



## Greenhouse, Nursery, and Floriculture Industry Forecast to 2025

In 2014, the 'greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture'\* industry was Canada's largest agricultural employer. It was also the most reliant on foreign workers. As the labour gap widens, this industry is predicted to be hardest hit by costly labour shortages.

### Industry Overview

The 'greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture' industry includes farms that produce nursery crops and trees, flowers and ornamental plants, or crops of any kind grown under cover (including mushrooms).

The industry's workforce is geographically concentrated, with 41% of the workforce located in Ontario, 20% located in Alberta, and 15% located in Quebec.

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

In 2014, the industry employed 60,600 people, including self-employed, paid labour, and foreign workers. This number is equivalent to 16% of the total agricultural workforce, making this industry the largest agricultural employer in Canada. With a labour-intensive and highly seasonal work cycle, the industry relies heavily on foreign workers. Currently, foreign workers account for 28% of the industry's workforce at its seasonal peak.

A high reliance on seasonal workers, a growing demand for labour, and a shrinking domestic labour pool will intensify the industry's labour challenges over the next decade.

**In 2014, the 'greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture' industry employed 60,600 people.**

The industry was unable to fill 2,800 jobs, which cost it \$100 million.

By 2025, the industry will need to fill an additional 7,500 jobs to meet the market demand for its products.

## Labour Trends 2004–2014

The 'greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture' industry is highly dependent on foreign labour and faces the challenge of maintaining an adequate workforce.

The industry is highly seasonal, with a workforce that increases 1.8 times from seasonal low to peak. It's also labour intensive, with many products needing to be hand-picked and packaged.

As a result, this industry relies heavily on foreign workers. While it makes up 16% of the total agricultural workforce, it accounts for 37% of the total foreign workforce employed by the sector. More than one quarter of the industry's workforce (28%) is foreign.

In 2014, labour shortages cost the industry \$100 million. The impact was larger for floriculture and ornamental operations, which lost \$71.6 million, or 3.8% of sales, than for food crop operations, which lost \$28.4 million, or 2.2% of sales.



**In 2014, labour shortages cost the 'greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture' industry an estimated \$100 million, or 3.1% of sales.**

Our industry survey revealed that:

- **28%** of farms lost sales due to labour shortages
- **21%** of farms experienced production delays

## Industry Forecast to 2025

Already struggling to maintain an adequate workforce, the 'greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture' industry faces greater labour challenges in the years ahead.

The total number of jobs to be filled in this industry is expected to grow by an average of 1% per year, rising from 63,500 jobs in 2014 to 71,000 jobs in 2025, creating an additional 7,500 jobs to be filled.

The supply of domestic labour, on the other hand, is expected to gradually shrink, with 1,900 fewer Canadian residents available to work in the industry by 2025.

As a result, the gap between the number of domestic workers available and the number of jobs to be filled will widen substantially. While 17,200 jobs couldn't be filled by domestic workers in 2014, that number will rise to 26,600 by 2025. This number is equivalent to 37% of the total workforce required to meet the market demand for industry products.

Ontario's 'greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture' industry will be hardest hit, with the labour gap rising to 52% of the total workforce required in that province.





## Meeting the Challenge

As Canada's largest employer, and as the industry most reliant on foreign workers, the 'greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture' industry faces significant challenges in the years ahead. Already impacted by a lack of available labour, the industry faces greater losses as the gap widens between the available pool of domestic workers and the number of jobs the industry needs to fill.

While the industry has had success in filling much of its labour gap with foreign workers, a change in policy could reduce or eliminate the availability of foreign labour and significantly affect the industry's potential growth.

Attracting more domestic workers may pose challenges for this industry:

- People have negative perceptions of the 'greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture' industry as an employer, which could hinder recruitment efforts if left unaddressed.
- The physical nature of work and the seasonal fluctuations in the demand for labour within the industry is a challenge to worker retention.

However, the industry may benefit from these advantages:

- The industry has a younger workforce, so the effects of retirement will be felt less here than in other industries with older workers.



- Industry operations tend to be located closer to larger cities, which make them more attractive to workers and provide larger labour pools.
- The industry has below-average turnover rates, particularly among seasonal workers.

For more information on production trends and labour market challenges for the 'greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture' industry, please refer to the accompanying report available at [www.AgriLMI.ca](http://www.AgriLMI.ca).

## About This Fact Sheet

The data cited in this fact sheet is based on the results of a three-year study that examined the labour market in Canada's agriculture sector. Information was collected by modelling labour demand and supply by province, commodity, and occupation; conducting a survey of and interviews with more than 1,000 sector stakeholders; and validating the results through focus groups and webinars. To read the accompanying report, or to access additional provincial, commodity, or national fact sheets and reports, please visit [www.AgriLMI.ca](http://www.AgriLMI.ca).

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

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