

**STATEMENT**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**December 13, 2016**

**Research supports Federal Government changes for Agriculture and Agri-Food**

**Ottawa, ON – “**The changes the Federal Government announced today are good news for agricultural employers and farm and food workers,” explains Portia MacDonald-Dewhirst, Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council Executive Director. “Feedback we have received from agricultural stakeholders is very supportive of these changes.” CAHRC works with industry leaders, governments and educational stakeholders to research, develop and communicate solutions to the challenges in employment and skills development in agriculture. CAHRC researches issues, gathers stakeholder feedback, facilitates discussions and consultations between government and industry, and coordinates and provides support for Canada's Agriculture and Agri-Food Labour Task Force (LTF).

“Our national Labour Market Information research released recently was conducted over a three year period with extensive collaboration with industry where we spoke to over 1,000 agricultural employers and employees,” says MacDonald-Dewhirst. “The feedback we received shows there is a critical gap between the demand for workers and the supply of available workers. This gap has doubled in the last 10 years to approximately 60,000 workers. By 2025, the labour gap is expected to grow to 114,000 workers. The job vacancy rate for the industry is higher than any other industry in Canada, 7 per cent. This is resulting in $1.5 billion in lost sales,” says Portia MacDonald-Dewhirst.

The changes announced today apply to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program’s four-year cumulative duration rule which will no longer apply to temporary foreign workers in Canada, effective immediately and an exemption is also being made on the cap for seasonal industries seeking temporary foreign workers for up to 180 days during the 2017 calendar year will be extended until December 31, 2017. More changes for immigration and the TFWP are expected in the new year.

Prior to the change, the cumulative duration rule forced skilled agriculture workers that were trained in Canada to leave after four years. This was creating a skills deficit for Canadian agricultural employers and it was also acting as a restrictive barrier for the pathway to permanency for farm and food workers.

Statistics Canada evidence shows that recruitment for agricultural employers is ongoing and continuous. Agriculture and agri-food stakeholders have provided feedback that the industry is dealing with unique workforce issues such as: rural location; handling of live plants and animals; strenuous physical work; and a high degree of seasonality.

Fixing the cumulative duration rule has been a long-standing recommendation of the LTF, comprised of industry representatives from the value chain, including the seafood sector, who have developed the ***Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Workforce Action Plan* (WAP)** to address the critical labour shortage. This proposed Canadian agriculture employment strategy is led by the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) and supported by over 77 agriculture associations.

“These changes are a positive step forward by the Federal Government which will help alleviate some of the issues that farmers, processors and agricultural employees are facing,” explains MacDonald-Dewhirst.

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***The Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council 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 also leads collaborative implementation efforts in support of the national Workforce Action Plan for the agriculture and agri-food sector.***

***For more information visit the 2 research reports attached and visit*** [***www.cahrc-ccrha.ca***](http://www.cahrc-ccrha.ca)***.***

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* **CONFERENCE BOARD OF CANADA REPORT ON AGRICULTURE TFWs RELEASED (Dec. 1):**The report, [Sowing the Seeds of Growth: Temporary Foreign Workers in Agriculture](http://cahrc-ccrha.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=8b2f4e6541485c31a03086416&id=0e0de359ce&e=f027ef2c47), examines why temporary foreign workers (TFWs) play such an important role in the agriculture sector’s workforce. It finds that the industry faces unique recruitment and retention challenges that are contributing to its growing labour shortages. These challenges include an aging workforce, the rural location of many operations, and negative perceptions about working in the sector. [News Release here.](http://cahrc-ccrha.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=8b2f4e6541485c31a03086416&id=3d962815a6&e=f027ef2c47)
* **CAHRC NATIONAL LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION REPORT RELEASED (Nov. 21):** Shortage of Canadians Working in Agriculture to Double by 2025. The gap between labour demand and the domestic workforce in agriculture has doubled from 30,000 to 59,000 in the past ten years and projections indicate that by 2025, the Canadian agri-workforce could be short workers for 114,000 jobs. This is a key finding of newly released Agriculture 2025: How the Sector’s Labour Challenges Will Shape its Future research by the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC). The LMI research also revealed that primary agriculture has the highest industry job vacancy rate at 7 per cent. Please visit [http://www.cahrc-ccrha.ca/agriLMI.ca](http://cahrc-ccrha.us8.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=8b2f4e6541485c31a03086416&id=fb972decf6&e=f027ef2c47) / [http://www.cahrc-ccrha.ca/fr/agriIMT.ca](http://cahrc-ccrha.us8.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=8b2f4e6541485c31a03086416&id=1060754206&e=f027ef2c47) to download a copy of the report.  [News release here.](http://cahrc-ccrha.us8.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=8b2f4e6541485c31a03086416&id=654dcd447b&e=f027ef2c47)