



**UNHEEDED  
WARNINGS:**

**COVID-19 & MIGRANT  
WORKERS IN CANADA**



# Unheeded Warnings: COVID-19 & Migrant Workers in Canada, June 2020

We dedicate this report to Bonifacio Eugenio Romero, who died on May 30, and Rogelio Muñoz Santos, who died on June 5. Both were Mexican migrant farm workers who died of COVID-19 in Windsor, Ontario. They died alone, separated from family and friends. Lives lost not because of an unavoidable tragedy but lives stolen as a direct result of decisions made by federal and provincial governments. May they rest in peace, may they never be forgotten, may there never be another death.

## WHO WE ARE

The Migrant Workers Alliance for Change (MWAC) is an organization and a coalition. As a coalition, 28 member organizations support worker self-organizing, share resources and advocate together for changes to immigration and labour policy. MWAC is a coalition of grassroots migrant-led bodies of farmworkers, careworkers, undocumented people and international students and local and national organizations. As an organization, MWAC supports migrant workers self-organizing in unorganized areas or sectors. Currently, MWAC is focused on supporting migrant worker self-organizing in the Niagara region, and migrant student organizing. MWAC is a member of, and forms the secretariat of the Migrant Rights Network - Canada's largest migrant justice coalition.

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## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the hundreds of workers that reached out to us, who spoke up in the most dire of circumstances. In particular, we would like to thank the worker leaders who steer our work and coordinate worker committees on farms. All worker calls that form the bulk of this report were received and responded to by Kit Andres and Sonia Aviles. We would also like to thank Sarah Rotz, Associate Professor of Social Sciences at York University for technical advice, and [Sylvia Nowak](#) for designing this report.

We respectfully acknowledge that this report was prepared on Huron-Wendat, Mississaugas of the Credit River, Haudenosaunee, Anishinabe, and unceded Algonquin territory. The migrant workers that participated reside and work on Indigenous territories across these lands, and MWAC is committed to building migrant support for Indigenous self-determination. Many MWAC members, particularly farmworkers, are Indigenous, and we are committed to solidarity between displaced people.



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## Section 1

# MAPPING THE TERRAIN

## I. INTRODUCTION

Migrant workers and their supporters have warned about the many systemic problems in Canada's temporary immigration programs for decades. In August 2018, over 100 migrant workers wrote a joint statement that they sent to Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). The statement read in part:

*"We need permanent resident status on landing, and open work permits. Contracts that limit us to one employer create fear and abuse. With permanent status and open permits that fear and abuse will be much less. Not everyone wants to live here but we want the same rights Canadians have.*

*We pick grapes for your wine, we pick flowers. We work for up to 17 hours a day. Our current wages are not enough for the work we do, especially with the deductions and taxes. We don't want more deductions from our pay! Some of us are working 18 hours a day and our pay averages \$5.00 an hour.*

*We pay into Employment Insurance for years and want to collect our benefits as the majority of us have never collected a penny from the money we pay. The Federal Government must allow us to collect EI while we are unemployed in our home countries.*

*We get sick from the water at our houses as many employers use wells so the water is not suitable for drinking and harms our health. Some of us sleep with up to 10 people to a room with no privacy. Some of us pay up to \$360 a month for housing and still share a room with four other people. Also many bunkhouses have no heater or air conditioning or ventilation. Some of the windows in houses are sealed which puts our life in jeopardy as there is no way for us to get out of the house in case of emergency or get some air if it's too humid inside. We demand a national housing standard system where employers get random inspections, and are not previously informed of inspections as they often hide problems beforehand when they know an inspector is coming. We want to participate without reprisal in these inspections, as our experience and voice has been ignored."*

Over the decades, there have been countless reports, publications, testimonials, and media stories in which migrant workers have raised concerns about how Canada's temporary immigration system breeds abuse and exploitation. These warnings have been ignored. As COVID-19 ravaged communities across Canada, migrant workers again raised the alarm with many federal and provincial agencies or liaison officers. The Migrant Rights Network - Canada's largest migrant justice coalition - wrote several letters to federal and provincial agencies outlining concerns from migrant workers. All were ignored.



And now Bonifacio Eugenio Romero and Rogelio Muñoz Santos are dead, and at least two migrant workers are in intensive care fighting for their lives. There are at least three major outbreaks right now in Ontario with over 280 confirmed COVID-19 cases, and several other smaller outbreaks. And the numbers keep rising.

We are writing about a crisis from within a crisis while responding to the crisis. The report was written while responding to COVID-19 outbreaks. The final result, then, is a work in progress. A snapshot in time. We write this in the hope of shining a light - yet again - on the injustices that underlie Canada's food system. But we do not claim comprehensiveness or universality - no report on this subject can ever be complete until the fundamental discrimination and exploitation built into Canada's temporary immigration programs are done away with. Until then, there will always be more abuses to expose, indignities to denounce, and demands for change to be made.

Finally, the story that no report can tell but that underpins all of this work is the story about the strength of migrant workers. Migrant workers who sacrifice for themselves and their families, who toil under inhumane conditions, who survive and who organize to assert their dignity and fight for justice. Migrant farmworkers have led protests, organized wild cat strikes, marched on their bosses, and spoken to elected decision makers. Throughout this report we have included photos of our members - their faces have been blurred for their safety, but it is their power that guides this work.

Section 1 of this report summarizes the current terrain of the immigration system and temporary work programs, and the state of the agri-food industry. Section 2 is a summary report of complaints we received and what came of them. We focus on COVID-19, border closures, access to health, labour intensification and housing, but the complaints we received covered many additional issues. Section 3 is a summary of our calls for change. The time for action is now. Lives are at stake. Canada must act.

### Methodology & Who we talked to

Prior to March 15, 2020 the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change was already operating a telephone hotline in English and Spanish for migrant farmworkers in the Niagara region. This hotline is used to share legal information and support worker self-organization. As COVID-19 hit, the calls we were receiving increased exponentially. This prompted us to try to document the COVID and quarantine related cases we were receiving and try to share a snapshot of that information publicly.

