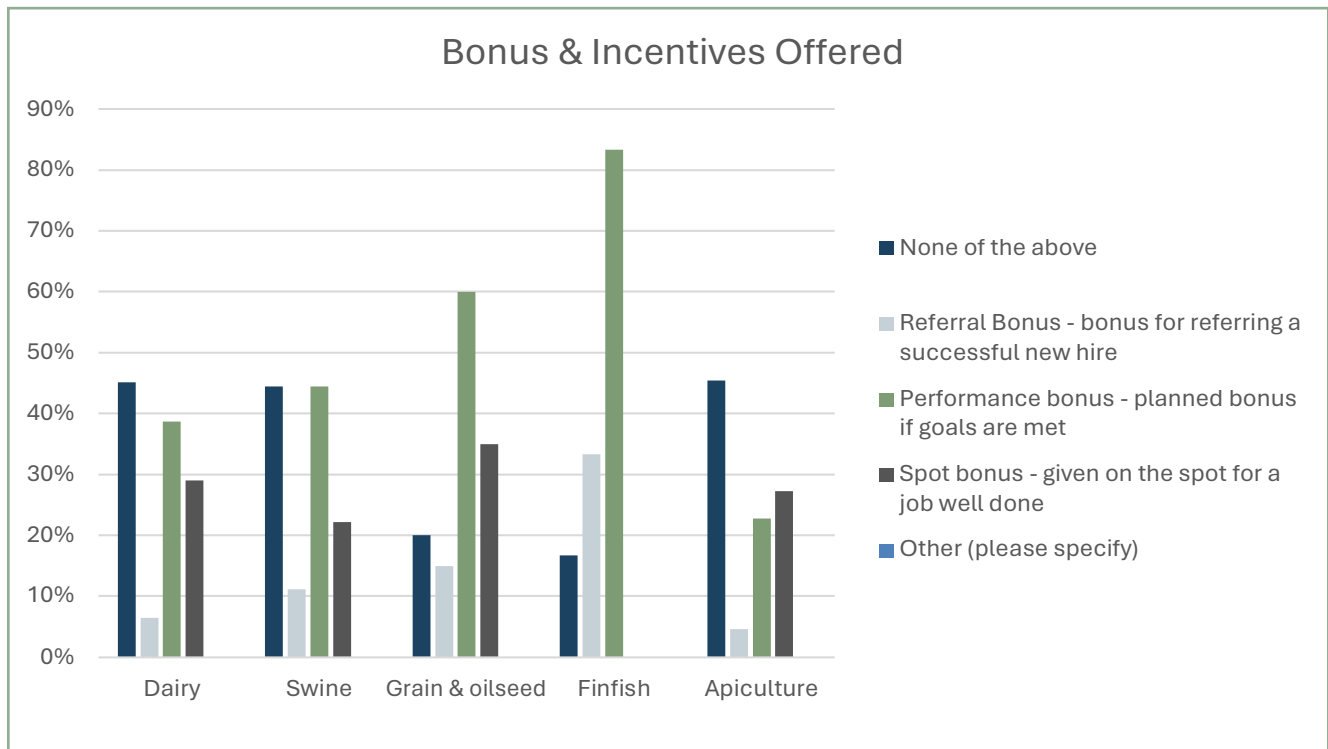
Flexible Schedules Offered	Dairy	Swine	Grain & oilseed	Finfish	Apiculture
Flexible schedules with core hours	55 per cent	56 per cent	60 per cent	33 per cent	32 per cent
Part-time or reduced schedule	52 per cent	44 per cent	45 per cent	17 per cent	32 per cent
Core hours, with flexibility outside of those core hours	32 per cent	33 per cent	25 per cent	17 per cent	32 per cent
Hybrid work schedules (on-site & home)	19 per cent	0 per cent	20 per cent	50 per cent	5 per cent
Compressed work week	10 per cent	11 per cent	10 per cent	50 per cent	5 per cent
Remote (regularly work from home)	10 per cent	0 per cent	5 per cent	17 per cent	5 per cent
None of the above	13 per cent	22 per cent	10 per cent	17 per cent	41 per cent
Other	3 per cent	0 per cent	0 per cent	0 per cent	0 per cent





Bonus and Incentives

Performance bonuses, defined as planned bonuses if goals are met, were the most frequently provided type of bonus for dairy (39 per cent), swine (44 per cent), grain & oilseed (60 per cent) and finfish (83 per cent). Grain & oilseed employers were the most likely to offer spot bonuses – given on the spot for a job well done, 35 per cent. Roughly 45 per cent of dairy, swine and apiculture companies offered none of the bonus options. Finfish most frequently reported offering a referral bonus – given for referring a successful new hire, 33 per cent.





