



FALL HARVEST
MOISSON D'AUTOMNE
Produce and Politics
Fruits, légumes et politiques

KEY MESSAGING FOR INDUSTRY PARTICIPANTS – LABOUR

TALKING POINTS:

When in doubt, think Connect (why is it important to YOU?), Contrast (what's missing?), Solve (how can the government help?)

If nothing else, we want Parliamentarians to remember:

- **Connect:** Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the labour gap in the horticulture sector had already reached crisis levels. The global shutdown threatened the flow of international farm workers, posing a significant threat to food production and food security here in Canada, and demonstrating just how essential these employees are for our food system.
- **Contrast:** We remain concerned about the substantially reduced number of employees who have been able to come to Canada and about what that means for domestic production – especially for operations who have experienced outbreaks of COVID-19.

Our supply chain has incurred unprecedented operational costs that are not adequately covered by government programs, and the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) created unintended challenges to accessing domestic labour.

- **Solve:** Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) need resources to manage the flow of international workers and work with source countries in both the short and long term.

Moving forward, COVID-19 support programs need to take a focused approach to reduce unintended consequences and impacts to business, including challenges accessing domestic labour.



WHAT WE'RE ASKING FOR (*outlined in Parliamentary brochure*)

- In both the short and longer term, work to improve service standards and processing times for applications under the SAWP and the Agricultural Stream of the TFW Program, including by ensuring that ESDC and IRCC have sufficient resources to efficiently manage the flow of incoming workers for 2021.
- Should the *Quarantine Act* be further extended, extend and provide additional funding to the *Mandatory Isolation Support Program for Temporary Foreign Workers*.
- Expand funding available through the *Emergency On-Farm Support Fund* to help growers manage costs associated with housing reforms and health and safety requirements.
- Work with source countries and implement measures to streamline the collection of biometrics and visa and work permit application processes.
- Extend the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) until the Public Health Agency of Canada has declared that the COVID-19 pandemic has ended, and adjust the program to allow companies and organizations to apply retroactively for the CEWS based on an assessment of a full-year's financial impacts, to better reflect the revenue flow impacts for many in the diverse produce supply chain and recognize later income cycles.
- Adjust the CEWS to support essential businesses, such as those in the fresh produce supply chain, that have been impacted by a significant rise in operational costs due to COVID-19 by providing an option to apply for the CEWS based on reductions in net income.
- Ensure that current and future employment benefits related to COVID-19 provide Canadians requiring support the opportunity to work beyond existing program limitations.