Between March 15, 2020 and May 15, 2020, we spoke to **180 workers who called us on behalf of 1,162 workers**. Because of the nature of surveillance on farms, and the fact that not all workers have access to local phones with credit or WiFi connection, it can be difficult for workers to communicate with people off-farm. As a result, individual workers calling on behalf of a group is common practice. In most instances, we spoke to each worker an average of **four times** during the 60 days that this report encompasses, gathering information and providing answers. In some of these instances, their co-workers would be present, or workers would call back on behalf of group concerns. Workers share our phone numbers with each other across the country, and they call us because we are available and accessible. As we only received calls from workers who had our numbers, the sampling here is not exhaustive.

complaints on behalf of

**1,162**  
workers

- We received calls on behalf of 873 Caribbean workers, and 289 Spanish-speaking workers. Border closures and COVID-19 related delays meant that fewer Spanish-speaking workers were able to arrive during the time period of this report.
- Between May 15 and June 1st, we have seen a proportional increase in calls from Spanish-speaking workers, but that data falls outside the timeframe of this report. One-third of the workers who we spoke to called us on their own behalf, the other two-thirds called on behalf of several workers. Those who called us on behalf of a group called on behalf of an average of 13 workers.
- Because of how the phone line has been used in the past, the majority of workers we heard about were based in Ontario. Of those from outside Ontario, 89 were outside Canada, 80 were in Nova Scotia, 10 were in British Columbia. We received one call from Alberta, Manitoba and Quebec each.
- 120 incident reports were from women migrant farmworkers, 1,042 were on behalf of men migrant farmworkers.

## II. SUMMARY OF WHAT WE HEARD

Almost all of the workers who contacted us did so with multiple complaints. Many were scared to share their real names or that of their employers. We earned their trust over multiple conversations, and have chosen to report on overall trends rather than name individual employers for fear of reprisals. For the same reason, we have removed identifying information from pictures, blurred faces and changed names. The only exception is for recent COVID-19 outbreaks for which information has already been made public in the media. The key trends are:

- **Lack of permanent resident status makes it impossible for workers to assert their rights:** A large majority of the complaints we received - from 437 workers - focused on lack of permanent resident status as a key factor in workers' ability to: protect themselves against COVID-19; ask for decent housing; access healthcare information; or assert their labour rights. For example, workers called us from Ontario Plants Propagation and Pioneer Farms weeks before the outbreaks to highlight lack of adequate health and safety protections, but insisted that they were unable to change the situation because of their employer's control over their housing, their ability to stay in Canada, or their ability to return in the future. All the workers we spoke to agreed that permanent resident status is an urgent necessity to save their lives.
- **Fear for health is related to fear of lost income:** 110 workers reported lack of access to healthcare services, particularly lack of health cards. Many others reported not receiving healthcare information or not knowing who to contact for health information while they were prevented from leaving farms. The top concern associated with healthcare related to COVID-19 was actually about loss of income. Many workers feared getting sick because they would lose income and not be able to send money to their families.
- **Wage theft is commonplace:** The fear of lack of income comes from long experience - workers have seen employers steal from them for years. We confirmed reports of \$57,369.46 stolen from workers in the form of deductions and unpaid wages. Some of these deductions were illegal, while others took the form of 'withholding agreements' that workers were forced to sign because they were given no choice or were under threat of deportation. We are only reporting verified amounts for which we have seen paystips, contracts, or photographs of receipts. Since conditions make it very difficult for workers to gather such physical evidence, the actual amounts of stolen wages workers complained about was much higher than we were able to document.



- **Border closures resulted in loss of income, and workers were coerced to travel to Canada because no income supports were available:** 155 complaints were about delays and difficulties faced by workers trying to come to Canada to start work. The vast majority of these concerns were about income - income lost due to delays, or the inability to refuse to travel to unsafe working conditions in order to not forego essential income. Most workers would have preferred not to travel to Canada because they were coming from communities relatively unaffected by COVID-19, but had no other choice since the federal income support program excluded them because they were outside the country. Workers feared for their safety based on their past treatment - the recent outbreaks in farms across the country proves they were right.
- **Workers could not socially distance and did not receive decent food, income or health information during quarantine:** As of March 21, migrant workers were to be quarantined for 14 days immediately upon arrival, during which period they were to be socially distanced, paid 30 hours per week, provided with healthcare information, food, and basic supplies (as they were on lockdown on farms). We received complaints from 316 workers who were either not paid for this period at all, had their quarantine incomes clawed back, or were paid less than the required 30 hours per week. In addition, 539 workers cited inadequate access to food. Another 160 complaints were from migrants not able to maintain social distancing. Quarantine protocols have been developed with the safety of Canadian citizens and employers in mind, and do not respond to the specific experience of workers who may not speak English or French, may not have access to a Canadian telephone number or internet, and were not informed of their rights in quarantine upon arrival.
- **Housing conditions worsened dramatically after quarantine and greater limits have been placed on worker mobility:** While the primary complaints about quarantine were about living conditions and crowding, we received another 109 complaints about housing conditions not specific to or after quarantine. Such complaints included lack of essential supplies, cleanliness, cramped quarters, and the presence of animals and pests. Cumulatively, this makes housing the second most common complaint that we received. Over 200 workers (205 to be exact) reported severe restrictions on mobility including being unable to leave their employer-provided housing, to send remittances to families abroad, to buy phone credit to communicate with their friends and families, or to access food and other basic supplies. Many migrant workers report that employers are using COVID-19 to further clamp down on basic worker freedoms, breaking down support systems and social networks, and targeting outspoken workers by ensuring they remain confined to workplaces and bunkhouses.
- **Intimidation, surveillance, threats and racism have greatly increased:** Workers also reported increased racism from employers, local shops, and some community members who treat them as if they are “disease carriers” - even in cases where workers arrived before COVID-19 hit. In all, 209 migrant workers reported increased intimidation, surveillance and threats from employers often under the guise of COVID-19 protocols. Private security guards were posted at bunkhouses, and workers told they would be turned over to the police for failing to follow employer orders. Many migrant workers reported employers treating them worse than in previous years.



Critically, while complaints among Spanish-speaking and English-speaking workers are largely consistent, complaints about threats were disproportionately higher for Caribbean workers who are largely Black men (19.7% of Caribbean workers, as compared to 12.8% of Spanish-speaking workers). Racism, and specifically anti-Black racism, underpins workers' experience.

- **Work has intensified greatly during COVID-19: As fewer workers are coming in, or workers' arrivals are delayed, migrant workers already here have seen dramatic work intensification:** 128 workers reported working for weeks without a day off, being forced to work long hours, and suffering increased strains, injuries and sickness due to increased pace of work. Most employment and labour laws exclude migrant workers - there are no rights to minimum wage, overtime pay, hours of work, breaks, days off, or collective bargaining. As a result, employers are forcing workers to work at breakneck speed to ensure their profit.

