

COVID-19 Weekly Information Update / Mise à jour de la semaine – May 29, 2020

Hello,

We would like to share with you a few updates related to COVID-19 that you may find of interest. Please do not hesitate to share this information with your networks.

Please continue to consult the [AAFC website](#) regularly for updates. This week, we updated our website to include information on scientific research at AAFC, Farm Credit Canada's \$100-million venture capital fund, the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund, the Large Employee Emergency Financing Facility, and the Youth Employment and Skills Program.

1) Regional Relief and Recovery Fund (RRRF) – Apply now

The RRRF, which was announced on April 17, 2020, provides \$962 million in additional support to Canadian businesses that cannot access existing federal measures, including:

- \$675 million for small and medium-sized businesses facing financial pressure, and
- \$287 million to support rural businesses and communities with access to capital, delivered by the Community Futures Network.

The RRRF is delivered through Canada's six [Regional Development Agencies](#) (RDAs) and nearly doubles their annual budgets. They began accepting [applications](#) on May 13, 2020. Please find **attached additional information** provided by Western Economic Diversification Canada, Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, and the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario.

RRRF requests of up to \$40,000 are available to those who have applied for, but did not qualify for existing Government of Canada COVID-19-related support such as the [Canada Emergency Business Account](#) (CEBA). As with CEBA, repaying the balance of the loan on or before December 31, 2022 will result in loan forgiveness of 25 percent (up to \$10,000). Repayable loans of over \$40,000 are also available.

Small business owners with pressing financial needs can also call 1-866-989-1080 (toll-free) seven days a week, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (ET), to get financial planning advice to deal with the impacts of COVID-19. The hotline is a national, bilingual service operated by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. Business advisors—125 members of Chartered Professional Accountants Canada (CPA Canada)—will be available to provide customized financial guidance.

2) Youth Employment and Skills Program (YESP)

On May 26, 2020, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, [announced](#) an investment of up to \$9.2 million to enhance the YESP and fund up to 700 new positions for youth, aged 15 to 30, in the agriculture industry. The YESP will provide agriculture employers up to 50 per cent of the cost of hiring a Canadian youth up to \$14,000. Indigenous applicants and those applicants hiring a youth facing barriers are eligible for funding of up to 80 per cent of their costs.

Eligible applicants include producers, agri-businesses, industry associations, provincial and territorial governments, Indigenous organizations and research facilities. Employers may apply for this funding retroactive to April 1, 2020, with projects to be completed by March 31, 2021.

Application forms are available through the [Youth Employment and Skills Program](#), or to get more information, please contact aafc.yesp-pecj.aac@canada.ca, or call: 1-866-452-5558.

3) New Guide for Temporary Foreign Workers

On Thursday May 28, ESDC released a “COVID-19: A Guide for Temporary Foreign Workers in Canada”. Customized for Temporary Foreign Workers under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, the Guide provides information on: how the disease spreads, what TFWs should know before coming to Canada, rights and responsibilities of TFWs during the mandatory 14-day quarantine period (including employer responsibilities) and post-quarantine, how to access health care and related information, income supports for TFWs in Canada, and contact information for government authorities related to health care, TFW Program compliance, Employment Standards, and Occupational Health and Safety. The Guide, available in English, French and Spanish, can be found at:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/campaigns/foreign-worker-rights/covid19-guide.html>.

4) Updated AAFC Inventory: Economic support available to the agriculture and agri-food sector

Please find **attached an updated inventory** of economic support available to the agriculture and agri-food compiled by AAFC. The list includes an overview of eligibility requirements, and applicability to the sector. AAFC will continue to update and circulate this list as additional information becomes available.

5) Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) Consultation

On May 25, 2020, the Department of Finance Canada launched a [consultation](#) on the CEWS, which covers 75 per cent of an employee’s wages (up to \$847 per week) for employers who have been hard-hit by COVID-19. This consultation will close on

June 5, 2020. It will help inform potential changes to the CEWS to help maximize employment and best meet the needs of businesses and workers during these challenging times.

6) Temporary Ministerial Exemption process to allow inter-provincial trade of meat and poultry products from establishments that are not federally licensed

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has put in place a temporary [Ministerial Exemption](#) (ME) process that will permit interprovincial movement of meat and poultry products from establishments that are not federally licensed if such trade becomes necessary to alleviate meat shortages during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To initiate the ME process, food businesses experiencing a shortage are asked to reach out to their Provincial or Territorial Authority to inform them of the food shortage, determine if the situation requires the issuance of an ME by the CFIA, and obtain all information about the application process.

7) Provincial programs and tools to source personal protective equipment (PPE)

Efforts are underway to ensure the agriculture and agri-food sector has appropriate support in sourcing supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) needed for both normal occupational health and safety purposes as well as to mitigate COVID-19 transmission. To this end, some provinces have announced programs and other tools to assist private sector procurement. While these are not specifically targeted to the agriculture sector, they can be a useful resource to the sector in accessing required PPE. The **information attached** is sourced from provincial websites and is being shared for your information and use.

Thank you,

Industry Engagement Division / Division de la consultation du secteur
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada / Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada
Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada