



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Labour Market Intelligence: CAHRC getting down to work**

**Ottawa, ON--** The Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) is currently engaged in four research initiatives that brings a multitude of stakeholders together to review issues and identify solutions to the critical labour challenges facing the agricultural industry.

“The agricultural labour issues have reached a critical point,” explains Portia MacDonald-Dewhirst, CAHRC Executive Director. “By building our labour market intelligence, evidence based policy can be developed and the industry can create meaningful plans to drive progress and find meaningful solutions.”

The first project is the *Labour Market Information (LMI): Agricultural Supply and Demand Forecast Model*. This three-year project defines a labour market information supply and demand model that will provide an overview of the current agricultural labour market and forecast labour supply and demand, provincially, nationally and by commodity. The project identifies labour and skill gaps, and investigates opportunities and barriers to participation among population groups that have been traditionally under-represented in the agricultural workforce (e.g. Aboriginal peoples, new Canadians, older workers).

The Conference Board of Canada is working with the CAHRC research team to clarify Canada’s agricultural labour market situation and future requirements. This research is guided by 55 active industry advisors. Over 1,100 industry stakeholders have participated in interviews, focus groups and surveys to inform this research, with plans to gather further stakeholder input and perspectives through various webinars. Final LMI research products will be disseminated in the fall of 2016.

The second project is the *National Agricultural Occupational Framework (NAOF) and Labour Market Support*. This project is clarifying a variety of much needed information about core jobs in agriculture and leveraging that information to build meaningful support tools to assist the sector to address its labour requirements and ensure the health and sustainability of Canada’s agricultural industry. It is an in-depth study of the exact jobs and skills involved in today’s agricultural workforce.

Extensive progress has been made in developing the NAOF, an important foundational element that defines the work conducted in Canada’s modern agricultural industry. Over 70 industry leaders are guiding this effort to ensure accuracy and the development of meaningful tools and resources to support career awareness, selection, training, performance management, and business planning for the sector. To date, 20 National Occupational Standards have been developed with input from 270 industry stakeholders for the pork, sheep, aquaculture, beef and poultry commodities. The development of job seeker, employee, educational and employer support tools are underway. Enhancements are being made to the online learning resource for the industry, AgriTalent. The development of a National Agricultural Job Board with commodity specific and regional components is also ongoing with the launch of a pilot planned for the fall of 2015.

The third project is the *Agriculture and Agri-Food Workforce Action Plan (WAP)*. The WAP was developed with extensive research over the last three years by an industry-led Labour Task Force (LTF) made up of representatives from all twelve of the Agriculture and Agri-Food Value Chain Roundtables. The LTF functions as a solution-oriented forum that examines issues of agriculture and agri-food labour management

and shortages. The WAP initiative is being led by the Council to ensure implementation of documented recommendations of the LTF.

To date, 60 organizations are confirmed as Implementation Partners lending support, credibility and a sense of urgency to addressing labour issues for the industry. Recent research has focused on clarifying the impacts of labour shortage on competitiveness across all commodities and regions of the agriculture and agri-food sector. This has developed into a review of issues and solutions regarding the industry's need for continued access to non-domestic agriculture workers with findings documented in an update to the WAP. Industry guidance for this initiative is provided through the Labour Task Force, the Policy and Programs Working Group, and the Value Chain Roundtables for each commodity. This stakeholder involvement is enhancing CAHRC's Labour Market Intelligence function. WAP's leadership will continue to communicate effective short, medium and longer term solutions to these and other agriculture labour issues.

The final initiative is *Supporting the Advancement of Women in Agriculture (SAWA)*. This project examines and addresses critical barriers to advancement facing women in the industry. The purpose of this initiative is to engage women and stakeholders within the agriculture community to develop and implement a strategic program to support improved access to leadership opportunities and strengthen business success for women working in agriculture.

The Council recently launched this research project with an announcement made during the *Advancing Women in Agriculture Conference* in Calgary on April 7, 2015, followed by a media release, both of which generated extensive interest. Project partners and industry stakeholder are being gathered to populate Advisory Groups and Working Groups to support the initiative. The research exploring the issues is now underway and will be ongoing until 2017.

"Before you can fix a problem you have to know exactly what your problem is," explains Mark Wales, Chair of CAHRC. "This research is going to answer that key question for Canada's agricultural labour situation, and give direction to the Council in the development of the corrective policies, training and other actions."

For more information on these and other research initiatives, visit CAHRC at [www.cahrc-ccrha.ca](http://www.cahrc-ccrha.ca).

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*The Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council works with industry leaders, governments and educational stakeholders to research, develop and communicate solutions to the challenges in employment and skills development in primary agriculture. The Council now leads collaborative implementation efforts in support of the national Workforce Action Plan for the agriculture and agri-food sector. For more information visit [www.cahrc-ccrha.ca](http://www.cahrc-ccrha.ca).*

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