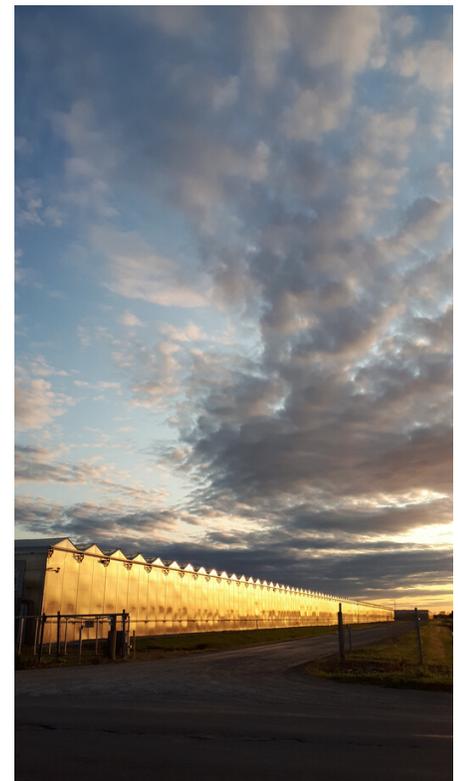
### III. THE TERRAIN: AGRI-FOOD SYSTEM IN CANADA

#### Corporate control and Canada's food supply

While the legacy and the story told about Canada's food industry may be small family owned businesses, by and large many of them are struggling to survive. In fact, data reveals that Canadian farm debt increased to \$114.8 billion in 2019—double the amount in 2000. Small and medium sized farmers are being overtaken by large, incorporated farm businesses and the massive multi-million dollar corporations who now control large sectors of the industry. In Canada, the agri-food sector – made up primarily of big businesses – generated \$111.9 billion of GDP in 2016, and exported \$62.6 billion in agriculture, agri-food and seafood products.

Just four corporations (Cargill, JBS, Maple Leaf and Olymel) control nearly all of Canada's meat production; 80 percent of the retail grocery market is owned by five companies (Loblaws, Sobeys/Safeway, Costco, Metro and Walmart). In meat processing specifically, 85 percent of Canada's beef is processed by only 3 plants. Two of these plants had significant COVID-19 outbreaks, impacting approximately 70 percent of Canada's beef supply. These corporations set prices and therefore determine labour conditions and wages all the way down the food chain. Further, this industrial, highly concentrated model of food production and processing prioritizes economies of scale, output maximization, and speed of production (e.g. drives to increase 'line speed') at the [direct expense of worker safety, health and wellbeing](#).

Contrary to popular myth-making, it is not primarily small family-run farms who are bringing in migrant farmworkers to supplement short-term labour shortages. Scotlynn Group, where nearly 200 workers have tested positive for COVID-19, generates over [\\$73.88 million in annual sales](#) and ships [70% of its sweet corn and pumpkin crop](#) to the United States. Notably, the very reason that many labour intensive farms and greenhouse operations like Scotlynn or Greenhill have been able to grow and expand at the rates they have is because of their reliance on low-cost (i.e. underpaid and exploited) migrant workers.



Since March 15, 2020, the federal government has given [nearly a billion dollars directly to agri-food businesses](#) under the guise of saving family-owned and -operated businesses. But [as the Deputy Minister of Agriculture stated](#), the assistance is not going directly to farmers, but to 'industry', who are expected to then support farmers and workers. While migrants workers and small farmers continue to carry all of the risk, large companies are having their operational costs subsidized through tax payer money. This funding model is not new. In 2017, the federal and provincial governments spent [\\$6.12 billion](#) on the agricultural sector - [over 70 percent](#) of this funding went toward the largest fifth of all farms in Canada (those with annual revenues above \$500,000.00). Canada invests public money into agri-business expansion, and not into ensuring decent working conditions or immigration rights for the workers who sustain it.



### **How does the current migrant farmworker program work?**

While millionaire corporations are being bailed out, migrant workers, the ones that actually grow food, are in crisis. COVID-19 is exacerbating existing injustices that have underpinned the agri-food system for a long time, and about which we have raised multiple warnings.

Migrant workers are the real food producers: [27.4% of employees in crop production were foreign workers](#) in 2017. Migrant workers accounted for 41.6% of all agricultural workers in Ontario, and over 30% of the agricultural workers in Quebec, British Columbia and Nova Scotia in 2017. Importantly, 56,850 agricultural workers came to Canada in 2019 - an increase of 36.7% from 2017.

These workers arrive under three major streams of the Temporary Foreign Workers Program: Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP), Agricultural stream and the Stream for low-wage positions. These programs offer almost no access to permanent residence in Canada.

The program and its problems go back much further. Migrant farm workers have been coming to Canada since 1966, over half a century. Throughout this period, they have been tied to their employers through employer specific work permits. Migrants live in employer-provided homes. Changing jobs requires finding a new employer who files for a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA), which can take over three months, and then the worker must wait three months to get a work permit. During this period, workers are without income and a home. Employers control transportation to grocery stores, remittance offices and community gatherings. Speaking out against dangerous working conditions means termination, homelessness and deportation. There is no meaningful federal oversight, and no federal housing standards for migrant worker housing, so workers are placed in cramped conditions without adequate access to hygiene or sanitation. Provincial labour laws exclude migrant workers from minimum wage, overtime pay, breaks, hours of work, or days off. This is the policy and legal framework that, when COVID-19 hit, made it impossible for migrant workers to protect themselves. Many of the workers we spoke to knew that if there were a single infection on the farm it would burn through the rest of them like a wildfire; but they had no other choice than to keep working in these conditions. Speaking out is simply not an option.

In a public health pandemic, it is critical to ensure that individuals and families have the tools and ability to protect their own health. Migrant farmworkers have been systematically denied the ability to do this through immigration and labour laws. The result is a growing number of migrant workers falling ill.

## Section 2

# WORKERS' WARNINGS

### I. LACK OF PERMANENT RESIDENT STATUS DRIVES ABUSE

**“Bosses just want us to come here to reap their crop and then send us back home. But just like they have a life, we have a life too. We are not dogs and we should have a say in this country. We work and feed the people of this country. We work in the rain and in the sun. We work in the snow to feed these people. I work here, I pay taxes, I should have a say. I would like to see a better offer on the table for seasonal migrant workers because we are not animals and we should be treated fairly. We deserve better treatment & better living conditions. We deserve permanent resident status. I don't want to live this way.”** Damian, Jamaican seasonal farm worker for over 20 years, father of five.

