



Saskatchewan Association
of Rural Municipalities

SARM represents its membership of rural municipal government in Saskatchewan and is the principal advocate in representing them before all levels of senior government.

PRIORITIES | FALL 2023

AG LABOUR

On-farm labour is a growing concern for Saskatchewan farmers. Our farms need a specialized skill set from their workers, such as operating heavy machinery or understanding agricultural inputs. Workers also need to be willing to live in rural areas and work seasonal jobs. Finding reliable access to this kind of labour is a challenge.

Farms looking to expand, increase productivity, or capitalize on new marketing opportunities struggle with finding and retaining good labour to support their plans. An aging farmer population also adds to these challenges.

We need to urgently increase the supply of skilled and unskilled labour, and to improve the knowledge and skills of existing workers. This can be done by developing a domestic interest in agriculture work, but also through ensuring federal worker programs are designed with agriculture's unique challenges in mind. Farming is demanding, labor-intensive work. For farmers to be successful and maximize their profits, they need access to agriculture labour.



With targeted skills development, employment incentives, and programs to recruit and retain workers in mind, the following are some recommendations that SARM urges to be implemented to address this issue:

- Grant funding is available to address 1A driver shortage in Agriculture, currently farm operations are not eligible to apply for funding.
- Incentivize employment and employee retention programs in rural areas of the country to aid in stabilizing labour supply.
- Allow for employment training opportunities to be held well in advance of busy times in the Ag industry (seeding/harvest).
- Immigration issues

SARM calls on the federal government to evaluate its process and the requirements for newcomers to get proper permits to enter the Canadian workforce. Focus on efficiency and reduce barriers so employers can access readily available employees. The time is now to build a more resilient workforce and strengthen the economy.

We welcome all newcomers and are supportive in their journey to thrive and make Saskatchewan their new home.