



## News release

### Fruit and vegetable growers welcome Recognized Employer Pilot for temporary foreign workers

For immediate release

Guelph ON, 10 August 2023 – Ontario’s fruit and vegetable growers are pleased with this week’s introduction of the Recognized Employer Pilot (REP) for qualified employers who hire workers through the Temporary Foreign Worker program. The announcement was made by Randy Boissonnault, Canada’s Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages.

“We appreciate the federal government taking this action to support farm employers while ensuring workers’ rights continue to be protected,” says Bill George, grape grower and Chair of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers’ Association (OFVGA) labour section. “Fruit and vegetable growers have long been asking for a streamlined application process for employers with a strong history of program compliance, which makes this announcement a particularly welcome step forward.”

REP will launch in September 2023 for the 2024 growing season for employers in the primary agriculture sector and includes the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) and the agriculture stream of the federal government’s Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) program.

The pilot will reduce the administrative burden for repeat employers who have a demonstrated history of compliance with program requirements. This includes a simplified Labour Market Impact Assessment that will be valid for up to 36 months.

Every year, Ontario fruit and vegetable growers employ approximately 20,000 seasonal and temporary foreign workers who come to Canada legally through the government regulated SAWP and TFW ag stream program.

Once here, these legal workers have the same rights and privileges as Canadian workers doing the same work and their farm employers, who are subject to frequent federal, provincial, and foreign government compliance inspections, have the same, and in some cases higher obligations to them as they do for their Canadian employees. This includes government approved wage rates, access to health care under OHIP, Employment Insurance and the Canada Pension Plan as well as workplace insurance coverage and safety protection.

“These workers play an essential role in Canada’s domestic food security and REP will help ensure growers can more easily access the labour they need to support the continued growth and viability of our fruit and vegetable production system,” adds George.

Through its [More than a Migrant Worker](#) initiative, the OFVGA has been letting workers tell their stories in their own words, while drawing attention to the critical role that legal international farm workers play in the Canadian food system and efforts by farmers and government in recent years to invest in worker safety, protection and well-being.

The [Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers’ Association](#) is the voice of Ontario’s fruit and vegetable producers on issues affecting the horticulture sector.

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