We received 437 of the complaints - the second largest number - about lack of access to permanent resident (PR) status. As is true with migrants in all sectors, the desire for permanent resident status is not a reflection of workers' desire to live in Canada. Rather, permanent resident status allows workers the ability to exercise their basic labour rights, to access healthcare, and to access income supports.

Interlocking structures are working together to worsen the public health crisis to the point of death. When it comes to migrant workers, this is more than a pandemic. Whether it be border controls and access to flights, the absence of translation and interpretation, or the systematic failure of government to provide even basic employment standards, these interlocking systems are creating extreme hardship and death. Different departments and agencies are unable to collaborate or cooperate, with one agency responsible for worker protection during quarantine, and an entirely different one if COVID-19 takes place after the first fourteen days of arrival. In this context, swift and comprehensive measures are necessary that respond to the scale of the crisis. The priority must be to equip migrants with the power to protect themselves - permanent resident status is the only solution.

**“I'm being sent home from Alberta as there is no more work for us in the nursery due to Covid-19. I want to stay in Canada and continue working, but I don't have Permanent Resident Status! I have been coming to Canada for 20 years and I believe it is time that we have access to PR.**

- Mariana, from Mexico, single mother of three.

**“I believe it is just and necessary that the Canadian Government gives a hand to those of us who have been in the program for many years.**

- Jorge, father of three.

#### *Migrant Workers Call for Change:*

- All migrants in the country without permanent resident status must be regularized and given permanent resident status immediately.
- All migrants that arrive in the future must have permanent resident status on arrival.
- Comprehensive migrant specific anti-reprisal mechanisms must be developed at the provincial and federal level.

## II. HEALTHCARE AND COVID-19

Even during a public health pandemic, very little has been done to ensure that migrant workers have access to basic healthcare. At the time of writing, at least 20 Spanish-speaking workers and 92 Jamaican workers who arrived in Ontario on or before April 1 have still not received their health cards. We received a report from one Mexican worker at a greenhouse in Leamington who fell in his bunkhouse and hit his head, suffering vision problems as a result. He was finally taken to see a doctor after he couldn't see the tomatoes he was packing. This worker has been threatened with deportation because he called the Mexican consulate to ask for help to file a workplace accident report. He had no health card and ended up paying to receive medical treatment for his injury.

Official public health information is largely only available in English and French. While many health providers have moved to offering services online or over the phone, most migrant farm workers do not have Canadian phone numbers and are unable to call. Local community health centres have been slow to adapt and add increased resources to be able to serve migrant communities. As COVID-19 led to lockdowns, many health centres limited services to existing clients. But because many farm workers move to different regions in between seasons, there was no immediate access to healthcare information or ability to connect with medical services particularly for non-COVID-19 related health concerns. Critically, this is a crisis of resources and lack of planning, and not the result of the actions of individual healthcare providers who are doing more than the best they can under the circumstances.

While the rest of this report focuses solely on the period between March 15 and May 15, it is difficult to separate COVID-19 related cases in this way. As of June 3, we have received the following updates on our hotline about COVID-19 cases:

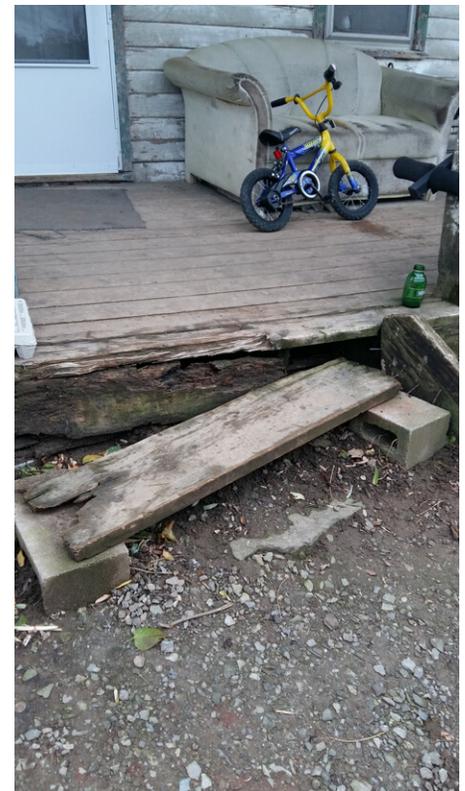
- **Greenhill Produce:** In Kent Bridge, Ontario, there are at least 100 cases of COVID-19 at Greenhill Produce. It is unclear how many of them are migrant workers. We spoke to migrant workers at Greenhill, including those who had tested positive for COVID-19. Workers confirmed that six workers started with mild symptoms. These symptoms were considered normal, because temperatures inside the greenhouse are very high and with the cold weather outside, workers often get colds. Workers confirmed that they never received any sick days in previous years and this remained the case this year. Only when some workers were sick to the point that they couldn't get up to go to work, were they tested for COVID-19. Once they tested positive, workers reported being moved into two houses with 20 workers each and just three bathrooms. Each room in the house has six workers in cramped quarters.



- **Ontario Plants Propagation:** Prior to the outbreak at Ontario Plants Propagation, workers called reporting that a shipment was arriving from a US farm which had a confirmed COVID-19 outbreak and over 100 infections. All citizens and permanent resident workers at the farm were given the day off when the shipment arrived, but migrant workers were asked to unload and unpack the shipment. Workers simply received an extra \$2.00 per hour, \$8.00 in total for working with this shipment. While some migrant workers were scared of contracting the virus, most were upset at the differential treatment noting they had no choice in the matter, and just as much care would be taken in the case of an actual COVID-19 outbreak. A few days later the first case was reported, and by June 1, positive cases had reached 20. Workers reported being made to work in group settings after being tested while awaiting results likely resulting in increased infections. On June 2, the employer asked the migrant workers to return to work without any changes being made to workplace or housing conditions. Many workers are scared but are fearful of refusing. Workers have called the Ministry of Labour to raise concerns but have not heard back.

