

INDUSTRY NEWS | PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES | SUPPORT FOR THE AGRICULTURE | AND MORE

AGRI WORKFORCE MATTERS

MARCH 2025

BRINGING THE INDUSTRY TOGETHER

EXPOSING STUDENTS TO CAREER PATHS IN AGRICULTURE

CULTIVATING TALENT

AGRICULTURE'S NEXT CHAPTER

EMBRACING AUTOMATION AND TECHNOLOGY IN AGRICULTURE

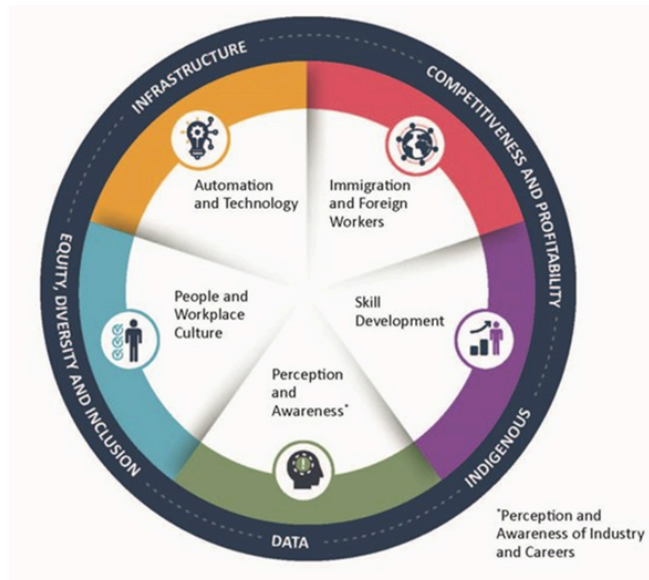


CAHRC-CCRHA
Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council
Conseil canadien pour les ressources humaines en agriculture

OUR NATIONAL WORKFORCE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

A National, Actionable Roadmap

Canada's agriculture and food and beverage manufacturing sectors are experiencing severe chronic labour and skills shortages while growing one of Canada's largest employment and economic sectors. A national, actionable roadmap will create the desired workforce of the future that addresses immediate labour gaps and systemic issues. The National Workforce Strategic Plan has entered its next phase of work. Over the next two years, industry stakeholders will embark on a new set of action items while continuing to amplify the great work already happening.



OUR VISION AND NEXT STEPS



Perception and Awareness of Industry and Careers

By 2030, the number of people entering the sector has increased due to positive perceptions of employment in the industry and greater awareness of the variety of occupations suited to various skill sets, the diverse communities in which careers are available and the paths to career advancement.

Understanding the perception of the industry and providing awareness of the opportunities in the agriculture and food and beverage manufacturing sectors is crucial to the growth and sustainability of the industry. The Perceptions and Awareness of Industry and Careers Working Group will amplify programs, bringing greater awareness of career opportunities in agriculture and food and beverage manufacturing to potential employees — either newcomers to Canada, members of underrepresented groups or high school and post-secondary students.

The group will also work toward increasing the awareness of the importance of the sector's GDP contribution with government and other leading industry stakeholders.

CAHRC conducted perception and awareness research to investigate perceptions of job seekers who have not traditionally considered careers in the agriculture sector. Industry stakeholders are using this information to promote the importance of the sector and have gained insight on how to better tailor messaging. Strategies for promoting work in the sector to job seekers who have had no connection to the sector have been developed.



People and Workplace Culture

By 2030, the sector is viewed as a desired choice for work in Canada by job seekers and workers

The People and Workplace Culture Working Group is focused on increasing recruitment of underrepresented groups to the agriculture and food and beverage manufacturing sectors. By providing a safe and healthy workplace culture, a generation of employees will desire to join the agriculture and food and beverage manufacturing sectors. As an industry that has been built on networking, it is paramount that we expand the network and invite those new to our industry in to gain expertise, knowledge and understanding on our common goal to feed people both in Canada and abroad.

This group has developed a set of resources and case studies to help outline some of the best management practices the industry is using to build the best workplace culture.



Immigration and Foreign Workers

By 2025, foreign workers are publicly recognized as a valued pillar of Canada's agriculture and food and beverage manufacturing workforce.

By 2025, Canada has publicly accepted programs to facilitate the entry of foreign workers and new Canadians into Canada's agriculture and food and beverage manufacturing sectors.

The Immigration and Temporary Foreign Workers Working Group understands the importance of temporary foreign workers to Canada's agriculture and food and beverage manufacturing workforce. The working group will address policy changes that provide employers with a streamlined approach to gaining access to the workforce while remaining competitive in the agriculture sector.

The working group conducted research to inform the development of the workforce strategy. Now, through this work, the working group will develop policy recommendations to build understanding for the importance of the TFW programs. Recommendations will also look at ensuring there are clear paths to permanent residency for those who wish to use it, as well as the need for ensuring the proper infrastructure and supports are available for both employers and employees.



Skill Development

By 2030, a National Skills Strategy ensures that the sector's workforce is appropriately skilled.

The Skill Development Working Group will develop the National Skills Strategy as a registry of the current and future skills needs of the agriculture and food and beverage manufacturing sectors.

CAHRC has conducted skills research to clarify the potential impact of technology and automation in the agriculture and food and beverage manufacturing industry on future skill requirements and labour demand. The investigation provided information that will inform skills development, training and education for the industry and ensure that workers have the right skills for employment in the industry now and in the future.

A skills inventory framework is in the final stages of development. Using the National Occupational Standards, CAHRC will outline in varying details what is required of a job. The aim is to provide this information to stakeholders, potential employees seeking job opportunities and employers looking to build job postings and develop responsibilities, as well as curriculum designers to ensure the full set of skills are covered over the course of a program.

CAHRC is also conducting research to understand the geographical location of skills, where the skills needs are and if there are skilled individuals available to fill that gap.



Automation and Technology

By 2030, automation and technology decreases labour demand and increases productivity and competitiveness.

The industry will see an important transition to automation and technology in each sector as it continues to experience shortages in labour. Although it is not the only answer to the falling labour supply, the Automation and Technology Working Group will understand the increase in capital investments and its correlation to labour productivity. They will also examine the need for upskilling and re-skilling due to changes in technology.

Research was conducted to investigate the capacity of members of the agriculture and food and beverage manufacturing sectors to increase their use of automation and technology. Next, the working group will investigate funding opportunities to increase the adoption of automation as well as the legal obligations and regulatory environment on automation and technology in the agriculture and food and beverage manufacturing sectors. It is important to note the increase in automation and technology, while a solution to the chronic shortage of labour, may not lead to a decreased demand for labour but could help improve the productivity and competitiveness of Canada's agricultural and food and beverage manufacturing sectors.



OUR PARTNERS



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Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council
Conseil canadien pour les ressources humaines
en agriculture

CFA
Canadian Federation
of Agriculture



FCA
Fédération canadienne
de l'agriculture

Food and
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Aliments
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Canada

To learn more about the issues and CAHRC's plan to address them, click here.

Due to reduced funding capacity to produce this publication, this issue of Agri Workforce Matters will be available in English only.

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GET INVOLVED

647-745-7457

outreach@cahrc-ccrha.ca





Dear readers,

What a start to 2025 we have had. Tariffs and other economic uncertainties are impacting business investment, decision making and workforce development. With more uncertainty to come, Canadians are working on adapting to accepting the move ahead with less clarity.

On a positive note, spring is in the air across Canada. Agriculture producers and employees across the country are gearing up for the season ahead, organizing inputs, finalizing winter equipment maintenance and looking forward to the growing season ahead.

