



# NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

## Agriculture labour market information and forecast 2023-2030



### Key Findings

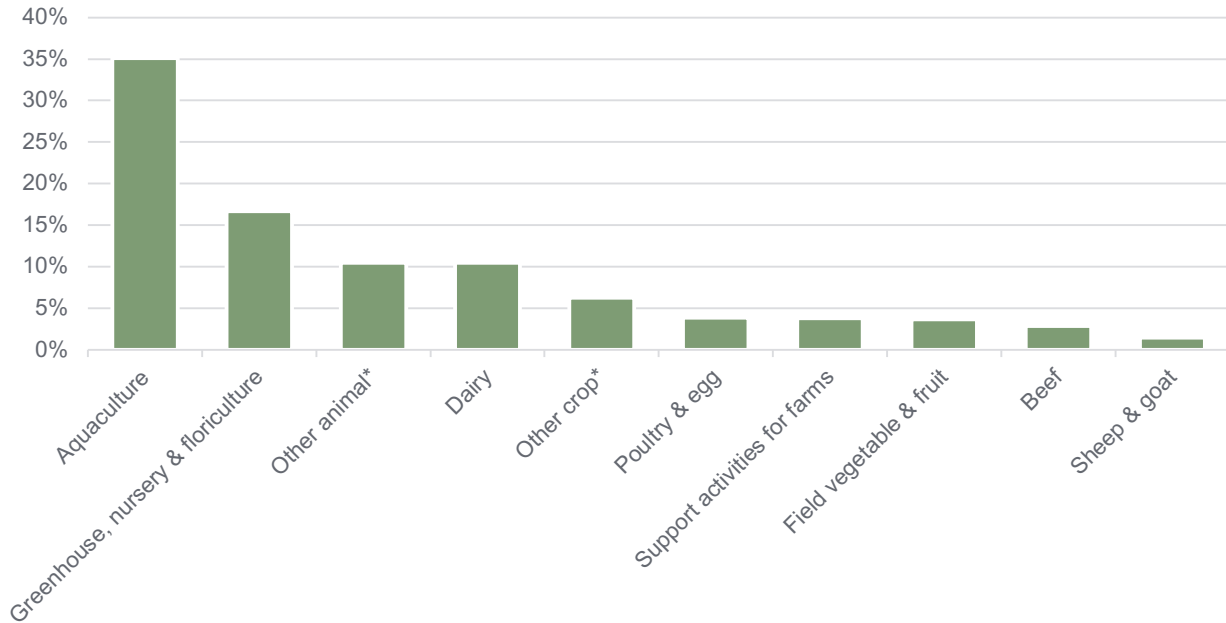
- Growth in domestic employment is on the horizon for the next couple of years as the sector recovers from Hurricane Fiona. However, a subsequent decline is projected due to a significant wave of retirements that will burden the sector.
- The number of young people (ages 15 to 24) in Newfoundland and Labrador is expected to decrease 9 per cent over the next 8 years, further exacerbating the labour challenges employers will face.
- By 2030, around 170 positions are expected to be unfilled domestically.
- The sector has been increasingly dependent on foreign workers<sup>1</sup> and this labour source could be further utilized in the years ahead.
- The recent influx of immigrants presents an opportunity for the agricultural sector. Finding ways to attract these newcomers to careers in agriculture will be important to increasing domestic labour supply.

### Current Workforce

- The agriculture sector in Newfoundland and Labrador employed 1,170 domestic workers during peak season in 2022, which is less than 1 per cent of the country's domestic agriculture workforce.<sup>2</sup>
- The number of foreign workers has more than doubled since 2017, reaching 107 workers in 2022 and accounting for 8 per cent of the sector workforce.<sup>3</sup>
- Aquaculture is the largest agriculture employer in the province, employing 35 per cent of the sector's workforce, followed by the greenhouse nursery and floriculture industry, which employs 17 per cent (Chart 1).
- The agriculture sector had approximately 50 positions that went unfilled at peak season in 2022, leading to an estimated 4.6 per cent vacancy rate.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Foreign workers include workers brought in through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program or Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program. Does not include immigrants or permanent residents. | <sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada; The Conference Board of Canada. | <sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada, Table: 32-10-0218-01. Does not include support services or agriculture wholesale industries. | <sup>4</sup> The Conference Board of Canada Model of Occupations, Skills and Technology.

**Chart 1: Aquaculture is the largest agriculture industry in Newfoundland and Labrador.**  
 Share of employment (domestic and foreign) at peak, 2022, Newfoundland and Labrador.



Source: Statistics Canada; The Conference Board of Canada.

\*Other crop is primarily combination fruit and vegetable farming and other mixed crop farming. Other animal is primarily fur-bearing animal and rabbit farming and other mixed animal farming.