Lloyd called us on May 29 saying, **“Right now they got 10 cases on the compound. They have the guys going to get tested and have them still coming to work and working with everybody the same way. The more they get tests, the more cases they find and they have the guys all working together.”**

- **Scotlynn Group:** This farm has the largest reported outbreak in Ontario. The first worker to fall ill was left unattended until he wasn't able to get out of bed. It was a fellow coworker who called an ambulance for him. At least five workers have been hospitalized, and two are in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). We received phone calls from three hospitalized workers outside of the ICU about lack of translation or interpretation. Workers were unaware of their diagnosis or treatment and no one had communicated with them in English and Spanish. We raised concerns with the media and local health agencies, who insisted that workers were receiving information in their own language. On the night of June 1, MWAC staff were called by an anesthesiologist in the Intensive Care Unit asking us to translate for one of the workers in intensive care. The migrant worker patient in ICU was about to be placed on a ventilator and his verbal consent was required for him to be anaesthetized. The doctor had tried to communicate using the Google Translate app on his phone. When we spoke to the worker informing him about his choices and that he may not wake up again, he confirmed that no interpretation had been provided in the previous days. He did not have his phone, his family in Mexico had not been informed, and he needed support to get in touch. We tried to get information from the worker about where his phone was, and why his employer had not contacted him, but the call was cut short. We have not been able to get any updated information about this worker. It is likely that his family is not aware that their loved one is on a ventilator at a hospital in Canada. It is important to note that we are not translators or interpreters for the purposes of medical information. We also received a call from workers at this farm who informed us that forty workers were being housed in a single dorm prior to the outbreak with a single shower between them. Multiple workers confirmed that employers instructed workers to keep working in large group settings after testing had begun and before results were announced which many workers believed caused the outbreak to grow.



- **Pioneer:** According to media reports and our contacts with workers, as of June 3 over 50 migrant workers have tested positive for COVID-19. On May 31, the farm notified the public via a Facebook post that “an offshore employee” had shown symptoms and had been isolated two weeks prior, but that other workers had subsequently shown symptoms, and as a result, testing and appropriate measures had been undertaken. However, on June 1, workers contacted us saying that they were not being given PPE nor were they able to social distance at one house where workers were showing symptoms; these workers were still being put to work with workers from other houses. Workers are very scared for their families and about what would happen to them if they fell ill and died of COVID-19 while in Canada.

### *Migrant Workers Call for Change:*

- **Ensure health and safety:** Ensure social distancing and provision of Personal Protective Equipment for all migrant workers, both in housing and at work, throughout the course of the pandemic (and not just during the quarantine period). Conduct random, unannounced, and proactive inspections of workplaces, including housing. Ensure health information and care is provided in workers’ languages, including during hospitalization. Ensure hospitals have the appropriate resources required to provide language-specific care. Workers should be provided with public health information, in appropriate languages, on handwashing and physical distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Suspend Work at COVID-19 Farms:** If working and living conditions on farms where there is COVID-19 cannot be immediately adapted to protect the safety of workers, all work must be stopped. Facilities must be fully disinfected and only reopen when worker safety can be guaranteed. Names of farms where there have been COVID-19 outbreaks must be released. The federal government must ensure that workers who want to change jobs receive expedited open work permits and permanent resident status.
- **Ensure income for all:** Provide immediate income support to all workers at workplaces impacted by COVID-19 outbreaks. Language, phone and internet access barriers make it nearly impossible for individual migrant farm workers to access the Canada Emergency Response Benefit.
- **Ensure an end to medical repatriation, and no medical inadmissibility rules.**

### III. IMPACT OF BORDER CLOSURES OR DELAYS IN TRAVEL

Much of the discussion in Canada about border closures and travel bans have focused on the labour shortages these have caused for the agrifood industry. Little attention has been paid to the impacts of these delays on the workers who depend on travelling to Canada for their livelihoods. Delays left workers stuck abroad and without income for weeks. The federal government's income support program, the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), requires that workers be residing in Canada to qualify and therefore excludes these workers.

Many of the workers we heard from live in communities where there are few or no cases of COVID-19, and were concerned about travelling to Canada because of the risk of exposure. Without income support from the Canadian government and no other employment options, workers were forced to do what they could to come to Canada to work. The majority of migrant farmworkers come from rural communities. Travel to Canada involves first taking public transportation to a major city, where they are housed for a few days in cramped quarters awaiting flights. Workers from disparate regions then boarded chartered flights that were full. Upon arrival, many migrants were transported to farms in buses that were full. Throughout their entire journeys, most workers were not provided with Personal Protective Equipment.

On March 18, when Canada closed its borders, 74 workers were scheduled to travel to Canada from Trinidad and Tobago. These workers were stranded without any income or support. One of the incident reports is from Jamaican workers who only had enough money to travel from their home to the Ministry of Labour in the capital, Kingston, on March 18, expecting to fly out to Canada that day. When they learned of the border closures, they were stranded in Kingston with no money for food, emergency housing or transportation to return home.

Another worker reported receiving two days notice that he had to travel to Canada. He was in the process of building his family home, and had to borrow \$800 to hire contractors to finish the work. He travelled to the Jamaican Ministry of Labour on March 18, signed a contract, and then was told to return home because borders were closed. Another worker was expecting his son to start medical school. However, with the contract delayed, he is struggling to raise \$800 to pay for his son's semester.

As borders reopened some workers were given a day or two notice to travel. In one case, a migrant worker received two days notice to travel. He borrowed \$500 to pay for his work permit and biometrics. Because of COVID-19 related disruptions, he was unable to travel to Mexico City in time to catch his flight to Ontario and is now left with no income and having to repay that \$500.

A Mexican woman migrant worker reported that she hasn't yet been called back to work in Canada. She is her family's sole income earner. Her mother recently died and she had to borrow \$160 to pay for the funeral, but does not know how she will repay that debt.

At the time of writing, the government of Trinidad and Tobago continues to bar its nationals from traveling to Canada, citing the much higher rates of infection in Canada. This has left thousands of migrant farm workers stranded at home without income.

***“My flight to travel to Canada on March 31 got canceled due to border closure! My 15 year old daughter has fallen sick and needs immediate care including blood transfusion, but I don't have the money to pay for that. I'm desperate and need income support as my daughter's life is at risk.*”**

- Gilberto, Mexican farmworker, father of two. He had to borrow \$700 Canadian dollars to be able to pay for his daughter's treatment. 'Gilberto's father also worked as a migrant worker in Canada for over 30 years.

