

# 4 farm-friendly ideas to help with the childcare struggle <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Access online <sup>[2]</sup>

## Excerpts

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Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's report, *What We Heard Report – Agricultural Labour Strategy*, details feedback received during consultations on developing a National Agricultural Labour Strategy. The report notes childcare as an issue for women who want to stay in agriculture long-term.

The report also notes that many strong contributors to the industry feel hesitant to take certain jobs because they don't want to be torn between the demands of the job and childcare.

Labour shortages, remote rural living, parents working hard and safety also contribute to the age-old issue of childcare on the farm.

And while carting the kids along for a parts run or bringing a tricycle into the barn may sometimes provide a solution, reliable, quality childcare is also critical. There isn't a tricycle lane at every job on the farm, and kids can't always be at our sides.

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In Prince Edward Island, Amber Dennis still lives in Souris, the small fishing and tourist community she grew up in. Now that she has her own family and operates a restaurant, she faces the same challenges as farm families – a need for quality childcare. At the same time, she needed to beef up her business venture during the quiet winter months, after the tourists had gone home and when the fishing boats sat idle.

Dennis recognized that her friends, family members, business contacts and rural farm neighbours faced the same childcare issues as she did. As a result, she decided to operate an after-school childcare program in the restaurant in the off-season.

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"It's parents that are farmers, nurses, paramedics, entrepreneurs," she explains of those she helps during the school season. "Everyone will always need care for their children."

Rural childcare is an age-old challenge, and while letting the kids tag along may work sometimes, it isn't a solution to childcare on the farm.

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**Related link:** [What we heard report - Agricultural labour strategy](#) <sup>[3]</sup>

[Lack of affordable child care is hurting young farm families' ability to grow their businesses – the US farm bill may finally of](#) <sup>[4]</sup>

**Region:** [Canada](#) <sup>[5]</sup>

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