## Employer Survey Insights

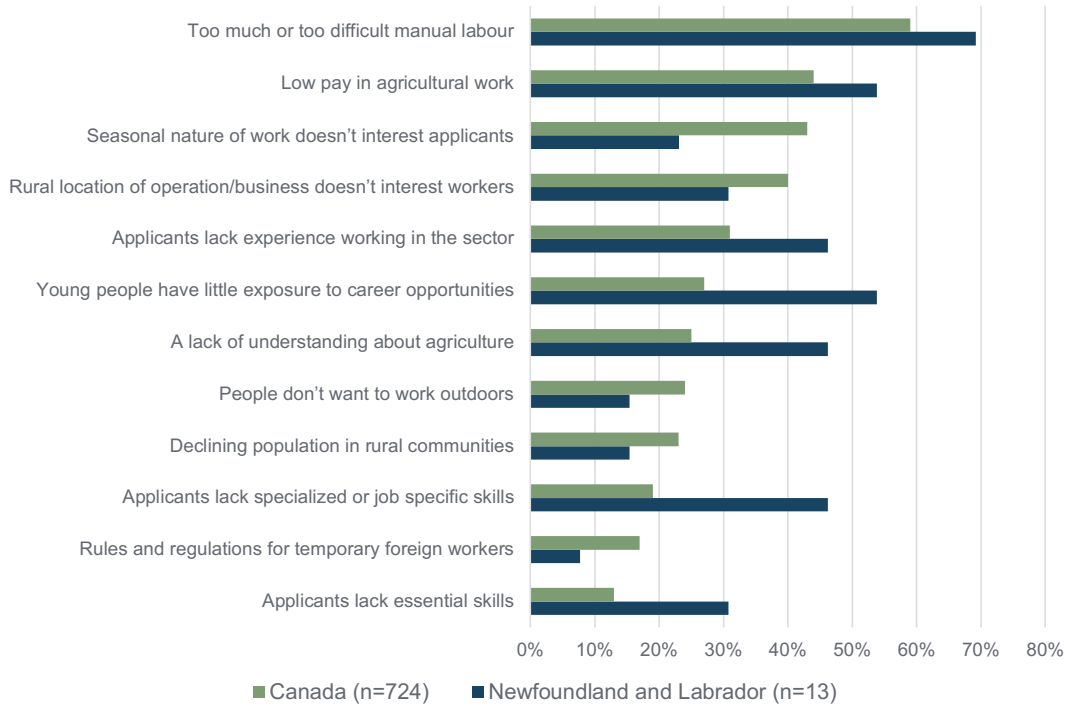
- One-third of agriculture employers in Newfoundland and Labrador said they were not able to find all the workers required in 2022, which is less than the 44 per cent average for Canada.<sup>5</sup>
- Forty-four per cent of employers in the province received only one or two domestic applicants for their job postings and 11 per cent received none.<sup>6</sup>
- Over half (54 per cent) of employers in Newfoundland and Labrador cite young people having little exposure to career opportunities in agriculture as one of the main barriers to recruitment (Chart 2).<sup>7</sup>
- Forty-six per cent of employers stated that applicants lack specialized skills and lack an understanding about agriculture.<sup>8</sup>
- Newfoundland and Labrador’s agriculture sector had a voluntary turnover rate of 11 per cent in 2022, which is well above the estimated 7.7 per cent turnover rate for all sectors in Canada.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council Employer Survey 2023 (n=19). | <sup>6</sup> Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council Employer Survey 2023 (n=13). | <sup>7</sup> Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council Employer Survey 2023 (n=13). | <sup>8</sup> Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council Employer Survey 2023 (n=13). | <sup>9</sup> The voluntary turnover rate is the number of voluntary departures as a share of the total number of workers in a year. Voluntary departures are comprised of workers who quit, including seasonal workers who leave before contract completion. Turnover rate was calculated by industry and then weighted based on the industry share by province. Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council Employer Survey 2023; The Conference Board of Canada.

**Chart 2: Lack of exposure to career opportunities and lack of job specific skills impedes recruitment.**

Share of employers.

Q: What are the top five factors that make recruitment of workers at your agricultural operation more difficult?



Source: Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council Employer Survey 2023.