***“After several attempts to talk to a government official in Mexico, they told me that my employer didn't ask for me, so I have no visa or work permit to travel! What I have is a huge debt because I had to borrow money to pay for my work permit and visa! Now I have to work as an Uber driver in Mexico City, risking my life [because of COVID-19]. If I had PR status in Canada, this would not be happening. I believe that I deserve PR status!!”***

- Andrea has been coming to Canada for 15 years. She borrowed \$400 to pay for her visas and permits and now is being asked to pay another \$215 for another visa.

Unlike Trinidad and Tobago, the government of Jamaica, under pressure from Canada, opened up its borders to allow migrants to travel to work, on the condition that workers sign a waiver releasing the Jamaican government of responsibility should they fall ill or die while in Canada. Workers were not provided with these waivers until they boarded the bus at the Ministry of Labour to go to the airport, and were not given any time to read and consider them with their families. These workers did not receive contracts. We shared news of this with the Toronto Star, and the story also broke in the Jamaican press.

***“They used to give us contract forms to sign and keep but this time there’s none. So I guess we are on our own this year by signing a death warrant. I think this isn’t right.”*** - Carlos, seasonal worker who has been coming to Canada for over 10 years to harvest peaches.

***“By asking us to sign this waiver, they ask us to sign away our family’s rights in case we get sick. We are scared!”*** - Leroy, a seasonal worker, harvests apples & peaches.

#### *Migrant Workers Call for Change:*

- Federal income support (Canada Emergency Response Benefit, CERB) must be extended to all migrant workers who have not been able to travel to Canada to work, for loss of income due to COVID-19.
- Workers who were delayed in travelling to Canada for work must receive income support for lost wages for those periods.
- Income support should be made available to workers who may not have valid Social Insurance Numbers.
- Applications for CERB should be accessible for workers who do not speak English or French, and do not have reliable access to local phone numbers or internet.

## IV. QUARANTINE AND ITS FAILURES

As the severity of the pandemic quickly became apparent in late March, farm worker advocacy groups grew increasingly concerned about the risks workers would be exposed to once they began to arrive in early April. Under immense pressure from our organization and our allies, the Federal government created quarantine guidelines for farm businesses, and later, a financial penalty structure for employers failing to implement them. These guidelines only apply to the first 14 days after workers arrive, during which time employers are supposed to ensure that while workers self-isolate they receive pay for the equivalent of 30 hours per week. According to the guidelines, workers must be provided with adequate housing where they can remain two meters apart, as well as adequate food and cleaning supplies. Quarantine and health information must also be provided to workers in their own language. Several provinces have also stepped in with additional measures. For example, in British Columbia, the province has taken on the role of housing and feeding workers during the 14 day quarantine period. In Ontario, where the province has not taken on a substantive role, different regions have created their own protocols. This has created a patchwork of regulations, protocols and access to supports. Migrant groups wrote [letters](#) warning of a potential health crisis - these letters went unanswered.

The central issue with these quarantine guidelines is that they are designed with the protection of non-migrant populations in mind. Under the current regime in Ontario, migrant workers are to be monitored to ensure that if they arrive in Canada infected, those infections do not spread into the community. COVID-19 related measures have not been designed to ensure that migrant workers are themselves protected from risk of infection. That no precautions were provided for migrant workers prior to travel and that governments took no measures to ensure farm workplaces were prepared for workers' arrival speaks to the appallingly low priority given to the health and safety of the workers themselves.

Meanwhile, there is little enforcement of employer guidelines, such as they are. There are no proactive or snap inspections of workplaces - in fact all inspections are now done virtually. Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) has a tip line that workers are encouraged to call to make complaints about employers who are not complying with quarantine guidelines. But this service is only available in English and French, and as such many workers cannot use it. Many workers do not have local Canadian phone numbers, and rely on WhatsApp to communicate with anyone off-farm, and cannot call the tip line.

Those who do use Canadian numbers were in most cases not able to activate them upon arrival because they were placed directly into isolation. No information about the quarantine guidelines or tip line was provided by the Federal government to workers on or before their arrival, and the Ontario government took no steps to provide information about provincial guidelines. Most significantly, migrant farm workers have work permits that tie them to their employers - this means that workers who speak out or complain can easily be terminated and deported, and banned from returning to work in Canada in future. This makes it impossible, in practice, for workers to be able to complain about their working and living conditions.

Even where workers do make complaints, little comes of it. In one case, a group of workers called the tip line to complain about lack of food while in quarantine. After being notified by ESDC of the complaint, the employer warned the workers not to make future calls but did not provide any food.

***The boss gets money from the government for quarantine costs and still we get a bill for soap and grocery. He's taking bread from our kids' mouths - we need to send that money to our families back home!***

- Winston, seasonal tree nursery worker for 5 years, father of two.

***Most of the guys don't understand what they signing, just don't want to lose this job so they sign away their rights. This is fraud, man, our boss should be in jail.***

- Mark, Jamaican seasonal worker, working in vineyards for 10 years.

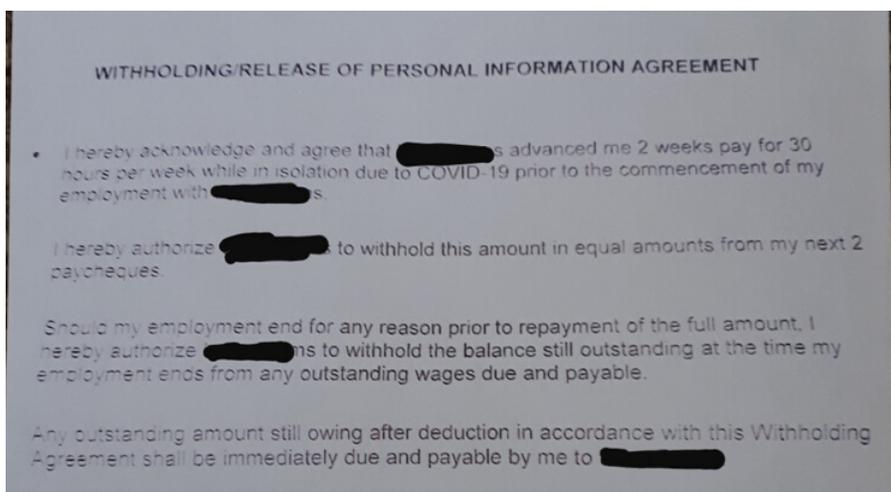
### Inability to do Social Distancing

In one incident report, 50 workers from different states in Mexico were placed on one bus from the airport to the local farm for a number of hours. In another instance, nine workers, also from different states, were cramped in one house despite being in quarantine. On another farm, 12 workers were placed in one room with bunk beds. In one incident report, 14 greenhouse workers were placed in one bedroom, sleeping in bunk beds. In many cases, kitchens in particular were areas where workers could not socially distance. In a separate incident, nine workers were made to start work as soon as they arrived at the farm, and were unable to keep distance while working.