Focusing on workforce management and implementing HR best practices is a beneficial way to ensure a more efficient, engaged, and productive team. At CAHRC, we remain busy supporting the agriculture industry with workforce development opportunities and human resource management products, training and consulting services. Through e-learning, our HR Management Microcredential, AgriHR Toolkit and one-on-one consulting, we have what you need to ensure your workforce management is working as efficiently as possible.

The current issue of AgriWorkforce Matters highlights opportunities to continue to attract, retain and develop your workforce even in uncertain times.

At times like this, innovation to create more efficiencies becomes a priority. Investment in automation, and technology is often considered to support these efficiencies. CAHRC continues to do work in supporting this transition by defining the impact on skills and jobs as this transition occurs. The National Workforce Strategic Plan on Agriculture and Food and

Beverage Manufacturing continues to progress as well. We are looking forward to diving into the topic of automation, digitalization, AI and technology and skills and the workforce with a two-day summit being held in early summer. . In this magazine issue, we share first-hand experience from our own Rebecca Balsdon on her experience transitioning her dairy farm to a robotic operation.

Our Growing Opportunities program provides agriculture employers wage subsidy support to hire post-secondary students. Take a look at this program as a way employee the people you need with less impact on your bottom line.

March also saw the celebration of International Women's Day. CAHRC is proud to be leading work to support the advancement of women in the Canadian agriculture industry. We have facilitated the development of the National Action Plan for Women in Agriculture, which will be launched later this month. The Action Plan has been developed by a steering committee representing grass-roots women in agriculture groups from across Canada and validated through a series of focus groups. Financial support was provided for local community events held across the country focused on networking, skill development and knowledge sharing. Work to update foundational research first completed in 2015 has taken place and the findings will be shared later this month as well. A session of CAHRC's Women in Ag Leadership Microcredential also wrapped up in March. We are so thankful to the women that engaged in this program and to Senator Mary Robinson for taking time out of her busy schedule to spend the last session with participants, sharing her experiences and advice.

These are a few highlights of what to expect in this issue of AgriWorkforce Matters. Thank you for your continued support and engagement. It is so appreciated. And remember, CAHRC is here to support agriculture through the uncertain days ahead.



Jennifer Wright
Executive Director
**Canadian Agricultural
Human Resource Council**



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.

This means representing and supporting agriculture in all forms, from farmers and ranchers to processors, packagers, food scientists, mechanics, veterinarians and much, much more.

We offer expertise and tools that can be tailored to meet the needs of owners, operators and workers throughout the sector.

This includes:

- Up-to-date HR training
- Wage subsidy and skill development programs
- Industry networking opportunities
- 1:1 consultation
- Insight on emerging issues like succession planning, finding skilled workers and improving farm safety.

Contact us to learn more about how you can take advantage of our services.



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CAHRC'S CORNER

- **STAYING CONNECTED**
- **CAHRC CONSULTING GETS A SHOUT-OUT!**
- **SPOTLIGHT ON OUR MICRO CREDENTIAL CERTIFICATE**
- **FROM FIELDS TO FORKS**

CAHRC'S CORNER

STAYING CONNECTED



GET INVOLVED

Do you support CAHRC's work on the National Workforce Strategic Plan? You can help us amplify the vital role of the NWSP by showcasing our [supporter badge](#) and following us on [LinkedIn!](#)



JOIN OUR PARTNER HUB ON CAHRC CONNECT

We've created a virtual space for you to stay connected and informed. Through exclusive info sessions and events, we'll ensure you're always up to date on the latest CAHRC initiatives, programs, and industry insights. [Join here!](#)

DATA AND RESEARCH THAT MEET YOUR NEEDS

Did you know we offer sector- and region-specific findings on the agriculture labour market?

If you are a business, association or agricultural organization looking to understand the job market based on the sector or province you represent, we've got you covered. We also provide presentations on research to help you become an expert on the issues that matter to you (design team – please note the change in wording from the draft doc). Contact us at outreach@cahrc-ccrha.ca.

KEEP LEARNING!

Looking to improve your HR practices or foster a more inclusive workplace?

Our eLearning courses cover everything from effective recruitment strategies to embracing Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA). Empower your workforce with CAHRC's expert-led online training.

Courses include:

- [HR Management in Agriculture](#)
- [On-the-Job Training Course](#)
- [Welcome to Canadian Agriculture](#)
- [Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility](#)

CAHRC'S CORNER

CAHRC CONSULTING GETS A SHOUT-OUT!



The Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council has been CCGA's primary source of reliable information on the labour needs in agriculture sector. Through their AgriLMI program, in which CCGA participates as a member of the Advisory Committee, CAHRC conducts farmer surveys to assess current labour requirements and develop projections to identify potential labour gaps. This work is instrumental in understanding the challenges facing our industry and determining strategies to address them effectively.

It is always a pleasure to work with CAHRC's professional and knowledgeable team. If you have any agriculture labour related questions, do not hesitate to reach out to them.

Julia Ilashchuk, Assistant Manager,
Government Relations and Parliamentary Affairs
Canadian Canola Growers Association



CAHRC'S CORNER

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE ESSENTIAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



The **Women in Agriculture Essential Leadership Skills Development Program** is designed to empower women working in primary agriculture and industry associations by developing core leadership skills.

This 10-week interactive program offers a blended learning experience, combining online modules, live webinars, group discussions, and practical exercises to equip participants with the tools needed to lead teams effectively. Developed specifically for women in agriculture, the program uses real-life examples and work scenarios from Canadian primary agriculture and industry associations.

Its goal is to support women who want to strengthen their leadership abilities, step into leadership roles, and contribute to the growth and success of the agriculture industry.

What you will learn:

We offer templates for the following event types:

- ▶ Strategic planning and decision-making
- ▶ Managing challenges with leadership techniques
- ▶ Building effective teams and networks
- ▶ Insights from industry experts

This program is for you if:

- You are stepping into a leadership role and need practical strategies to succeed.
- You want to enhance your leadership style and build trust within your team.
- You are preparing to take on new challenges and need confidence and support to thrive.
- You are returning to the workforce and want to sharpen your leadership skills.

Join the waitlist

The next session will be in Fall 2025. Be the first to know.



The #1 reason I recommend this is course is that **it focuses on women**. Most leadership courses only briefly touch on the unique challenges women face.

This program gives tools tailored to our strengths - like empathy and nurturing - to help us thrive as leaders.

CAHRC'S CORNER

FROM FIELDS TO FORKS

From fields to forks: uniting people to tackle Canada's agri-food workforce challenges

Canada's agriculture and food & beverage sectors are at a critical juncture, facing persistent workforce challenges that demand innovative and collaborative solutions. We recently caught up with Scott Ross, the Executive Director of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA), to see if he could share his insights into the [National Workforce Strategic Plan](#) (NWSP) and how this initiative is transforming the labour landscape for the sector.

CFA's role in the NWSP: bridging voices and driving action

Scott Ross highlighted CFA's leadership role in the NWSP, a partnership with Food and Beverage Canada (FBC) and the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC). From the inception, CFA has worked to ensure that producers' voices are front and centre.

"CFA has been involved from the outset in the NWSP in a leadership capacity" Ross emphasized "[To] ensure the diverse concerns of our members were reflected in the strategic plan and that the process to develop the strategy was focused on delivering meaningful results rather than a report that could sit on the shelf. In that same vein, we have worked to ensure producers are well represented throughout the process on working groups and in related events".

By connecting stakeholders and tapping into a vast network, CFA has amplified the diversity of expertise shaping the NWSP, ensuring solutions address the complexity of the workforce crisis.



