

# FACT SHEET

## Labour Market Information on Recruitment & Retention in Primary Agriculture

*The Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) was created to address human resource issues facing primary agriculture across Canada. CAHRC works with industry leaders, governments, and education stakeholders to research, develop and communicate solutions to the challenges in agriculture employment and skills development.*

### What is Labour Market Information?

Labour market information (LMI) is most useful to career counsellors, industry decision makers and policy makers as it provides data and identifies trends about the availability of workers and the types of occupations in the sector. It can also be valuable to job seekers researching career options.

This fact sheet provides information about current employment in the on-farm agriculture sector and the projected need for specific occupations on the farm. It also highlights challenges and successes of farm employers in their efforts to recruit and retain workers.

The information in this report was gathered from May to November 2008. The data is based on:

- An extensive review of statistics from the Census of Agriculture, Population Census, and Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey;
- 552 employer surveys;
- 50 key industry stakeholder interviews; and
- 13 farm profile interviews.

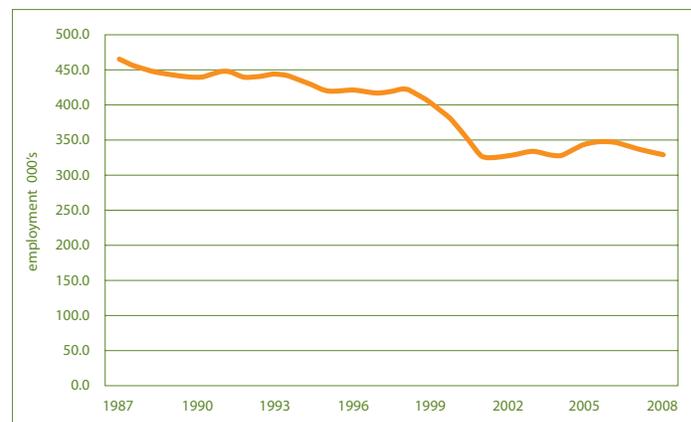
This research focused on farm operations with more than \$100,000 in farm receipts to capture issues in recruitment and retention of workers.



### What Do We Know?

Canada's agricultural sector employs a large number of people. Based on Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey, on-farm agriculture employed an estimated 336,200 people in 2008, across all farm sizes. While on-farm employment has declined since the late 1980s, employment has leveled off since 2002. Approximately 244,500 of these people worked in operations with receipts of more than \$100,000.

### Agricultural Labour Force Estimate in Canada 1987 – 2008 (000's)



The results of the CAHRC survey of farm employers suggest that future employment needs on the farm will vary by geographic region, by commodity, and by occupation.

For example, over the next five years:

- Employment needs on the farm are expected to increase by at least 15% across all regions of Canada;
- Employers in horticulture commodities expect they will need up to 52% more employees. This group has the highest current vacancy rate (28% of positions were vacant at the time of the survey); and
- Farm employers indicated that they will need to hire 39% more mechanics and machinery operators.



The on-farm vacancy rate is estimated to be 9% across Canada. This percentage is calculated by comparing the proportion of unfilled positions on the farm to all positions (both filled and unfilled) which, in 2008, translates into more than 25,000 job vacancies for non-seasonal positions. The average vacancy rate for seasonal agricultural positions is estimated to be 20%, the equivalent of 16,560 positions.

Employers in primary agriculture indicated that they expect to employ an additional 50,000 non-seasonal, and 38,000 seasonal workers by 2012. A variety of workers in technical, trade and supervisory occupations, as well as general farm workers will be needed.

#### **Recruitment and Retention in Primary Agriculture**

Most employers use 'word of mouth' through family and friends as a means to finding new employees for their farm businesses. Just over one-half of employers surveyed advertise in newspapers. Less than one-half use the Internet or a government employment centre to recruit workers.

Employers surveyed noted that they had difficulty finding and keeping Canadian employees as competition from other industries has increased while the size of the labour pool in rural areas has decreased. As a result, some farmers are showing a growing interest in temporary foreign worker programs to meet their labour needs.



#### **Next Steps**

CAHRC's LMI research indicates that there will be an increased need for farm workers with a variety of skills. To help attract potential employees to the sector, CAHRC will work to raise awareness within the agriculture industry, government and the general public of current and projected labour shortages. CAHRC's industry partners will also use this labour market information to influence policies designed to attract and retain workers in primary agriculture.

Farmers expressed the need for resources to help them in their recruitment and retention efforts. CAHRC will develop human resource tools in response to this need.

To download the full research report or for more information about CAHRC's projects visit:

202-1283 Algoma Road  
Ottawa Ontario K1B 3W7

613-745-7457  
1-866-430-7457  
Fax: 613-745-0119

info@cahrc-ccrha.ca  
www.cahrc-ccrha.ca



CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL  
HUMAN RESOURCE COUNCIL