



**CAHRC-CCRHA**

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

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## CAHRC Semi-Annual Update – Summer 2023

*Estimated reading time: 10 minutes*

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**CAHRC is Canada's AgriWorkforce centre of excellence.** For over sixteen years, the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) has been working with industry associations, educators, and all levels of government to examine issues and build meaningful solutions for the Canadian agri-workforce. Our efforts have resulted in clarifying jobs and worker requirements for modern agricultural operations today and into the future. Our research explores emerging labour issues, tracks the number of positions required, and quantifies vacancies and their impacts on competitiveness. We work through collaboration and partnerships with industry associations, educational institutions, and government departments to deliver practical staff management tools and training programs. In these ways, we are working hard to grow the AgriWorkforce and ensure it is

skilled and resilient for future success.

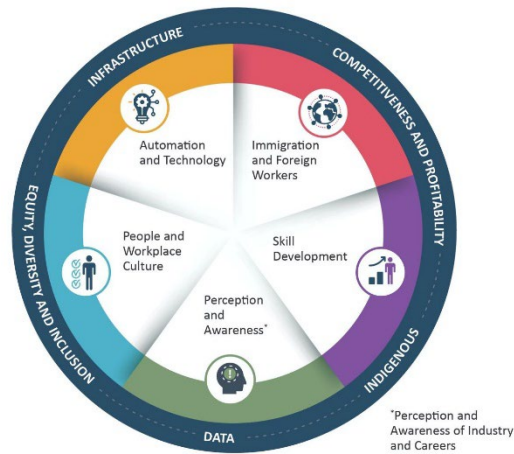
**Partnership.** The Council has developed a critically important partnership model and works in collaboration with numerous industry associations across Canada, such as CNLA. By working together, we help associations keep their staff, Board and members informed about emerging labour issues and connected with the latest research and supportive materials. Special briefings, updates, research and advocacy assistance is provided to support the work of associations. Council association partners also give their members access to practical and effective staff management training and an extensive list of HR management tools, guides and templates. CAHRC is available to work with partners to provide customized member surveys, research, webinars, HR management tools, training and advice. CAHRC is pleased to welcome our new Stakeholder Engagement specialist Rebecca Balsdon to our team.

## CAHRC PROGRAMS & SERVICES

The Council supports a strong future for the agriculture industry by focusing on five key programs, with details and materials about these programs and services available on [CAHRC's website](#).

### 1. Emerging AgriWorkforce Issues: Competitiveness and Sustainability

CAHRC continues to partake in government/industry meetings, providing insights into the agricultural labour force and temporary foreign worker LMI.



In spring 2021, CAHRC, in partnership with the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and Food and Beverage Canada formally [announced](#) the National Workforce Strategic Plan for Agriculture and Food and Beverage Manufacturing. Structured around five pillars and five overarching themes, this two-year project is bringing together all parts of the agriculture and food manufacturing sector to identify solutions to longstanding workforce issues and develop an actionable roadmap that will track progress in implementing these solutions. As work continues on track with scheduled activities adding multiple research projects to the work plan to understand the current state of the sectors in all areas of focus. CAHRC continues to deliver presentations to industry groups and individuals on how they can become involved in the NWFS initiative.

**Key activity includes:**

- 8 research projects that are under way
  - The effects of Technology and Automation-Future skills and labour demand
  - Identifying and addressing barriers to automation and technology in Agriculture and Food and Beverage Manufacturing
  - Analysis of Compensation in the Canadian Agriculture sector

- Identifying and Addressing Barriers to Attracting Urban/Non-traditional job seekers to Agriculture careers
- Understanding the Economic Impact of Temporary Foreign Workers Programs in Agriculture and Food and Beverage Manufacturing
- Identifying and addressing barriers to infrastructure in Agriculture and Food and Beverage Manufacturing
- HR-People and Workplace culture
- Environmental scan of Post-Secondary Education programming
- Working groups will reconvene in the fall once research has been completed.
- The Skills Symposium that was held on April 20th in Toronto, Ontario was a great success with hope this will bring all pillars together as we enter the next phase of our project in Fall 2023.

CAHRC continues to work closely with AAFC's team that is developing the Department's Agriculture Labour Strategy as well. The Interim Report was shared with the Minister and the Department, with a letter highlighting key industry input and recommendations.

CAHRC is a member of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Skills Development Sector Engagement table and will be sitting on the sub-groups of the Table as well.

CAHRC is also a member of the Canadian Agriculture Sustainability Initiative (CASI) Governance Committee, a partner on the National Index on Agri-Food Performance, and the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef People Health and Safety Working Group.