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Pressing challenges and NWSP's multifaceted approach

Labour shortages in agriculture and food processing aren't caused by a single issue, and the solutions aren't simple either. Ross described the sector's challenges as "complex and multifaceted," requiring a systemic and integrated response. "In the absence of the NWSP, many of these issues relating to immigration, skills development or automation and technology happen in silos, leaving opportunities and potential challenges that cut across these various lever unaddressed. By engaging the sector in identifying solutions with a cross-cutting lens that explores the intersection of these issues on an ongoing and dynamic basis, the NWSP has the opportunity to help the sector identify systems-level solutions and ensure discussions on one facet of the labour issue are informing responses that would otherwise have potentially been fragmented."

A prime example? Tackling labour challenges that ripple through both primary agriculture and food processing, which were previously addressed in isolation.

A vision for collaboration and long-term impact

For CFA, the NWSP isn't just about identifying solutions—it's about fostering sector-wide ownership of them. Ross believes this collaborative approach builds a stronger foundation for sustainable workforce solutions.

The NWSP, while touching on government policies and programs, looks at the full spectrum of solutions, including those led by industry." Ross said "The NWSP continues to identify targeted and novel solutions to chronic labour shortages affecting our sectors and mobilizes many of the stakeholders in leadership positions to advance them. This creates a continued platform to explore issues as they emerge or evolve, but also ensures the sector buys into the proposed solutions and can see themselves as having a role in advancing them." He added that the most exciting part of the process is seeing the level of engagement and passion people from across the sector bring to the table. "It's this people power that will be essential in making sure the actions identified through the process are implemented and not just concepts on paper."

Key resources for workforce development

When asked which NWSP resources he found most valuable, Ross highlighted the importance of mapping current and future skills needs in agriculture and food & beverage manufacturing.



INNOVATION • COLLABORATION • AWARENESS
INNOVATION • COLLABORATION • SENSIBILISATION

“Each element is important in its own regard, but the work done on mapping the current and future skill requirements by sector, including the impact of technological developments, strikes me as a foundational piece of research” Ross explains “critical in shaping how we address labour shortages on a strategic and long-term basis. This kind of cross-cutting research that looks at skills needs through the lens of how other evolutions in the sector are changing our needs, is a great example of the kind of work this strategy can drive.”

The road ahead: Industry’s role in NWSP success

Ross emphasized the critical role industry stakeholders play in supporting the NWSP. *“First is staying at the table for what is a long-term process,”* he said. *“second is ensuring they’re sharing information, building new relationships outside the traditional agriculture and food networks, and communicating to the public, policy-makers and others around the opportunities and challenges our sector is facing.”*

He pointed to efforts to promote career pathways and engage with immigration and settlement services as key areas where industry involvement is essential. *“Both of which require industry stepping up, but can have lasting benefits for the sector.”* Ross explained.



Why the NWSP matters

What excites Ross most about the NWSP is its holistic nature and the collective commitment it has inspired. “The NWSP moves the discussion to a place that isn’t focused on just one tool or lever, but looks at how they can all work in concert to move the needle.” he said.

As the NWSP continues to evolve, one thing is clear: its success hinges on collaboration, innovation, and a steadfast commitment to action. With leaders like Scott Ross and organizations like CFA championing the cause, the future of Canada’s agriculture and food sectors looks promising.

Stay tuned as we continue to explore the impact of the NWSP and highlight the voices driving change in Canadian agriculture.





Empowering Your Corporate Impact in Agriculture

WHY PARTNER WITH CAHRC?

We offer tailored opportunities for agricultural associations to enhance member services and for corporations to support workforce sustainability in agriculture.

- **For Agricultural Employers, By Agricultural Experts:** Tailored workforce solutions designed specifically for the agricultural sector.
- **Recognition as a Leader:** Be recognized for your role in driving meaningful workforce change in agriculture.
- **Access to Exclusive Industry Knowledge:** Stay ahead with CAHRC's reports, insights, and labour market data.



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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS

- **AgriHR Toolkit Discounts:** Offer exclusive savings on essential HR resources.
- **Webinar Access:** Provide customers with insights into workforce challenges and market trends.
- **Micro-Credential Discounts:** Enhance skills with specialized training at reduced rates.
- **Discounted eLearning Programs:** Help agricultural businesses stay ahead with CAHRC's training programs.

BRAND VISIBILITY

- **Magazine Spotlight:** Feature your organization in our e-magazine.
- **Social Media Campaigns:** Announce your partnership across our social platforms.
- **Website Recognition:** Your logo showcased on CAHRC's Corporate Partner page.

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PERCEPTION AND AWARENESS OF INDUSTRY AND CAREERS





CULTIVATING TALENT

How the University of Waterloo is planting the seed for tomorrow's agriculture leaders

Agriculture in Canada isn't just about farming—it's an ecosystem of innovation and opportunity. From cutting-edge technology to advancements in research and business, the agriculture sector is one of the most diverse industries in the country. In 2023, it generated \$150 billion in gross domestic product (GDP), accounted for 7% of the nation's GDP and employed approximately 2.3 million people. Despite its significant impact, the sector faces challenges including labour shortages and the need for more sustainable practices. Addressing these challenges requires bold solutions and fresh talent, making the role of work-integrated learning (WIL) programs, like co-operative education, more critical than ever.

Leading the way in WIL

The University of Waterloo is at the forefront of work-integrated learning (WIL) and co-operative education. Each year, the University empowers more than 25,000 students to connect with employers and industries through its globally renowned Co-operative & Experiential Education.

Waterloo's co-op program provides students with opportunities to explore exciting careers

far beyond the traditional scope of agriculture, including in agronomy, business, communications and technology. By placing students in diverse, real-world environments, Waterloo fosters a culture of innovation needed to tackle the agriculture sector's biggest challenges.

Student-driven innovation leads to real-world impact

As Canada's most innovative university, this culture of innovation is a cornerstone of Waterloo's approach to work-integrated learning. For example, students engage in experiential learning projects through the Sedra Student Design Centre. The center has more than two dozen student-led design teams, including the Waterloo Alternative Protein Project. The project focuses on creating a sustainable and secure food system through research and entrepreneurship, that aligns with Canada's broader food security goals. Competitions like the Faculty of Environment's Jack Rosen Memorial Award Pitch Competition and GreenHouse' Social Impact Showcase, empower students to pitch innovative ideas which often lead to social ventures that drive meaningful change.

Chadd Bauman (BES '21) and Kyle Born (BES '21) met at the Jack Rosen Memorial Pitch Competition, where they pitched similar ideas

for indoor agriculture solutions. After graduating, Bauman and Born started [Circular Harvest](#), a social venture startup that aims to reshape agriculture by equipping people with resources to grow their own food.

Similarly, [Hydrobud](#), founded by Alexis Windatt (BES '24) and Rumaisha Qadar (BES '24), is a student-led venture that [won GreenHouse's 13th Social Impact Showcase](#). Hydrobud is a self-sustained hydroponics system that grows fresh produce for food banks.

Many of these student-led ventures begin as co-op experiences, where students gain the insights and skills to develop innovative solutions. With support from Waterloo's Velocity incubator, these ideas evolve into thriving startups that contribute to agricultural sustainability.

Accelerating agri-tech innovation with Velocity

Waterloo's [Velocity incubator](#) furthers the University's commitment to experiential learning and innovation. By providing mentorship and resources, Velocity enables students to transform their ideas into viable startups.

[Ceragen](#), co-founded by Waterloo graduate Matthew Rose (BASc '21) and Danielle Rose, is an agri-tech startup that develops soil microbes to enhance greenhouse-grown fruits and vegetables. Since its incorporation in 2021, Ceragen has launched two products, ACCelerate and FerraGrow, used to grow hydroponic tomatoes and lettuce.