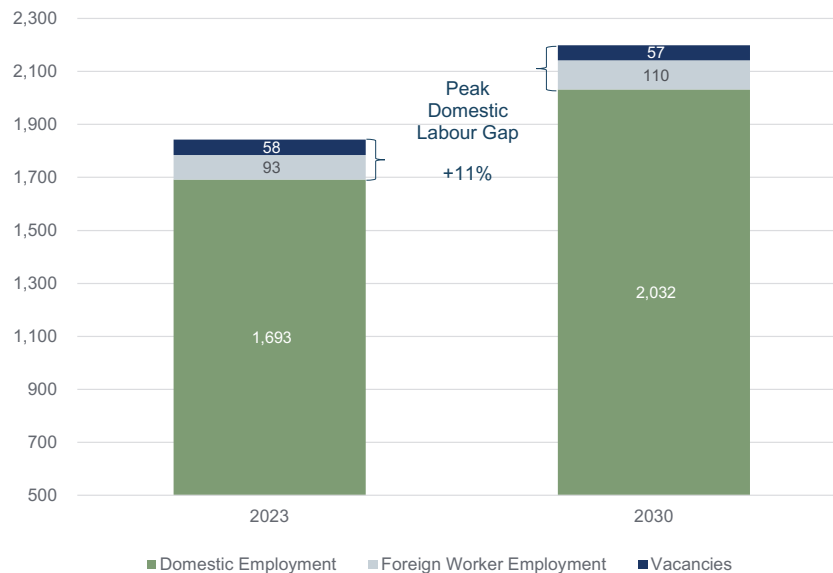


## Labour Market Forecast

- The agriculture sector in Newfoundland and Labrador has been restrained over the past couple of years, due in part to COVID-19 (2020) and Hurricane Fiona (2022). In turn, domestic employment in the sector has fallen 38 per cent since 2019.
- Domestic employment is anticipated to recover over the next couple of years, reaching 2,170 workers by 2024. After 2024, a gradual decline to 2,030 workers by 2030 is foreseen, due to shrinking labour supply.
- Newfoundland and Labrador has the highest retirement rate of any province with 38 per cent of its current domestic workforce (370 workers) expected to retire between 2023 and 2030. Meanwhile, around 40 immigrants and 260 school leavers<sup>10</sup> are projected to enter the workforce.
- However, growing demand for workers coupled with the expected decline in domestic employment leads to an increasing domestic labour gap, from 150 in 2023 to 170 by 2030 (Chart 2).<sup>11</sup>
- The number of foreign workers employed is expected to increase slightly over the forecast period, filling 66 per cent of the peak domestic labour gap by 2030. Still, a shortfall is expected with around 60 vacancies remaining by 2030.

### Chart 3: The peak domestic labour gap persists over the forecast period.

Number of workers required at peak season in Newfoundland and Labrador, forecast.



**Source: The Conference Board of Canada's Model of Occupations, Skills and Technology.**

Foreign workers include workers brought in through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program or Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program. Does not include immigrants or permanent residents. The peak number of foreign workers is less than the cumulative total employed over the year since not all workers will be employed simultaneously.

<sup>10</sup> School leavers is the number of workers finished school (all levels of education) and entering the workforce. | <sup>11</sup> The domestic labour gap is the difference between the total number of workers required and the number of domestic workers employed which equals foreign worker employment plus the number of vacancies. Estimated at peak to reflect maximum demand during seasonal peaks in agriculture.





## Building the Future Workforce

- Newfoundland and Labrador is grappling with a shrinking population of young people, punctuated by an expected 9 per cent decrease in the 15 to 24 age group over the next 8 years.<sup>12</sup> To address this, it is crucial to encourage immigrants to settle in rural agricultural areas and promote career opportunities in the sector.
- Employers in the province struggle to find workers with the necessary experience and skills required to work in the sector. Targeted training programs would help build a skilled workforce.
- Newfoundland and Labrador employs a small number of foreign workers. There is potential to leverage the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, including the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program, to bring in more foreign workers. This could help expand the workforce and ease the challenge of securing domestic workers in the province.

## Agriculture Sector Definition

CAHRC's definition of agriculture includes crop and animal production (NAICS 1111, 1112, 1113, 1114, 1119, 1121, 1122, 1123, 1124, 1125, and 1129), support services (NAICS 1151 and 1152), and agriculture wholesale industries (NAICS 4111 and 4183).

<sup>12</sup> The Conference Board of Canada.

## About This Factsheet

The data cited in this factsheet is based on a Labour Market Information (LMI) study that took place between March and September 2023. This study involved modelling labour demand and supply by province, commodity, and occupation; conducting a survey of more than 1,400 sector stakeholders; conducting five regional focus groups; and validating the results through webinars as well as an advisory group presentation. For more information about agriculture LMI, please visit [www.cahrc-ccrha.ca/programs/agri-lmi](http://www.cahrc-ccrha.ca/programs/agri-lmi).

The study was initiated by the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC), a national, nonprofit organization focused on addressing human resource issues faced by agricultural businesses across Canada. For more information about the Council and its products and services for Canada's agriculture sector, please visit [www.cahrc-ccrha.ca](http://www.cahrc-ccrha.ca).

This research was conducted by The Conference Board of Canada, our country's foremost independent organization for applied research. Through the use of sophisticated data modelling, best-in-class forecasting and multi-method research approaches, they deliver research to help leaders take action.

The use of any part of this publication, whether it is reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means (including electronic, mechanical, photographic, photocopying or recording), without the prior written permission of CAHRC is an infringement of copyright law.

### Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council

PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 2024

T: 613.745.7457 | E: [info@cahrc-ccrha.ca](mailto:info@cahrc-ccrha.ca)



Funded by the Government  
of Canada's Sectoral Workforce  
Solutions Program



This document may be downloaded from [www.cahrc-ccrha.ca](http://www.cahrc-ccrha.ca) | All rights reserved. © 2024 CAHRC

Photo credits: C. Couturier | NAIA