

Agricultural sector workers from the Temporary Foreign Workers Program, 2015

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Every summer, thousands of temporary foreign workers come to Canada to work in the agriculture sector, primarily in Ontario and Quebec. Most workers are from Mexico. In 2015, 40,497 temporary foreign workers filled 45,005 jobs for agricultural operations.

Hiring temporary foreign workers has become a widespread practice to compensate for the lack of available labour in the agriculture sector. Statistics Canada studied the presence of these workers in the population, employed for agricultural operations in Canada, by cross-referencing and comparing data from the Temporary Foreign Worker Program with 2016 Census of Agriculture data.

Crop subsector the top employer of temporary foreign agricultural workers

Most temporary foreign workers hired by agricultural operations worked on crop operations. More specifically, 41,659 jobs filled by temporary foreign workers were in the crop subsector, representing 92.6% of all agricultural jobs filled by temporary foreign workers in Canada. In the livestock subsector, 3,346 jobs were filled by temporary foreign workers, representing 7.4% of all agricultural jobs filled by temporary foreign workers.

The greenhouse, nursery and floriculture production industry hired the most temporary foreign workers, filling 15,093 jobs (33.5% of the total number of agricultural jobs filled by temporary foreign workers). This was followed by vegetable and melon farming, with 11,793 jobs (26.2%), and fruit and tree nut farming, with 10,523 jobs (23.4%).

Most jobs filled by temporary foreign agricultural workers are in Eastern Canada

Ontario (21,975 jobs) and Quebec (10,617 jobs) together accounted for 72.4% of all jobs filled by temporary foreign agricultural workers in Canada. They also accounted for 60.9% (2,183) of all agricultural operations that hired at least one temporary foreign worker (1,350 operations in Ontario and 833 in Quebec).

Just over half of temporary foreign agricultural workers are from Mexico

In 2015, just over half (51.5%) of the temporary foreign agricultural workers were from Mexico (20,854 workers), followed by Jamaica (19.5%) and Guatemala (15.2%). Overall, 86.2% of temporary foreign workers in Canada (34,897 workers) came from one of these three countries.



Table 1
Jobs filled by temporary foreign workers in the agriculture sector, and agricultural operations with at least one temporary foreign worker, by industry, 2015

	Jobs filled by temporary foreign workers	Agricultural operations with at least one temporary foreign worker
	number	
All industries	45,005	3,581
Cattle ranching and farming	1,187	363
Hog and pig farming	707	140
Poultry and egg production	335	67
Other animal production	1,117	197
Oilseed and grain farming	1,391	299
Vegetable and melon farming	11,793	669
Fruit and tree nut farming	10,523	826
Greenhouse, nursery and floriculture production	15,093	680
Other crop farming	2,859	340

Note(s): Agricultural operations in the territories were excluded.

Source(s): Temporary Foreign Workers File, 2015.

Table 2
Jobs filled by temporary foreign workers in the agriculture sector, and agricultural operations with at least one temporary foreign worker, by province, 2015

	Jobs filled by temporary foreign workers	Agricultural operations with at least one temporary foreign worker
	number	
Total, provinces	45,005	3,581
Newfoundland and Labrador	51	18
Prince Edward Island	264	35
Nova Scotia	1,466	72
New Brunswick	137	21
Quebec	10,617	833
Ontario	21,975	1,350
Manitoba	804	95
Saskatchewan	649	209
Alberta	2,516	434
British Columbia	6,526	514

Note(s): Agricultural operations in the territories were excluded.

Source(s): Temporary Foreign Workers File, 2015.

Table 3
Top 10 countries of citizenship for temporary foreign workers in the agricultural sector, 2015

	Temporary foreign workers	Proportion of temporary foreign workers
	number	%
Total, countries	40,497	100.0
Mexico	20,854	51.5
Jamaica	7,903	19.5
Guatemala	6,140	15.2
Philippines	1,116	2.8
Thailand	860	2.1
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago	669	1.7
Honduras	529	1.3
Ukraine	340	0.8
Nicaragua	284	0.7
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	235	0.6
Other countries	1,567	3.9

Note(s): Agricultural operations in the territories were excluded.

Source(s): Temporary Foreign Workers File, 2015.

Note to readers

Data from the Temporary Foreign Worker Program were linked with data on agricultural operations from the 2016 Census of Agriculture using the business numbers of the agricultural operations that issued a Statement of Remuneration Paid (T4) to a temporary foreign worker in 2015.

The fact that there were more jobs than the number of temporary foreign workers indicates that some individuals had more than one job, in different locations, during 2015.

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