"We are seeing a vast array of innovative solutions for the agricultural industry coming from University of Waterloo research groups and student co-op experiences," said John Dick, Senior Director at Velocity

"Students are gaining key insights through direct consultation and industry experiences. They are saying, 'I see a problem here, let's solve it,' then bringing their ideas to Velocity to learn how to make it happen and accelerate their growth."

Harnessing AI to transform Agriculture

In addition to supporting agri-tech startups and student-led ventures, Waterloo is harnessing the power of AI, robotics and autonomous



systems to drive innovation in the agriculture sector.

At the recent [Livestock Research Innovation Corporation symposium](#), Mary Wells, Dean of Engineering highlighted projects like [Dr. Mahla Poudineh's wearable nanotech health indicators](#), with potential applications in animal welfare.

"How do we create those opportunities for graduate students? Bringing the research going on from the lab to the marketplace and the fields," said Wells.

Waterloo's commitment to experiential learning is creating a new wave of agri-tech innovators, equipped to tackle the sector's most pressing challenges.

Driving agricultural innovation and sustainability with co-op talent

Through co-op placements, emerging talent from Waterloo helps agricultural companies

address issues like innovation, efficiency, labour shortages and sustainability.

Co-operative and Experiential Education launched the [SDGs at Work](#), an initiative to engage students and employers on how to align their work with the [United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#). Students learn how their contributions address critical social, economic and environmental challenges.

At Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), [Waterloo co-op students have been instrumental in advancing key sustainability projects](#). Students help develop systems, scripts and program to maintain and improve the crop yield forecaster and ensure its reliability. Students' contributions also help to optimize the tools used for drought monitoring and crop yield forecasting, crucial to Canada's food security and agricultural planning.

Startups like [Mycro Harvest](#) harness the expertise of Waterloo co-op students to pioneer smart farming innovations. The company [leverages co-op student talent in automation and AI optimization](#).

Waterloo students build shipping container farms, prototype machine learning algorithms and validate sensor systems for monitoring.

These collaborations exemplify how co-op can support employers, fuel advancements, accelerate the growth of agri-ventures and offer students transformative industry experiences.

Ready to drive agricultural innovation?

The university partners with organizations like the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) to connect employers with skilled talent.

Employers can also benefit from the [Student Work Placement Program \(SWPP\)](#), which offers funding of up to 50% of student wages, making hiring Waterloo co-op students even more accessible.

Next steps: Want to learn how to tap into Waterloo's Co-op program and hire top talent? Register for one of our free [co-op fundamental info sessions](#) or reach out directly to Alyssa Kuron (alyssa.kuron@uwaterloo.ca).



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

Co-operative and
Experiential Education





AGRI-CAREER SPOTLIGHT: BEYOND FARMING



Discover exciting, non-traditional careers in agriculture with [our new video series](#), Agri-Career Spotlight: Beyond Farming! We're shining a light on diverse roles across the agri-food sector, showcasing the dynamic opportunities that go beyond the farm. If you're a student or recent graduate looking to kick-start your career in agriculture, don't miss out on our [Growing Opportunities](#) wage subsidy program! This program provides employers with subsidies to hire students for work-integrated learning opportunities—helping you gain valuable hands-on experience in the industry.

Why thinkAG??


There are more
job opportunities
in agriculture
than there are
graduates to
fill them.


1 in 9 jobs in the
Canadian
workforce are in
agriculture
and food.


123,000:
The number of
unfilled
agriculture jobs
expected in 2029.

The national thinkAG initiative strives to cultivate curiosity and spark interest in agriculture and food careers by connecting educators, parents and students with curriculum-linked learning tools and interactive experiences. Our member organizations talk about various careers in classrooms with our interactive Career Case games, genAG case competitions and Career Expos. Learn more thinkAG.ca



EXPOSING STUDENTS TO CAREER PATHS IN AGRICULTURE HELPS BUILD A STRONGER WORKFORCE

Exposing students to career paths in agriculture helps build a stronger workforce

Anyone who works in the agriculture industry understands that the sector is a place with many diverse opportunities to make an impact. For those who are on the periphery, this is less understood.

We know this from CAHRC's perception research, released last fall. A majority of Canadians (54 per cent) were unable to identify a job in the agricultural industry that is not a farmer, pointing to a general lack of awareness. Despite this, 76 per cent of Canadians say they view the industry positively, with 54 per cent claiming they would consider switching careers.

Understanding that workforce growth is required to keep Canada's agriculture sector a top performer at home and on the world stage, it is important to think about how to attract and retain the next generation of workers.

Opportunities worth growing

Our young people are our future and offer a snapshot of what is possible for agriculture in the years ahead. What we also know from our research is that a majority (55 per cent) of students aged 16-24 and parents of teenage children aged 14-17 are interested in learning more about career opportunities in the agriculture industry and would consider a career in this industry.

At CAHRC, we are committed to building a stronger workforce, and we know that providing opportunities for young people to be exposed to career paths in agriculture is one tool in our toolkit for doing so.

This is why we created the [Growing Opportunities Student Wage Placement Program \(SWPP\)](#). Growing Opportunities empowers employers to hire post-secondary students as part of the work-integrated learning components of their academic courses. The program also presents activities such as webinars, networking sessions, and business case competitions to engage students and post-secondary institutions with the industry and improve their job readiness.

Employers see the benefits of hiring students

Since our launch in 2021, we've heard from employers who have seen the benefits of Growing Opportunities, particularly about how it is showing promise in fueling industry worker growth.

This past Summer 2024 term was a great success for the Growing Opportunities Program; completing the term with 135 completed placements and a total of 77 agriculture employers that benefited from hiring a post-secondary student as a Work-Integrated Learning placement.

Nureen Dua, Laboratory Manager at Pathogenia, is one example.

“Participating in CAHRC’s Growing Opportunities program this summer was fantastic for us. The students we hired brought fresh perspectives and enthusiasm, significantly contributing to our projects. The program’s support and funding allowed us to offer these students valuable industry insights, enriching their career paths and our work environment. CAHRC’s guidance through the funding process was invaluable, which made everything seamless and straightforward.”

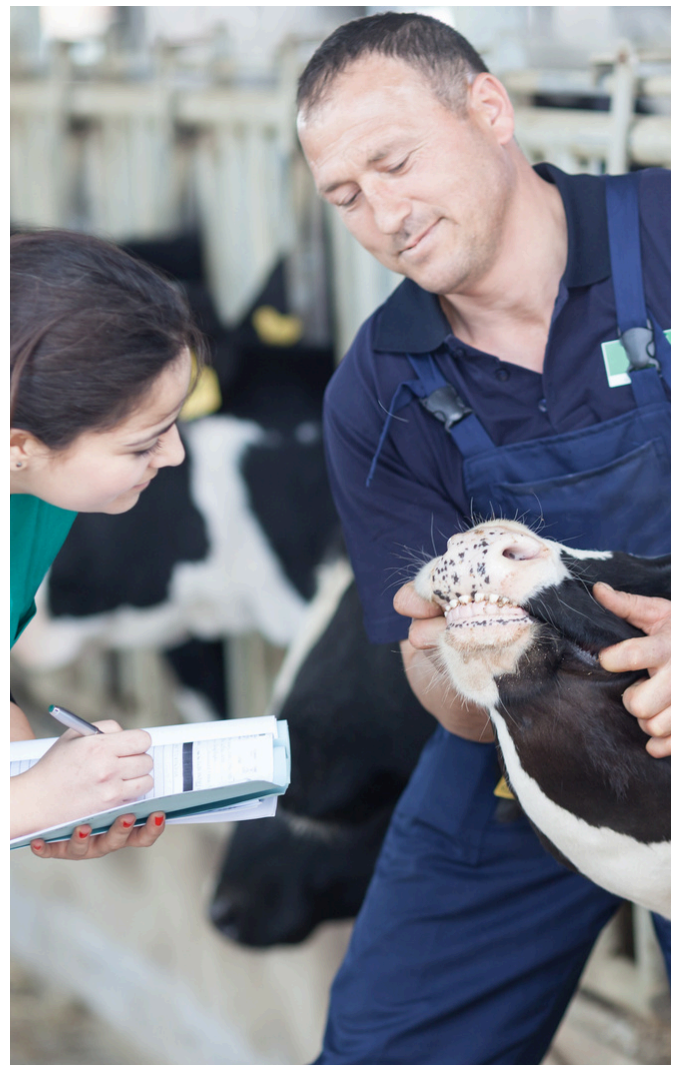
Others, like Justin Cheng from Mycro Harvest, have participated in *Growing Opportunities* for many years and echoes Nureen’s statement regarding the benefit of hiring student interns:

