

A SAWP to Farmers

Temporary Foreign Workers in
Canadian Agriculture

Introduction

- Background of labour shortages
- Origin of SAWP
- Expansion in West Indies and Mexico
- Pilot Project for Low-Skilled Workers

Structure of SAWP

MOU between national governments

- Role of governments in supplier countries

Recruitment

Basic conditions of employment

Rules for use of SAWP workers

Crops, length of stay in Canada

- Provinces join in Canada

Standard employment contracts

Operation of SAWP

Canadian growers request workers

- Must demonstrate shortage
- Federal government issues LMO
- After LMO, permission to hire

Growers issue request to supplier governments

- Supplier governments recruit
- Many workers requested by name

Status of Workers in Law

- Equal conditions to Canadian workers
- Farm workers' rights inferior to other sectors
 - hours of work/overtime
 - public holidays
 - right to unionize—constitutional battles
- Special problems for SAWP
 - Withholding for statutory benefits
 - Health and safety

Incidence of SAWP

- Concentration in Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia
- Data on actual participation difficult to find
 - Permits vs arrivals
 - Length of stay varies
- No evidence of substantial leakage
- Data on remittances
 - Estimated CAD1000 per month
 - Evidence of use of remittances
- Isolation

Data on SAWP

Gov. of Canada: entries

	2002	2006	2011	2013	2017
SAWP	18,628	21,253	24,693	27,566	33,435 ?
L/S	128	2,231	6,209	7,099	

Permits: 2018, Jan-Mar

Mexico	11,587
Jam.:	4,366
Guat:	3,648
India:	1,298
Pl:	1,050

Gov. of Mexico: 2016: 23,131 entered Canada

Pilot Project for Low-Skilled Workers

- Started in 2003 to alleviate shortages in West, agriculture included
- Grower organizations recruit—Guatemala, India, etc. Guatemalan workers pay recruitment expenses, despite legislation
- Large concentration in Quebec farms
- Rapid growth in other provinces,
- Guat. government contract covers transportation, etc.
- Eligible for permanent status—labour market tests

Lessons Learned

- Employer domination
 - No appeal mechanism from contract
 - De facto indentured status
 - Blacklisting
 - Workers isolated
- No effort to improve conditions of domestic workers
- Integral part of agriculture—continued expansion, especially Low Skilled—less regulation