

## **Canada's food manufacturers applaud adoption of industry's emergency labour proposal**

The coalition of leading Canadian food and beverage manufacturing associations and their members applaud the federal government for taking concrete action to address the debilitating labour crisis impacting Canada's food supply.

Changes to the Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW) Program announced by federal Minister Qualtrough today will provide some necessary short-term relief for Canadian companies, as the industry continues its work with governments on longer-term measures to address chronic labour shortages. In particular, the temporary increase in the TFW Cap to 30% for food manufacturers will help stabilize the food supply chain.

Canadian food and beverage manufacturing, an industry of nearly 300,000 workers, has been facing an escalating labour crisis, with companies reporting vacancy rates of 20% and more. Vacancy rates of this magnitude pose a serious risk to Canada's food supply as manufacturers are forced to limit production and/or stop producing some products altogether.

In December, eleven industry associations came together to develop a proposal for an Emergency Foreign Worker Program, which recommended measures to provide immediate relief in the short term. The coalition worked closely with policymakers and government officials to develop proposals for effective solutions to the immediate labour crisis.

Today's announcement, and Minister Qualtrough's keen, thorough review of the issues facing this sector, are important and positive steps forward towards securing Canada's food supply. While these changes extend beyond food and beverage manufacturing, Minister Qualtrough has made clear that her decisions were inspired by the coalition's proposal and constructive approach to addressing labour issues. The coalition also thanks Minister Bibeau for her significant support for the sector and its proposal.

Canada's food and beverage manufacturing sector looks forward to working with Minister Qualtrough to review additional improvements to the TFW program, including streamlining the application process and resolving delays in processing times. Industry remains committed to the collaborative problem solving that led to today's announcement of both temporary and permanent measures to support industry.

### **Coalition Members**

Food and Beverage Canada  
Canadian Meat Council  
Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors Council  
Le Conseil de la transformation alimentaire du Québec (CTAQ)  
Food and Beverage Ontario  
Canadian Produce Marketing Association  
Fisheries Council of Canada  
BC Food & Beverage

Baking Association of Canada  
Food & Beverage Manitoba  
Food & Beverage Atlantic

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**Quotes**

*"Our sector went from 1,700 to 10,000 empty butcher stations in the past few years. The temporary foreign worker cap was a cap on our processing capacity and our sector's growth potential. Today's announcement allows our meat processors to hire temporary foreign workers, but there's nothing temporary about our jobs; they are full-time and permanent. The measures introduced today will help alleviate our worker shortage and help us produce more high-quality and nutritious Canadian meat to feed Canadians and the world."* Marie-France MacKinnon, Senior Vice President Public Affairs - Canadian Meat Council

*"Throughout the pandemic, Canada's food and beverage manufacturers continued to operate, guaranteeing Canadians had the food they needed despite the uncertainty of the pandemic. Today's announcement offers a welcome reprieve for a tired workforce and will help to provide Canadian food and beverage companies with the additional support they so desperately need."* – Kathleen Sullivan, CEO, Food and Beverage Canada

*"Our industry plays a dual essential service role: Canadian farmers rely on us to process and market their production, and Canadian consumers rely on us to feed themselves and their families. Today's announcement supports our entire supply chain by helping poultry and egg processors find the labour they need to staff their operations".* – Jean-Michel Laurin, President & CEO, Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors Council

*"Labour scarcity, whether it affects succession training, skills development or the retention of experienced workers, is a national priority. It is also important for the industry that the Canadian government streamline the Temporary Foreign Worker Program in order to reduce waiting times before the arrival of workers in Canadian companies. The CTAQ is pleased to see that the work of the food industry over the past few months has paid off. Today's government announcement acknowledges the seriousness of the situation and takes concrete action to help food manufacturing companies grow their markets."* – Sylvie Cloutier, President and CEO, Conseil de la transformation alimentaire du Québec

*"It is vital that the food and beverage processing sector continue to attract and retain workers to address the labour crisis. This announcement supports the needs of the industry, so that we can continue to deliver high quality food and beverage products."*  
– Chris Conway, CEO, Food and Beverage Ontario

*"The baking industry has already been grappling with external pressures, notably due to strains on the global supply chain, extreme weather and drought. Today's announcement will help to alleviate some of the acute labour shortages being experienced by Canada's agri-food sector, including retail, in-store and commercial baking companies across the country." – Martin Barnett, Executive Director/General Manager, Baking Association of Canada*

*"Seafood producers appreciate today's announcement and especially the recognition that seasonal processors have additional challenges to secure sufficient labour for their peak seasons." – Paul Lansbergen, President, Fisheries Council of Canada*

*"The fresh produce industry is facing significant ongoing labour shortages that have spread from the farm across the supply chain. Today's announcement is a welcome first step to support our sector in addressing this challenge in the short-term. We look forward to working with the Government to bridge the labour gap in the longer-term so we can continue to put fruits and vegetables on Canadian tables." – Ron Lemaire, President, Canadian Produce Marketing Association*