“We are thankful for the opportunity to participate in CAHRC’s Growing Opportunities program this summer. The application process was straightforward, making it easy for us to access funding and bring on talented student interns. These interns provided fresh insights and meaningful contributions, helping to advance our projects while gaining valuable industry experience. Programs like this are essential for fostering future agricultural talent, and we look forward to continuing our partnership with CAHRC.”

Students appreciate the chance to experience the wonders of agriculture

Konrad Borowski, a student who participated in a Growing Opportunities placement at Finite Farms in Kitchener, Ontario, is proof of how on-the-job learning is unmatched in its ability to engage young people.

“My work placement at Finite Farms has led me to not only appreciate innovation, but also actively work towards implementing it to improve food security and sustainability in Canada and beyond. It has reinforced the importance of patience and has imbued in



me a continued discipline towards finding solutions to the most pressing problems of our communities and ecology at large,” he says. “The most important lesson I learned this summer is that every seed you plant can teach you something, even if it does not sprout.

My favourite part of working in the agricultural industry is 'getting my hands dirty' and seeing the tangible results of my work in front of me at the end of the day, season, and year. There are few things more fulfilling than watching a mechanical system, robotics project, or plant come to fruition as a result of my own determination - and the guidance of mentors who are genuinely invested in my growth.”

Konrad also states his gratefulness for Growing Opportunities giving him the opportunity to find his passion in the agriculture industry:

CAHRC's Student Wage Placement Program



305

employers have completed
CAHRC'S Student Wage
Placement Program to date



95

post-secondary institutions
are participating



50%

of placements are from
underrepresented groups

"I am grateful that CAHRC could offset the cost of my employment for Finite, and increasingly feel that I have found myself in exactly the right space for my career and work moving forwards. It is certainly an exciting time to be at the forefront of agricultural innovation with the natural environment being as threatened as it is. What follows is a brief paragraph about my experience this summer"

Let's imagine what could be accomplished if more young people like Borowski experienced the wonders of agriculture.

For more information on CAHRC's Growing Opportunities Program, please reach out to Megan Lockhart, AgriTalent Project Manager at mlockhart@cahrc-ccrha.ca

LEVERAGE U OF G TALENT TO DRIVE YOUR AGRI-FOOD INNOVATION"

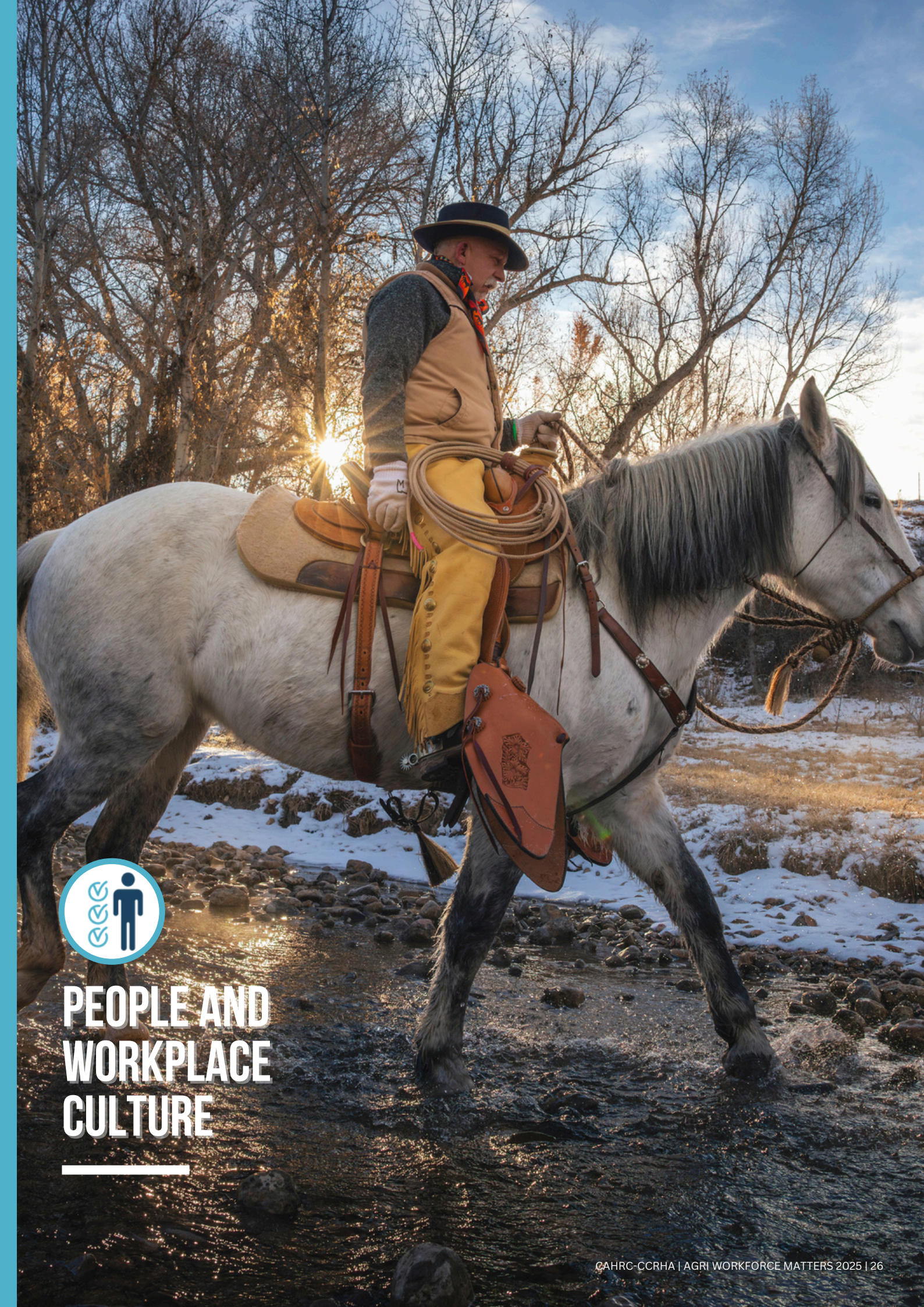


Looking for fresh perspectives and expertise to tackle your organization's challenges? The Ontario Agricultural College (OAC) at the University of Guelph invites organizations to hire highly skilled master's students eager to tackle real-world challenges in agriculture, food, and the environment through a new internship course. These students bring advanced expertise in agriculture economics, animal biosciences or plant agriculture, and are ready to support your

organizational goals and projects such as sustainability audits, operational improvements, and exploring emerging technologies.

Internships run May to August, 2025 (12-16 weeks) and offer a pathway to full-time employment while enhancing your organization's visibility and talent pipeline.

