

# What we heard report - Agricultural labour strategy <sup>[1]</sup>

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Excerpts

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A challenge cited by women looking to enter and stay in the agricultural sector over the long-term was access to childcare in rural areas. There are often limited spots available, and as childcare duties often disproportionately fall to women, preventing them from fully participating in the workforce. They are deterred from pursuing careers in the sector because they feel they cannot offer their full capacity to operations without neglecting childcare duties.

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**Recruitment**

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The top ideas recommended for action include:

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- Offering non-wage incentives (for example, health and vacation benefits, childcare, transportation).

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Additionally, industry groups raised that improving services and infrastructure in rural communities would help tackle one of the main recruitment challenges — inability or unwillingness to move to a rural area. This includes improving access and availability childcare in rural area, as this was cited as a main barrier for women's participation. While childcare facilities exist in rural areas, they are often unable to meet capacity needs of the area. Many felt changing negative perceptions surrounding living and working in rural areas will create long-lasting benefits for the sector. They also noted that building a sense of community by way of family support services may also help recruitment of newcomers to the sector.

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Several other innovative solutions were raised outside of the main challenge areas, including:

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- Supporting labour cooperatives to help alleviate other pressures with running a farm or factory (for example, housework, cooking, childcare)

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Given many of the levers for labour-related initiatives rest with other government departments (for example, childcare, skills and training, rural development), AAFC will continue our engagement with other government departments to advance these important labour-related initiatives that also affect the broader Canadian economy.

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**Conclusion**

Agriculture and agri-food has been identified as a key driver for sustainable economic growth at both the federal and provincial levels. There is an understanding that the chronic labour shortages being experienced are hindering the success of the sector and its ability to provide food to Canadians and the world; and the consultations further illuminated these issues. The stability and security of the Canadian agriculture and agri-food sector depend on access to a skilled and reliable workforce and the Strategy will focus on solutions that are responsive to the needs of the sector.

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**Related link:** 4 farm-friendly ideas to help with the childcare struggle [3]

Lack of affordable child care is hurting young farm families' ability to grow their businesses – the US farm bill may finally of [4]

**Region:** Canada [5]

**Tags:** rural child care [6]  
rural communities [7]

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**Source URL (modified on 13 Nov 2023):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/23/11/what-we-heard-report-agricultural-labour-strategy>

#### Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/23/11/what-we-heard-report-agricultural-labour-strategy> [2]

<https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/departement/transparency/public-opinion-research-consultations/what-we-heard-report-agricultural-labour-strategy> [3]

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