- **Research:** exploring the latest labour-related impediments to competitiveness for the agriculture industry
- **Customized Research:** examining regional and commodity-specific workforce issues upon request
- **Reports:** documenting the impacts of shortages & recommendations for strengthening the AgriWorkforce
- **Communications:** clarifying issues & options through presentations, info-graphics, tours, and meetings

- **Tools:** supporting association staff & members with Partner Updates on critical emerging labour issues

## 2. AgriLMI: Agricultural Labour Market Information

Over the past sixteen years, the Council has worked with industry stakeholders to quantify labour requirements and trends. Our AgriLMI program continues to generate interest and build influence. CAHRC's labour market information has become an important resource for federal and provincial governments and industry in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. CAHRC continues to work with partners on custom labour market research as needed.

CAHRC has been executing Growing the Agriculture Workforce of the Future: Cultivating Canada's Post Pandemic Recovery activities related to updating the LMI forecast to assist in defining the current labour status, post COVID-19 pandemic challenges and seeking to gather new and additional data the agriculture & sales services, cannabis and organic farming sectors.



CAHRC conducted a Labour Market Information survey from April 3, 2023 to May 7, 2023 with more participation than anticipated. The target sample size for the survey was set to 800 responses to which we received 1,052 completed survey responses and 2,448 partially completed responses. The survey was distributed to three stakeholder groups: Employers, Farm Workers and other stakeholders (i.e. provincial governments, agricultural associations).

CAHRC has taken the results of the survey and have conducted 21 interviews with Industry leaders to provide an outlook at the larger issues on labour and skills shortages, to reflect

on how things have changed since the pandemic and outlook for the future. CAHRC conducted five virtual focus group discussions by province/region between June 27-30 with 15 participants from a diverse group of commodity areas. CAHRC is currently conducting commodity-specific focus groups to ensure the data is well represented. The LMI advisory committee met in Fredericton to validate the data on July 17, 2023 to ensure a target release of Fall 2023.

- **Research:** exploring the latest labour market supply and demand requirements for the agriculture industry
- **Customized Research:** examining commodity-specific workforce shortages, growth and needs upon request
- **Reports:** documenting ten years of labour market research (national, provincial & commodity-specific reports)
- **Communications:** clarifying current and future workforce needs through presentations and webinars
- **Tools:** supporting stakeholders with dashboards, calculators, & benchmarking tools (turnover & compensation)

### 3. AgriJobs: National Agricultural Occupational Framework and Support Tools

CAHRC continues to provide National Occupational Standards (NOS) that provide content for training, job descriptions, career pathing as well as other tools. CAHRC will be using the content in these NOS to develop micro-credentials and on-the-job training resources in the months ahead.



CAHRC has been executing Growing the Agriculture Workforce of the Future: Cultivating Canada’s post pandemic Recovery activities related to training, sector wide standards and tools to address labour market shortages and skills needs. CAHRC will be supporting this initiative by expanding CAHRC’s HR management program, including the Quality Agriculture Management program (QAMP).

- **Research:** exploring task, knowledge and skill requirements for jobs in modern agriculture
- **Customized Research:** examining specific jobs and their requirements upon request
- **Reports:** documenting ten years of research clarifying and classifying agricultural jobs (by commodity, level)
- **Communications:** clarifying the AgriJobs framework and available tools through presentations & webinars
- **Tools:** supporting employers with Job Descriptions, Interview Guides, Policy Manuals & the AgriHR Toolkit

## 4. AgriSkills: Training Program

The AgriSkills training program includes courses and materials to support new and existing agriculture workers in various commodities. All courses are based on detailed AgriJobs research reflecting the latest production practices and regulatory protocols. Programs are built in collaboration with association partners and are designed to ensure workers have the knowledge and skills they need to be safe and effective on the job. The Council continues to build the AgriSkills training program while investigating the long-term

potential for certification. With the completion of CAHRC's latest NAOF II project, CAHRC is supporting CSGA and CHC with comprehensive learning programs as part of larger professional development and recognition initiatives. The Council also continues to build its Quality AgriWorkforce Management Program, with plans to add new HR management eLearning courses. The program has been expanded to include a learning module for equity, diversity and inclusion as well as health and wellness with a special focus on mental health. CAHRC has begun the work of translating employee-training documents into Spanish to further expand the usefulness of our resources.

CAHRC is in the process of expanding the learning content for AgriSkills HR e-learning program to support employers with best management practices with seven modules currently being developed. CAHRC will soon be offering a HR management program focused on best practices across all areas of HR management along with webinars to support learning, collaboration and networking opportunities. In development is the framework for a HR recognition program including benchmark tool to assess best practice for employers.