Contact: Emmanuelle Arnaud, Assistant Dean OAC (earnaud@uoguelph.ca).



PEOPLE AND WORKPLACE CULTURE



CASE STUDIES



Case Studies for Success: Four Industry-Specific Examples That Can Transform Your Workplace

In the ever-evolving agriculture sector, finding ways to improve workplace culture and HR policies can be a challenge. But one of the most powerful tools for change? Learning from those who are already leading the way. By looking at industry leaders who are driving positive change, you can uncover proven strategies that will set your organization on the path to success. Research from CAHRC highlights intentional efforts across sectors to enhance engagement, foster a positive culture, and build workplace environments that attract and retain top talent.

What better way to foster collaboration and active change across Canadian agriculture than by seizing opportunities to learn from each other's successes and implement HR strategies across the industry.

Case Studies: Real-World Examples of HR Excellence in Agriculture

Drawing from the NWSP's research, [Workplace Culture Research for Agriculture and Food and Beverage Manufacturing](#), these

four case studies provide real-life examples of employers within the sector applying HR best practices and creating a workplace culture that successfully attracts and retains employees.

Case Study #1: Becoming an Employer of Choice

The first case study examines Nortera, a large vegetable processor with 13 operations and 3,000 employees, who has become an employer of choice in both Canada and the United States. Over a 25-year history, they have responded to challenges by creating a strong company culture anchored by a strong leadership team with stable, grassroots values and a commitment to employee satisfaction, success and well-being.

What makes this example particularly valuable is that Nortera's success isn't just for large-scale operations. Smaller farms and agribusinesses can also take away key lessons on building a positive workplace culture, making it an invaluable blueprint for all employers looking to enhance their operations.

Case Study #2: Creating a Culture of Community

This case study examines how employers can create a culture of belonging by forming meaningful connections with the local community. By positioning themselves as community partners, these businesses not only improve their workplace culture, but they also foster a strong sense of loyalty and commitment from their employees. The study goes beyond community engagement and provides actionable strategies that organizations can use to enhance employee onboarding, boost retention, and cultivate a workplace where employees truly feel at home.

Case Study #3: Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Through the TFW Lens

In this case study, we dive into the experiences of employers going above and beyond to support Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) and integrate them into the Canadian workforce. What makes all these initiatives truly remarkable is that they are deliberate efforts towards improving equity, diversity

and inclusion (EDI) within the Canadian workforce. This case study demonstrates that creating a welcoming and inclusive culture is a sound investment. When employees who arrive in Canada as foreign workers are made to feel part of the work family through support of life and family, as well as cultural celebration, everyone wins.

Case Study #4: Overcoming Challenges to Attract and Retain Domestic Workers

The final case study tackles one of the most pressing issues for many employers: attracting and retaining domestic workers. According to research, a staggering 67% of employers report significant difficulty in recruiting for both entry-level and skilled positions. But where there are challenges, there are also solutions.

Through a combination of data-driven insights from surveys, focus groups, and interviews, we uncover actionable strategies that are helping employers succeed in the face of a tight labor market. These include steps to enhance onboarding and support workers during those critical first weeks, a period known for high turnover. The key takeaway? It was found that employers who have been successful in attracting and retaining workers have recognized that the labour shortage/crisis has been the impetus for change and have realized that innovative practices are needed to become desirable employers.

Using These Examples to Propel Your Business Forward

At CAHRC, we're all about celebrating success within the agriculture sector and sharing those wins across the entire industry. These case studies serve as powerful demonstrations of how tailored HR strategies can make a tangible difference in workforce management and culture. By learning from the real-world successes of these organizations, employers across Canada's agricultural sector can feel empowered to implement change with confidence.

Ready to dive deeper? Explore the full [Case Studies report](#) and start applying these strategies today.





AGRICULTURE'S NEXT CHAPTER: INCLUSIVE SUPPORT FOR WOMEN'S GROWTH AND SUCCESS

In 2022, the Canadian Agriculture Human Resource Council discovered through their Labour Market Information that the agriculture industry in Canada is faced a loss of \$3.5 billion in sales due to a 7.2% workforce gap—a shortage that impacts everyone in the sector. Women make up half of our population and yet remain underrepresented in the workforce. Bridging this gap isn't just about filling roles—it's about creating supportive spaces, advancing skills, and ensuring equal access to resources. That's where the [National Women in Agriculture and AgriFoods Network Project](#) takes the lead.

Through this initiative, we are building a nationwide network for women to build rewarding, long-term careers in agriculture, all while addressing some of the unique challenges they face. Here's how the project will unfold and what it aims to achieve for women and the industry as a whole.

Establishing a National Network

The first goal is to build a solid foundation by bringing together regional and provincial women in agriculture organizations. These partnerships will ensure we're working in alignment with those who are in touch with the unique challenges women face in their respective provinces or territories. Ensuring the industry understands specific needs, and setting a unified vision. By developing a roadmap that will outline key goals from 2025 to 2030, both for immediate progress and long-term impact.

Webinars gathered feedback directly from participants and stakeholders, ensuring that the network's Action Plan truly reflects the voices and experiences of women across Canada.

Gathering Data and Researching Needs

Understanding the unique challenges women face in agriculture is essential for meaningful change. CAHRC conducted a survey, an in-depth environmental scan to collect the latest research about women in this industry, along with a national survey in English and French.



I work and family, or navigating traditionally male-dominated spaces. According to the most recent study conducted by [Léger](#) and [Agricultrices du Québec](#), it revealed that 90% of the female farmers interviewed claim to live with a high or very high mental load. By creating [this network](#), we are tackling these challenges head-on, building support for women to grow into leadership roles, and inspiring the next generation to see agriculture as a viable, rewarding career path.

Women bring diverse perspectives, skills, and approaches that are critical to the future of agriculture. As the industry shifts towards greater sustainability, technology adoption, and innovation, the strengths women offer are exactly what is needed to drive the industry forward. The *National Women in Agriculture and AgriFoods Network Project* is about building a future where women feel empowered, valued, and ready to take on the opportunities that lie ahead in agriculture. By connecting women across regions, sharing knowledge, and resources we are working towards an agricultural workforce of the future is strong and diverse.

This survey will help to identify what women in agriculture need to succeed. The final report will summarize the findings and offer recommendations for moving forward.

Building Local Connections

Career development can often feel isolating, especially in an industry as vast as agriculture. Through local and regional events, we are helping women connect, share experiences, and learn from each other. These community-organized events will cover important themes such as human resources, leadership and technical skills improvement. Supporting locally focused events creates the opportunity for women to form lasting networks close to home and making it easier to exchange resources ultimately feeling supported in their careers. Check out a list of event supported by this initiative [here](#).

Breaking Down Barriers and Building Opportunity

In agriculture, just as in many other industries, women often face unique barriers—whether it's access to training, balancing





IMMIGRATION AND FOREIGN WORKER



BRINGING THE INDUSTRY TOGETHER

Navigating the New Temporary Foreign Worker Agriculture and Fish Processing Stream

The Canadian government is advancing its consultation process for a new Foreign Labour Program tailored to the Agriculture and Fish Processing sectors. Expected to launch by 2027, the program aims to address critical workforce demands across Canada's agriculture and fish processing sectors. CAHRC has taken an active role, facilitating discussions and gathering industry-wide feedback through the National Workforce Strategic Plan (NWSP) Temporary Foreign Worker and Immigration Working Group, ensuring a comprehensive response to the proposed program changes.

