



19 OCTOBER, 2025

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KEY MESSAGE:

The winning formula for Alberta's agriculture labour market:
Clear PR Routes + Rural Settlement Supports + Targeted Training and Mobility Incentives = Reliable Staffing without Displacing Domestic Workers.

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2025 AB FARMER SURVEY: LABOUR MARKET & IMMIGRATION

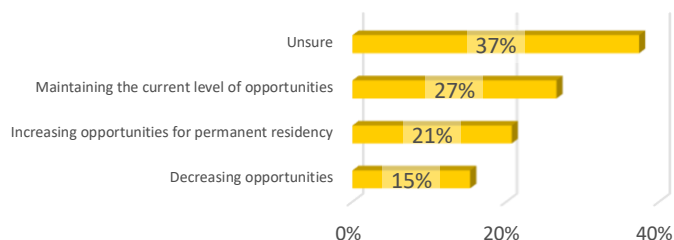
Alberta's agricultural sector is a cornerstone of the provincial economy, generating \$10.3 billion in GDP in 2023 and employing 83,000 people. Alberta's Economic Dashboard reports 3,102 agricultural Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) in 2024. According to the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council, TFWs account for roughly 5% of Alberta's total agriculture workforce.

To portray Alberta farmers' preferences and perceptions about the labour market and immigration, the Simpson Centre surveyed 222 Alberta farmers (and 979 Canadian farmers) as part of the "[Voices from the Field](#)" project. Against this backdrop, the Simpson Centre's "Voices from the Field" surveyed 222 Alberta farmers (and 979 Canadian farmers) to examine how Alberta producers view permanent immigration pathways for TFWs and the capacity of the domestic labour pool.

On Permanent Residence (PR) for TFWs, producers are cautious and often uncertain. Over one-third (37%) are unsure, 27% favour maintaining current PR opportunities, 21% support expanding them, and 15% would reduce them. In effect, nearly half (48%) back either maintaining or broadening PR options, indicating a mild preference for growth, tempered by information gaps and diverse labour realities across commodities and regions. Please refer to **Figure 1**.

On domestic labour sufficiency, confidence is high but not universal. Two-thirds (67%) agree they can meet needs with Canadians or permanent residents (40% strongly, 27% somewhat); 23% are neutral and 10% disagree. This pattern indicates that most farms can staff

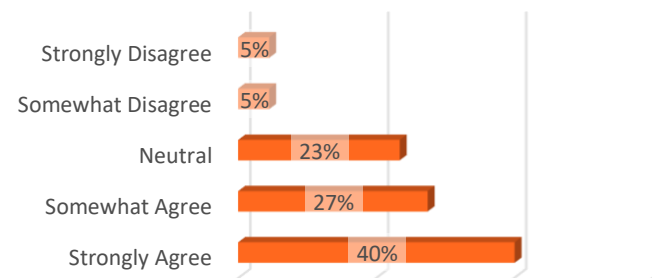
Figure 1: Permanent Immigration policy preferences



from the domestic pool, while nearly one in three signal uncertainty or seasonal/skills gaps. Please refer to **Figure 2**.

Labour-market leverage skews neutral (62%), with only 21% feeling they have sufficient bargaining power over the labour market and 17% reporting weak bargaining power. Please refer to **Figure 3**. Furthermore, respondents express the second-highest mistrust toward the Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council (CAHRC), among all the organizations respondents were asked about. Please refer to **Figure 4** (Appendix).

Figure 2: Perception of labour market adequacy

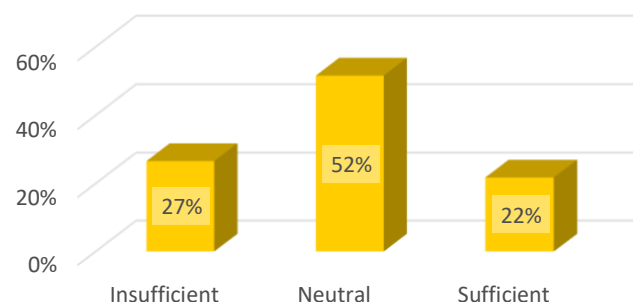


Next Steps: Further consideration needs to be given to aligning PR pathways with plain-language guidance, farming communities' demands and rural supports (housing, transport, credential recognition). Future research should be conducted on training, apprenticeships, mobility incentives, and employer outcomes from previous and upcoming PR pathway pilots. Further assessments are needed on labour-market intelligence, job-matching exercises, and bargaining-power shifts.

EDITORIAL PRACTICES STATEMENT

This manuscript is a rapid contribution to the policy conversation that has been open-reviewed by at least one University of Calgary faculty member prior to publication.

Figure 3: Alberta farmers' perception of bargaining power with labour force



APPENDIX

Figure 4: Level of confidence in organizations