Greenhouses are some of the worst culprits - we received evidence from eight different greenhouses and 365 workers who were housed in conditions that they were not able to socially distance even during quarantine. Alton, referring to how the mainstream media was speaking of them as coming to rescue Canadian crops said: **“This isn’t right; we should be treated like kings.”**

### Pay violations and wage theft

In one incident, a peach and grape farm in Niagara asked over two dozen workers to sign an agreement saying that the pay during the quarantine period was a loan that they would have to pay back. In a separate incident report, 15 workers were only paid for 30 hours for the 2-week isolation period (instead of 60 hours). They were given just one pay cheque of \$400 each for two weeks. Under the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program contract, employers can provide workers advanced pay on arrival for startup costs. This advance, including its repayment through pay deductions, must be agreed upon in writing between individual workers and their employers. In two instances, workers reported their quarantine pay being treated as advanced pay. In another incident, seven workers reported being told by their employer that if they didn’t work during their 14 day quarantine period, they wouldn’t be paid at all. When workers refused to work, the employer said he would pay them but only as a loan.



One Caribbean worker, Paul, had this message on our hotline for the Prime Minister, **“Prime Minister, you need to look into this situation where we as migrant workers are coming to your country to work and are not being treated fairly. Some workers are being abused and they can’t say anything about it. Some farms don’t have proper bathroom facilities and have to use nearby bushes. Sometimes we work in minus zero weather and we still work for minimum wage. We leave our families for this and it is only fair that we have the same income as other workers.”**



***If we couldn’t reach anyone I think our boss would let us starve before helping. He doesn’t care about us.***

- Anthony, pear farm worker in the Hamilton area.



***If you [MWAC] didn’t have a WhatsApp number, there is nobody we could turn to for help in this situation.***

- Sheldon, Jamaican seasonal worker

### **Deductions, abuse, and insufficient access to food**

With workers being confined in employer-controlled housing during the quarantine period, access to food was a major concern. In one case, a tomato and pepper farm in Essex County sent unhealthy and culturally inappropriate meals to workers in quarantine that workers refused to eat. They told their employer repeatedly to stop sending these meals as they preferred to source their own food through their networks, but the employer kept sending this food which they also deducted from workers' pay. At a peach and grape farm in Niagara, 16 workers reported receiving only one loaf of bread and a carton of eggs to feed them all for two days. Another vineyard in Niagara provided only two small bags of tortillas and a carton of eggs to feed 20 workers. Asparagus harvesters in Oxford, ON, were given no choice but to purchase food from their employer, including items from the employer's basement pantry. Workers were given no grocery receipts, just handwritten itemized lists. At another farm, 35 workers reported being forced under threat of termination to sign an agreement to pay for food during quarantine, which also included a clause that payment for the quarantine period was a loan. In another incident, 23 vineyard workers were forced to sign agreements permitting the employer to bring them groceries, which are deducted from workers' pay, even though they are no longer in quarantine. On another farm, workers reported not having internet access or Canadian SIM cards and having to sneak access to WiFi from the employer's barn to contact community members and ask for food and other basic supplies.



#### *Migrant Workers Call for Change:*

- A responsive monitoring and proactive enforcement system must be set up, in consultation with migrant worker organizations which includes swift, unannounced, and in-person inspections on employers where complaints have been made, in coordination with local public health officials.
- COVID-19 quarantine requirements for employers must be made available directly to workers, with information on how workers can assert their rights and make anonymous complaints.
- An accessible interface for workers and their support organizations to make complaints must be established.
- All workers at a workplace must be informed about the results of inspections following anonymous tips.
- Employers must ensure adequate hygiene products and meals for workers during their quarantine period without deductions.
- Workers' ability to reach social supports must be facilitated through guaranteed wireless internet and phone access, and connecting workers to local support organizations.
- Workers must be appropriately compensated where employers put workers' lives at risk through non-compliance with guidelines.

## V. INHUMANE AND SUBSTANDARD HOUSING

One of the central concerns about migrant agricultural worker programs, which is only exacerbated during COVID-19, is employer control over worker housing. Migrant workers must, by law, stay in employer-provided housing. As a result, employers control who comes in and who goes out. For workers, speaking up against unsafe working conditions, even in a pandemic, means not only losing income but also becoming homeless. Living conditions are one of the key concerns. A Toronto Star study of worker complaints in Mexico found that [over half the complaints were about housing conditions](#). Despite repeated calls by migrant worker organizations, the federal government has refused to establish national housing standards for migrant farm work, responding to [pressure from employer lobby groups including Canadian Federation of Agriculture and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture](#) instead. The lack of national standards means that a vastly uneven patchwork of regulations exists across municipalities and regions.

Substandard housing conditions have only worsened during COVID-19, as employers have used the need for social distancing to exercise greater control over workers' lives. Because social distancing at work is not required for individuals who live together, employers have increased the numbers of workers bunking together post-quarantine in order to maximize productivity. This increased housing density is one of the key reasons that farmworkers are seeing an increased number of outbreaks. Many of the workers that called us were aware that housing conditions would exacerbate the pandemic and put their lives at risk but felt they could not speak out for fear of reprisals, termination, homelessness, deportation or being 'blacklisted' from returning to Canada in the future.

### Lack of cleanliness and adequate supplies

One group of nine workers called us about being placed in a house where dogs had been living, that smelled of dog urine and had not been cleaned prior to the workers' arrival. In another instance, workers arrived very late at night to find the house was so dirty they needed to clean for hours before they could sleep. Another group of workers told us that no washing machine or dryer had been provided and they were not given money from the employer for laundromat costs (as outlined in SAWP contract).