Areas of Improvement

Comparing compensation benchmarks against a producer's current hourly wages is a proactive measure that can be taken to ensure pay is competitive in the marketplace. The grain & oilseed industry is leading the market in regards to wages for all of the surveyed roles. Similarly, finfish pays higher for farm manager, supervisor and worker roles than do dairy, swine and apiculture. There are clear areas of opportunity for the dairy industry to pay more competitive wages with regards to managers and supervisors to compete for more experienced and skilled talent. The dairy industry's wages are average for farm workers and labourers outside of grain & oilseed. Apiculture paid the lowest wages for farm labourers and farm workers which could be an area to attract potential candidates into the industry. However, farm manager and supervisor employees within the apiculture industry are paid a higher hourly rate than those in dairy. The swine industry paid the second-highest hourly rate for farm labourers next to grain & oilseed, which gives a recruitment advantage. Also, bonus and incentive plans were not utilized by all the producers to further attract, engage and retain employees.

In addition to compensation, enhancing total rewards should be a goal for agricultural producers to elevate their employee offerings. A comprehensive plan of benefits, training and flexibility can be a catalytic approach to improving the current and future agriculture workplace. Current and future employees will want access to training and development offerings, beyond commonly cited on-the-job training. Making health, dental and vision benefits more readily available to employees would be a great first step by commodity employers, as well as offering these benefits for those employed part-time and extending benefits beyond that of solely the employee.

Another example of opportunities that exist in the agriculture labour market is work life balance which is supported through programs like vacation, sick time and flexibility. While some agriculture employers offered these benefits, many participating organizations do not offer any flexible work arrangements or basic benefits like sick days.

Summary

Providing essential compensation data resources to all industry producers is a critical step to attracting top talent, retaining current experienced talent and bettering careers in the agriculture industry.

Rethinking the standard approaches of how employees are compensated and supported through benefits can serve to improve the current agriculture labour market shortages. Employees who are properly rewarded by employers who can provide the needed resources create a codependent solution to the increasing employment gap problem.

About the Research

The Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council recently partnered with [AgCareers.com](https://www.agcareers.com), agricultural talent solutions experts, to provide compensation insights, salary benchmarking and market research to ensure human capital success in our industry.



Methodology

In collaboration with the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council, AgCareers.com developed an understanding of the immediate compensation data needs of producers.

The following roles were identified as those most needed for labour market benchmarking:

- Farm Manager
- Farm Supervisor
- Farm Labourer
- Farm Worker
- Specialty Roles

Next, the following distinct commodity types were identified as the target markets for data collection:

- Grain & oilseed
- Dairy
- Swine
- Apiculture
- Finfish

A survey was then created to collect data on both monetary and non-monetary compensation factors for these commodity types by role. Producers were surveyed during the period of February 19 – March 17, 2024. The survey was also structured to capture demographics including: province, number of employees and employer size.

The survey was then nationally promoted for producer participation to CAHRC members, AgCareers.com industry contacts and through multiple social media channels. Producers anonymously submitted employee-level record data benchmarked individually to each role target. The collected data was then validated and analyzed utilizing a specialized compensation platform to aggregate and report statistically relevant data. Monetary and non-monetary results were collated and reported into both compensation benchmark reports and executive summary formats. The data has been collectively reviewed and reported as a sample of current compensation and human resources trends and also separately by industry/commodity type.

There were certain limitations of the study that may have impacted the results available. A shorter window to collect responses impacted the number of responses to the survey. With lower responses there was more limited information available to analyze and, therefore, the data presented should not be generalized for the all workers within the subsector.



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About CAHRC

The Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) is a national, non-profit organization focused on addressing human resource issues facing agricultural businesses across Canada. CAHRC works with industry leaders, governments and educational stakeholders to research, develop and communicate solutions to the challenges in employment and skills development in primary agriculture. The Council represents farming in all its forms: raising traditional and non-traditional livestock; producing, cultivating, growing, harvesting or collecting conventional and non-conventional agriculture commodities; and any practices performed as an integral part of an agricultural operation. For more information, visit www.cahrc-ccrha.ca.

About AgCareers.com

The AgCareers.com mission is to provide global talent solutions in agriculture and food. They strive to “Feed the World with Talent” in the industries they serve. AgCareers.com’s passion is agriculture, demonstrated through their investment in time and resources that engage candidates and employers in the industry. They work to build the pipeline of talent to the industry by expanding knowledge about the breadth of career opportunities in agriculture. For more information, visit www.AgCareers.com.





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