

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. Throughout the pandemic, the logistical challenges of bringing in foreign workers have posed a significant threat to food production and food security here in Canada, demonstrating just how essential these employees are for our food system.
- **Contrast:** From the farm gate to the dinner plate, our supply chain has incurred unprecedented additional costs to develop business plans and adopt new procedures to ensure the health and safety of workers and the public. These operational changes are necessary, but the associated costs cannot be sustainably absorbed by our sector as public health protocols will remain in place for months to come.
- **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 must recognize the ongoing nature of increased costs growers and others are assuming because of the pandemic and ensure critical supports are in place until the pandemic has ended.

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 Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program and the Agricultural Stream of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, including by ensuring that ESDC and IRCC have sufficient resources to efficiently manage the flow of incoming workers for 2021.
- Recognize the ongoing nature of increased costs growers are assuming because of the pandemic and provide additional funding to compensate for the reduced value of the Mandatory Isolation Support for Temporary Foreign Workers Program.
- 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 to implement measures to streamline the collection of biometrics and visa and work permit application processes.
- Maintain access to the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) until the Public Health Agency of Canada has declared that the COVID-19 pandemic has ended. The CEWS has been a critical support for many in the fresh produce sector.