



December 23, 2020

Hon. Marco Mendicino,
Minister Immigration, Refugee, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)
Jean Edmonds Building, South Tower
20th Floor, 365 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, ON, K1A 1L1
Minister@cic.gc.ca

Re: Request for Agri-Food Immigration Pilot (AFIP) Industry Review Meeting in January 2021

Dear Minister Mendicino:

On behalf of the Canadian Meat Council (CMC) Mushrooms Canada (MC), we would like to request a meeting for industry in January 2021 to review progress and status of the Agri-Food Immigration Pilot (AFIP).

The Agri-Food industry creates 1 in 8 jobs in Canada, and we contribute \$111 billion per year to the economy, over 6% of Canada's GDP. This represents \$304 million per day, creating 2.3 million jobs. Our employers participate in ongoing advertising, recruitment fairs, increased recruitment, training, and retention practices including language training, more robust advertising in core business geographics, and integrated work with community/social service providers, augmented referral incentives, augmented student incentives and more. In spite of this increased recruitment, the challenges related to labour, skills, and talent on the farm and in meat processing remain critical.

We are counting on the AFIP to help our farm and food companies fill job vacancies and support essential TFWs with a strong pathway to permanent residency. Due to COVID-19, this has been a very difficult year for agriculture and processing. Increasing regulations make it more and more difficult for companies and their incoming Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) to fill job vacancies when Canadians do not apply. For these reasons, the AFIP has become even more important, to help agriculture and meat processing retain workers with valuable skills that secure our food supply for Canada and the world.

As part of the review, one of the questions we would like answered is how many workers have used the AFIP since its launch? To support the AFIP's success, we are providing our industry recommendations (page 2) that we would like to be included in the AFIP review process and discussed at the upcoming meeting.

Thank you for supporting and prioritizing agriculture and agri-food as a key sector within IRCC's immigration strategy. We look forward to meeting with your IRCC team in the new year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ryan Koeslag'.

Ryan Koeslag
Executive Vice-President
Mushrooms Canada
ryan@mushrooms.ca | www.mushrooms.ca

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marie-France MacKinnon'.

Marie-France MacKinnon
Vice-President, Public Affairs
Canadian Meat Council.



CANADIAN MEAT COUNCIL



mushrooms.canada

CC:

Hon. Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Marie-Claude.Bibeau@parl.gc.ca; correspondancem@agr.gc.ca

Hon. Carla Qualtrough, Minister Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Carla.Qualtrough@parl.gc.ca;

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Hilary Peirce, Policy, Policy AAFC Minister's office hilary.peirce@canada.ca

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE AGRI-FOOD IMMIGRATION PILOT

- 1) **Renewals/ Work Permit Extensions:** Issues with agriculture and butcher work permit renewals have been exacerbated due to COVID-19 causing many terrible case situations for workers who have lost health care cards and other id during COVID-19. When this happens, it also means that workers are unable to return to their home countries due to family deaths or illness because they have lost their identity and work permit when they only have "implied status", We need in-Canada agriculture and agri-food TFWs to have the same priority processing that is provided to incoming TFWs.
We recommend:
 - a. **Form imm5710 have the NOC code added on page 3 line 6** beside the LMIA number, so that IRCC officials can have a searchable field to find our agriculture and agri-food NOC Codes that are prioritized in the regulations.
 - b. **Work permit extensions/ renewals be completed within 30 days.**
- 2) **We recommend: AFIP acceptance letter to be sent from IRCC to the successful AFIP applicant and to the TFWP:** A letter showing acceptance in the AFIP is currently not outlined as part of the process. This is the IRCC trigger needed to release agriculture and meat processor employers from the TFWP renewals/extension (agriculture and meat processing) and the Cap (meat processing). The AFIP should be set up like the Express Entry or the provincial nominee programs that include a letter or certificate of nomination as part of the process. Without this, the AFIP cannot work properly for the worker, the employer, or the TFWP.
- 3) **We recommend: Education process flexibility during COVID-19:** Education institutions in the workers' country of origin remain closed during the pandemic, which is not allowing workers to start the AFIP process with the education assessment companies. For this reason, we would like to recommend a 2-part education assessment process. This could be immediately tweaked to include:
 - a. Allow the worker to use **copies of high school certificates** with wording recommended by the assessment company: "Assessment based on documents submitted by applicant".
 - b. When the education institutions open, then complete the education assessment process by **having originals mailed to the assessment company.**
- 4) **We recommend: Workers with Open Work Permits and other TFWP Stream workers should be able to apply through the AFIP:** Entry to the AFIP should be based on the **permanent, full time Job Offer from the employer**, not on prescriptive NAICs or streams of the TFWP. These regulations and barriers mean less workers with the agricultural skills and experience that Canada needs can access and use the pilot.