The new stream retains existing exemptions for the primary agriculture industry, such as no LMI processing fee for primary agriculture positions, no cap on the number of TFWs employed, and priority application processing. Additionally, employers will benefit from specialized government recruitment channels from Mexico and Caribbean SAWP participating countries, with seasonal fish, seafood, and primary fruit and vegetable processing sectors added to the new program. A proposed two-year agriculture and fish processing, aim to "make the TFWP more responsive to the sector's unique workforce demands.

For workers, a new wage structure, yet to be announced, will bring temporary worker salaries more in line with those of Canadian and permanent resident employees, addressing wage disparities in the sector. Additionally, the new stream proposes significant advancements in worker protections, such as a stream-specific work permits will allow workers the flexibility to operate in any occupation covered by the new stream and to transition between employers with open LMIA's, enhancing job security and providing protection against exploitative practices.

Throughout the consultation process, CAHRC plays a central role in uniting diverse voices within the agri-food sector. Through the NWSP Working Group, CAHRC facilitated discussions, providing a platform for stakeholders to share their thoughts and offer input on the ESDC consultation papers. This feedback helps formulate a cohesive industry approach and identify potential threats and opportunities related to the proposed changes. Following these discussions, each party finalizes their consultation submissions independently.

As of today, ESDC has released two discussion papers: one on employer-provided accommodations and another on occupational scope. Four more discussion papers are expected on stream-specific work permits, transportation, wages and deductions, and healthcare provisions. The latest discussion paper on occupational scope included data from CAHRC's Agriculture Labour Market Forecast for 2023-2030. This forecast, which highlights current and future labor shortages, skill gaps, and workforce trends, offered a valuable foundation for assessing workforce needs across agriculture and fish processing. Stakeholders raised questions about how certain occupations will be categorized and whether key roles within the processing and primary agriculture sectors would be included in the new stream. ESDC's reliance on CAHRC's labor market forecast data marked a significant step toward aligning workforce planning with actual industry needs. However, stakeholders noted that the evolving demands in agriculture require that NOC codes accurately reflect the range of skills and job roles in the industry. Additional studies and consultations are underway to ensure that occupations essential to Canadian food production are accurately represented and effectively supported by the new TFWP stream.

During these discussions, stakeholders emphasized the importance of balancing the increased labor mobility offered by stream-specific permits with worker protections. Proposed stream-specific open work permits would allow workers to switch employers within the same sector to enhance flexibility and minimize risks of exploitation. While this flexibility is generally viewed as beneficial, some stakeholders continue to raise their concerns about how increased mobility could disrupt workforce stability and drive up already high recruitment costs, particularly in commodities requiring specialized skills and with limited labor pools. For instance, the potential for "cherry-picking" workers in the grain and oilseed sector could lead to higher turnover rates, impacting productivity during critical seeding and harvest periods.

The group also discussed the unique challenges faced by different sectors of the industry, particularly the processing sector. Many roles in food-processing are full-time and permanent, which does not align well with the seasonal or temporary focus of the current TFW Program. Some members emphasized the need for a separate immigration pathway to address these year-round roles, suggesting that an option geared towards permanent residency would better fit the needs of processing employers.



In conclusion, the working group underscored that each sector in the agri-food industry has its own needs and challenges, from managing seasonal workers transfer in SAWP to ensuring a pathway to permanent residency for food-processing roles. This diversity makes it challenging to implement a one-size-fits-all approach, but all stakeholders are united by a common purpose: to maintain a stable and secure food supply for Canadians. The primary agriculture seasonal, year-around and processing sectors are closely interconnected, making it essential for all segments to work together to secure the workforce needed to keep food production stable and sustainable across Canada.

As the agri-food sector navigates these policy changes, CAHRC remains committed to fostering dialogue and providing a platform for the industry to exchange insights and address challenges. Through this collaboration, stakeholders are laying the groundwork for a resilient and sustainable future in Canadian agriculture and fish processing.





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needs to be told in the next
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Matters?**

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to discuss sponsored content and other opportunities
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SKILL DEVELOPMENT



UNLOCKING LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL: ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

Canada's agriculture sector, a cornerstone of the economy, faces significant labour shortages, and women, who represent nearly half of the workforce, are underrepresented in leadership roles. The [National Women in Agriculture and Agri-Food Network \(NWIA\)](#) is working to change this by empowering women with the skills and opportunities they need to lead.

The Skills Gap in Leadership

Women in agriculture face several barriers to leadership, including lack of confidence, limited networking opportunities, and struggles with balancing family responsibilities. To lead effectively, women need training in:

- **Strategic Decision-Making:** Managing farm businesses, assessing risk, and financial planning.
- **Technical Proficiency:** Hands-on experience with machinery and emerging technologies.
- **Communication & Media Training:** Advocacy, public speaking, and industry representation.
- **Resilience & Mental Health Awareness:** Work-life balance and stress management.

Growth in Female Leadership

Statistics Canada reports a modest increase in female farm operators, with women now comprising 30.4% of farm operators. This growing involvement underscores the need for leadership development programs for women in agriculture.

Lessons from the U.S.: Women in Agricultural Leadership

In the U.S., women in agricultural leadership roles have been shown to improve financial performance, innovation, and group dynamics. Key strategies for fostering leadership include:

1. Seeking mentorship to expand professional networks.
2. Viewing leadership as applicable in both traditional and non-traditional roles.
3. Supporting one another in striving for leadership positions in agriculture.

Programs Bridging the Leadership & Skills Gap

Several initiatives across Canada are helping fill the leadership gap for women in agriculture:

- **Women in Agriculture Essential Leadership Skills Development Program (CAHRC):** A 10-week program offering training in decision-making, team leadership, and confidence-building.

- Influential Women in Canadian Agriculture (IWCA): Annual summits focused on leadership challenges and advocacy.
- Chicken Farmers of Ontario Women in Leadership Initiative: Leadership training and networking events for women in poultry farming.
- Farm Credit Canada's Women Entrepreneur Program: Resources and financial support for women in agribusiness.

The Impact of the National Women in Agriculture and Agri-Food Network

Through [23 funded events across Canada](#), the NWIA is helping women develop practical and industry-specific skills. These events have included:

- **Tractor & Machinery Operating Training:** Breaking down barriers in technical skills and farm operations.
- **Media & Communication Workshops:** Preparing women for leadership roles in advocacy and industry discussions.
- **Mental Health & Resilience Training:** Addressing stress and unique challenges faced by women in agriculture.

With a goal of achieving 30% female representation in leadership by 2030, the NWIA is laying the foundation for a more inclusive and innovative future for agriculture.

Challenging Perceptions and Navigating Leadership

While much of the literature highlights the barriers women face in agricultural leadership, it also points to a challenge of perception. A common attitude suggests that women in leadership positions are seen as benefiting from diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts, rather than their own merits. This perception undermines their achievements.

However, many women in Canadian agricultural leadership are determined to challenge this stereotype. They emphasize that their focus is on ensuring the "right person for the job" is chosen—regardless of gender. These women explicitly distance themselves from traditional notions of feminism, emphasizing leadership grounded in competence, expertise, and experience, not gender. This attitude underscores the core belief among women in leadership: competence should be the determining factor, not gender.

Looking Ahead

The NWIA's work, through skill-building programs, mentorship, and networking opportunities, is empowering women to take on leadership roles in agriculture. With continued support, women will drive innovation, productivity, and sustainability, shaping the future of Canada's agricultural sector for generations to come.





AUTOMATION AND TECHNOLOGY



EMBRACING AUTOMATION AND TECHNOLOGY IN AGRICULTURE: A PATH TO EFFICIENCY AND GROWTH

The agricultural sector is undergoing a technological transformation, with automation and digital tools playing a critical role in enhancing efficiency, productivity, and sustainability. As Canada's farms face persistent labor shortages, technology is stepping in to bridge the gap, making farming more precise and less reliant on manual labour.