CAHRC's HR toolkit is currently under revision to update templates, new resources, new templates and tools to support employers in various aspects of HR management.





The Council promotes opportunities for partnership and collaboration with education institutions across Canada. This includes the exploration of developing upskilling programs that will ensure students and job seekers have the skills needed to hit the ground running in the agriculture industry. In addition, CAHRC promotes the AgriHR curriculum to post-secondary institutions. The 12-unit AgriHR Management Curriculum that is designed as a flip classroom, and covers a complete range of HR topics, including recruitment, selection, hiring, training, health and safety, workplace wellness, and more.

To compliment all of the resources provided by CAHRC, the Council has started an HR communications program. Aimed at bringing HR top-of-mind for agriculture employers, the first stage of the program involves weekly #AgHRTip social media posts on Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook. These short messages focus on a different topic each week and provide reminders and tips that any HR professional can use.

- **Research:** exploring training requirements for jobs within the agriculture industry
- **Customized Research:** examining certification & professionalization for commodities upon request
- **Communications:** clarifying the value of the AgriSkills Training Program through presentations and webinars
- **Tools:** supporting employers and workers with webinars, workshops, online courses, and an Educator's Kit

## 5. AgriTalent: Building the future of the AgriWorkforce

In summer 2021, CAHRC launched the AgriTalent program Growing Opportunities with the goal of engaging post-secondary students in careers in agriculture.



[Growing Opportunities](#) provides a wage subsidy for employers who hire students for work integrated learning opportunities. Funded by the Government of Canada, the subsidy encourages employers to take a chance and hire students from outside traditional agriculture fields of study and underrepresented groups.

CAHRC is in the second year of the two-year funding agreement to which CAHRC has received a one-year extension to this project. During the period we have went beyond our target number of placements (187) and have filled 272 placements. This was made possible, as not all placements were able to hire under-represented students. Employers can still apply to the program [online](#).

## 6. AgriDiversity: Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Interest and engagement continues for the Council's AgriDiversity program. CAHRC continues to research and focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion-related issues, to improve the participation and quality of experience for equity deserving groups. Through workshops, enhancements to the HR Toolkit, and new research, CAHRC continues to support equity, diversity and inclusion for Canadian agriculture. CAHRC continues to support the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) in Agriculture and Food working group as secretariat. The organization is also providing secretariat support for a national woman in agriculture initiative.

The National Workforce Strategic plan includes development of tools, training, and resources to support the industry on the topic of equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility in workplaces. Work has been underway and an anticipated launch of the suite of products in fall 2023.



CAHRC continues to work with our Indigenous Agriculture Stakeholders to develop relationships and collaborate as appropriate as well as foster relationships and understanding through our Indigenous Advisory Committee.

In next steps, CAHRC will be expanding the EDI training, resources and support for the agriculture industry in the coming months.

- **Research:** exploring mechanisms to reduce barriers to entry and advancement for women in the industry
- **Customized Research:** examining commodity-specific diversity and inclusion improvements upon request
- **Reports:** documenting diversity and inclusion research findings for the agriculture industry
- **Communications:** clarifying the current findings & tools for improvement through presentations and webinars
- **Tools:** supporting employers and associations to increase diversity with guides and templates

## 7. Indigenous Agriculture

CAHRC's Indigenous Advisory Committee continues to meet and advise the organization. Guided by the Seven Grandfathers Teachings, the relationship between the Advisory Committee members and CAHRC is a partnership with objectives to:

- Guide work related to supporting workforce development in Indigenous agriculture;
- Advise CAHRC on engagement, research, and tool development related to skill development in Indigenous agriculture; and
- Provide an Indigenous lens to CAHRC's work.

The important work undertaken by this Committee will feed directly into the National Workforce Strategic Plan for Agriculture and Food and Beverage Manufacturing and will be part of a sustainable, actionable roadmap that includes Indigenous participation and ownership in the industry.

CAHRC partnered with CFA at the Federal – Provincial – Territorial Agricultural Ministers meeting in July 2022 to host a session highlighting the importance and opportunities in Indigenous Agriculture.

This year CAHRC will continue to host [Sharing Circle](#) virtual events focused on topics requested in previous sessions. Planning of the next series of Sharing Circles, as well as building out resources and training guides from these events, is currently underway.

## Stay in Touch with CAHRC

We look forward to continuing our partnership  
and finding new ways to support success.

**Contact Rebecca Balsdon ([rbalsdon@cahrc-ccrha.ca](mailto:rbalsdon@cahrc-ccrha.ca))  
to discuss your association and sector specific human resources needs.**

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