



The Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) Report Submitted by Don Connick.

The Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) was created in September of 2006 to address the human resource (labor) issues facing agriculture across Canada.

The Council is funded through the Sector Council Program of Human Resources and Skills Development, Canada. All expenses for attending meetings are paid by the Sector Council.

The Vision of the Council is to have a qualified and motivated workforce sufficient to sustain profitable agriculture in Canada.

The Mission is to research, develop and communicate solutions to human resource issues identified by Canadian primary agriculture.

The Scope of the Council represents farming in all forms – from fish farming to livestock to horticulture and field crops.

The Council is working to generate greater awareness among the agricultural industry, government and educational institutions about human resource management and best practices.

The CAHRC Board meets three times a year, twice in Ottawa, and during the summer at various locations across Canada. This June, the meeting will be in Kananaskis, Alberta.

The Board of Directors is comprised of 10 appointed representatives from each of the Provincial Farm Organizations, a representative from the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) and representatives from the Canadian Nursery and Landscape Association, The Canadian Horticultural Council, the Canadian Herb and Spice Coalition, The Canadian Aquaculture Alliance, the Canadian Honey Council, and a representative from the Canadian Young Farmers' Forum. Without APAS, Saskatchewan would have no representation on this Council. Currently CAHRC has 8 staff members headed by Executive Director Danielle Vinette. The Chairman of the Board is Terry Murray of Wild Rose Agricultural Producers.

Every year the Board of Directors and staff decide on priority projects to be designed for human resource issues and present these to the Canadian Human Resources Council for funding. One of the first projects was a Canada wide research project to determine the labor requirements in agriculture on a regional and commodity basis. This project report was released last spring and details many labor shortfalls across the country. There are 336,000 persons employed in 'on farm' agriculture across Canada (over and above family labor). The vacancy rate is 9% (well above other industries) with a 20% vacancy rate for seasonal positions.

The demand for workers is growing and more and more the demand is being filled by temporary foreign workers.

Another project, completed this fall (2009) was a survey of farm employers across Canada with Gross Income over \$100,000 and with full time employees. This survey studied recruitment and retention practices used by these producers. It is interesting to note that two farms were studied in Saskatchewan – a grain farm in S.W. Saskatchewan and Kurtz Farms at Stockholm, Saskatchewan.

At the November meeting in Ottawa four new projects were proposed:

1. To develop a guide to recruitment and retention resources to assist in the effective recruitment and retention of workers on the farm.
2. To develop a comprehensive list of training opportunities in key commodities to assist workers and employers to develop necessary skills.
3. To provide employers in the ornamental sector with the tools and skills to train workers on the job site.
4. To determine the feasibility of an interprovincial agricultural worker exchange program.

Why does APAS need to be represented?

The needs of agricultural labor are very diverse across Canada – as are some of the solutions. We need to be represented to ensure that the solutions are acceptable to us.

On October 6, 2009 Christine Mercier, Project Coordinator for CAHRC, and myself met with senior staff of Farm Business Management Services of Saskatchewan Agriculture in Regina to present the Farm Labour Requirements report to them and to discuss the possibility of a joint project with Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food. We were well received and we look forward to future cooperation.

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