The Role of Automation in Modern Agriculture

Automation and digital tools are revolutionizing agricultural practices. Technologies such as precision farming, drones, and autonomous machinery are now widely adopted to optimize operations. These innovations allow farmers to monitor soil health, apply fertilizers with pinpoint accuracy, and even harvest crops using autonomous equipment. According to recent research, over half of Canadian farms now incorporate at least one form of advanced technology, with an increasing reliance on data analytics to drive decision-making.

Addressing the Skills Gap in Agriculture

With the rapid integration of technology, there is a growing demand for workers equipped with digital skills. Many traditional agricultural roles now require expertise in software applications, data analysis, and automation systems. However, finding talent with these competencies remains a challenge. Programs like [Jelly Academy's digital marketing training](#) can provide farmers and agribusinesses with the necessary skills to navigate the digital landscape, enhancing their ability to market products, engage with consumers, and adopt emerging technologies.

Attend their webinar on March 27: [Register](#).

FREE WEBINAR
Unlock Funded Seats for a Marketing & Business Growth Course in the Advanced Manufacturing, Food, Agriculture & Beverage Industry

JELLY ACADEMY POWWOWPITCH



NAVIGATING TECHNOLOGY, TRADITION, AND FAMILY ON A DAIRY FARM



When Rebecca first heard the word "agriculture," she never imagined it would shape her future. Growing up on various military bases across Canada, her early life revolved around adapting to new environments and exploring different parts of the country. In high school, her interests leaned toward health sciences, but living in a rural area ignited her passion for equine studies.

Determined to pursue this interest, Rebecca moved from Nova Scotia to Ontario to study agriculture with a focus on the equine industry. That decision proved to be life changing. The program opened her eyes to a wide array of career opportunities in agriculture, and she excelled in areas like nutrition and reproductive sciences. It was during this time that she met her husband, Thomas, a fourth-generation dairy farmer and studying agriculture and heavy equipment mechanics.

Fast forward to today, Rebecca and Thomas work side by side on their dairy farm. After completing a comprehensive succession plan, the couple took over the reins in 2024 and began modernizing their operation. With a shared vision for the future, they've adopted cutting-edge technologies, including a robotic milking system, an oilseed pressing system, and a grain dryer, to enhance the farm's

efficiency and sustainability to ensure the farm remains viable for the next generation—their three daughters.

We caught up with Rebecca, who is also the Stakeholder Engagement Specialist at the Canadian Agriculture Human Resource Council (CAHRC), to ask her a few questions about her journey adopting new technologies, balancing her career, and raising a family while contributing to the future of Canadian agriculture.

What challenges did you face while adopting and implementing new technologies on the farm, and how did you overcome them?

Adopting technology like robotics for our dairy herd was a welcomed but challenging transition. After completing our succession plan, it became clear that my husband's parents no longer wanted to milk cows, and finding local labour for that task was incredibly difficult. Financially, continuing with traditional milking methods wasn't viable for us.

One of our biggest challenges was managing our expectations—this kind of transformation doesn't happen overnight. Sometimes, it can take months or even years to fully integrate new systems. Communication was key, not just with family but also with suppliers and service providers.



and processing feed on-site reduces waste and ensures a constant supply of fresh, high-quality feed—a change our cows love. These innovations make the farm more efficient and sustainable, while also paving the way for our daughters to see a future for themselves here. The physical demands of farming have lessened, which makes the work more accessible and appealing to the next generation.

How do you balance your role at CAHRC, your responsibilities on the farm, and raising three daughters with your husband, while managing the expectations of a farm?

It's a juggling act, but one I'm proud of. My work with CAHRC complements my role on the farm, as both require organization, strategic thinking, and a passion for agriculture.

Being organized is critical. We plan out our goals for the next 4-5 years, researching every decision to ensure it aligns with our long-term vision. I've also learned to accept that I can't do everything. Leaning on our team—both at home and at CAHRC—has been essential.

The perception of agriculture as purely physical work is outdated. While it's still demanding, advancements in technology mean we're working smarter, not harder. This shift makes the work even more rewarding, as we can see the tangible impact of every decision we make.

Without the right team in place, the process can become drawn-out and stressful, especially on top of regular farming challenges like harvest deadlines and fluctuating market prices.

How has integrating the robotic milking system, oilseed pressing, and grain drying technologies transformed the way you operate the farm?

Before these upgrades, we had no technology on farm, so the changes have been transformative. The robotic milking system includes a data collection component—essentially a “Fitbit” for cows—that allows us to monitor each animal's health in real-time. We can detect subtle changes, like a rising temperature or reduced feed intake, long before traditional signs of illness appear. This proactive approach ensures our herd receives the best possible care.

The oilseed press and grain dryer have also been game changers. By processing our crops on-farm, we've stabilized feed prices and reduced environmental impact by minimizing the need for trucking commodities to and from the farm. Storing





What lessons have you learned from this experience that could inspire or guide other women in agriculture, especially those navigating similar challenges?

Communication is the cornerstone of success in agriculture, especially when working with family or managing a team. Clearly defining roles, setting expectations, and holding regular meetings to align goals are essential practices.

It's also important to embrace a growth mindset. Agriculture is constantly evolving, and staying open to innovation can make a world of difference. Finally, don't be afraid to ask for help—whether it's from mentors, peers, or service providers. Building a strong support network is invaluable.

How has this experience shaped your vision for the future of the farm and the role your daughters might play in it?

Adopting technology has cleared a path for the next generation. Tasks that were once highly physical are now less demanding, allowing younger family members to take on roles earlier or enabling parents to stay involved longer if they choose.

This shift also broadens the skills our daughters might need for the future. Instead of solely focusing on traditional farming skills, they could pursue engineering, skilled trades, or even technology-driven careers

that align with modern agriculture.

Ultimately, every decision we make is with them in mind. We want to pass down a business that is not only financially secure but also adaptable to the changing demands of the industry.

Rebecca's story is a testament to the power of resilience, innovation, and teamwork in agriculture. By embracing new technologies and balancing the demands of family, farm, and career, she's paving the way for a sustainable future—for her daughters and for the generations to come.





The Impact of Digital Marketing on Agriculture

In addition to automation, digital marketing is becoming a crucial tool for agricultural businesses. Consumers are increasingly interested in the origins of their food and sustainable farming practices. By leveraging digital marketing strategies—such as social media engagement, search engine optimization (SEO), and online advertising—farmers can connect directly with consumers, build brand loyalty, and expand their market reach.

A Future-Ready Workforce

To sustain growth and innovation in agriculture, industry stakeholders must invest in upskilling their workforce. Supporting training programs that focus on digital competencies will ensure that Canadian agriculture remains competitive in an evolving global market. By embracing automation and digital strategies, farmers can improve operational efficiency, reduce labor dependency, and create a resilient, future-ready industry.

As technology continues to shape the future of farming, integrating digital skills and automation will be key to sustaining productivity and meeting the demands of an ever-changing agricultural landscape.



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APRIL 9
- **CANADIAN PRODUCE MARKETING ASSOCIATION CONVENTION (CPMA),**
APRIL 8-10
- **MANITOBA PORK AGM,**
APRIL 10
- **MARITIME WILD BLUEBERRY CONFERENCE,**
APRIL 11-12
- **SIAL CANADA,**
APRIL 29-MAY 1
- **AGSCAPE AGM,**
MAY 1
- **AIC CONFERENCE,**
MAY 6-7
- **AGRI TECH VENTURE FORUM,**
MAY 7-8
- **LIVESTOCK MARKETS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA CONVENTION,**
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