***We know our boss will use this virus to enforce rules he wanted already. He's using the pandemic as an excuse to get control over us. He shouldn't be allowed to treat grown men this way.***

- Joseph, Jamaican seasonal worker



### *Migrant Workers Call for Change:*

- Create a national housing standard where workers can live safely and with dignity.
- Particularly during COVID-19, frequent and random in-person inspections should be mandated throughout the season. Employers who are found to be in noncompliance with standards for adequate housing that enables social distancing should be terminated from the TFWP and adequate new jobs and open work permits provided for the affected migrant workers.
- If workers request it, mandate employers to ensure adequate hygiene products and culturally appropriate and nutritious meals for workers throughout COVID-19 without deductions.

## VI. INCREASED SURVEILLANCE AND LACK OF MOBILITY

### Restrictions on mobility

As the COVID-19 crisis worsened, many workers state that employers are using the pandemic as a way to further limit workers' mobility and freedom to send remittances, buy groceries, receive social support, or access healthcare. In one incident report, 50 flower greenhouse workers in Niagara who had been in Canada since January were forced to sign an agreement saying they would not leave the bunkhouse - not even for essential items like food and personal supplies. Although many workers did not understand what they were being asked to sign, they were all threatened with termination and deportation if they did not sign. They have not been able to leave the house or receive deliveries from local community members for the duration of this report. On another farm, 28 workers were told that no one is allowed on the farm property where their bunkhouses are and that the police would be called if anyone entered the property, even if it is only to drop off essential supplies. Numerous complaints focused on workers' inability to leave the farm, even to send necessary remittances to families abroad.

### Surveillance, threats and racism

At one greenhouse, 48 workers reported being surveilled by a paid security guard to ensure they would not leave their home after a 9:00 pm, employer-imposed curfew. In another incident, 23 workers received a written warning upon their arrival in Canada: "If you don't follow these instructions, we will have to make decisions to send you home." In another case, seven workers reported not being provided food, medicine, or basic supplies during quarantine and told by the employer, "If you set one foot off the farm I'll be the first one to call the cops." A Mexican worker in Niagara told his employer that he was exhausted from working too many hours at a flower greenhouse, and was threatened with deportation under the guise that he was breaking COVID-19 protocols. In Nova Scotia, when an employer was reported to the ESDC tip line, 43 strawberry workers from that farm were told not to speak to the government agent who followed up on the complaint. Instead, the employer selected five workers to be interviewed and told them to **"say that they [employers] are treating us good and paying us okay and if they [workers] don't say that they are going to go back to Jamaica."** In another incident report, when Caribbean workers complained about conditions, the employer called them **"lazy n\*\*\*\*rs"**.

The threat of policing - particularly, the presence of security guards, the use of racial epithets, and verbal abuse directed at Black and brown men by employers - is incredibly dangerous. This employer threat - combined with racism faced by workers in the community - creates a level of intense insecurity for these workers. We received reports of a local grocery store in Delhi, ON, that refused to deliver groceries to 10 workers at a local farm. In another instance, workers raised complaints about being asked to show documents before being allowed to enter supermarkets. This increased racism and xenophobia directed against migrant workers has made their lives even harder during COVID-19.



***“These people are cruel and I’m tired of them. They have no heart for Black people, they use us like slaves. I tried getting away from this farm for a very long time and I cannot.”***

- Delroy, seasonal worker for 23 years, father of 5 and also taking care of elderly mother back home. He asked the liaison office for a transfer to another farm and was refused.

*Migrant Workers Call for Change:*

- Employers must ensure full and easy access off farms, for sending remittances, buying groceries, receiving social support, accessing healthcare as well as Wi-Fi and phones. There should be no sharing of information or contacting of law enforcement, private security or consulates, either by employers or by compliance units in cases where workers make complaints. This provision must be communicated directly to workers.
- Specific anti-racism measures must be developed in conjunction with migrant workers by all levels of government.

**VII. INTENSIFICATION OF WORK, LACK OF LABOUR RIGHTS**

Because of the labour shortages caused by COVID-19, many farms are operating with fewer workers than expected. This has meant that workers who arrived early in the season have had to take on additional workload to make up for delays or for workers who never arrived.

Greenhouse workers in Leamington reported that they have been required to pick over 130 pounds of cherry tomatoes before 1pm or else they are dismissed for the day without full pay. As a result of understaffing, asparagus harvesters report working between 16 and 17 hours a day, six days a week. At a grape and peach farm in Niagara, 12 workers reported putting in 63 hours a week, working seven days straight, for four consecutive weeks while their coworkers were shut out of the country due to travel restrictions. Workers at four different vineyards, 68 workers in total, reported working 14 hours a day to catch up on work. Twenty-four workers from three fruit orchards reported working at a much faster pace to catch up on work because fewer workers had been able to travel. As a result of this work intensification, these workers reported increased calluses, sprains, strains, and other injuries.

In every single case, workers were not given overtime pay. In Ontario, where the majority of our calls came from, the Employment Standards Act contains more than 83 complex exemptions and special rules that exempt some employers from basic entitlements like minimum wage, vacation pay, public holiday pay, overtime and more. Only 24% of Ontario employees are fully covered under the Employment Standards Act. These exemptions and special rules have a particularly negative impact on migrant farm workers. They are subject to special rules and exemptions with respect to minimum wages, working time, vacations and leaves, public holidays, hours of work and breaks. This means that many migrant workers are working long hours, days and weeks, without breaks. Migrant agricultural workers are forced to speed up their work at various stages in the production cycle, without adequate remuneration. Migrant workers are also excluded from the Labour Relations Act and thus unable to unionize to collectively bargain for their rights. This lack of basic protections combined with work permits tied to single employers make it nearly impossible for workers to assert their rights to safe work. COVID-19 has only made this situation worse by increasing employers' control over workers.

***“We’re treated like machines. We just want them to recognize that we’re still human.”***  
- Raymond, Jamaican seasonal worker for 11 years, father of two.



### *Migrant Workers Call for Change:*

- Ensure migrant workers have permanent resident status on arrival so that they can leave bad jobs or unsafe work conditions. As an immediate measure, provide open work permits for all who request them.
- Increase wages for essential agricultural workers permanently.
- Ensure that agricultural workers have access to all labour rights including worker compensation without exemptions and exclusions.
- Require all employers to provide adequate Personal Protective Equipment to all workers in group settings and ensure workers ability to socially distance at work or at home.

“

*With the delay in other workers arriving, we are working 9 hours a day, 7 days a week. We only rest when it rains. No one complains because our families need the money.*

- Marcus, seasonal vineyard worker from Jamaica.



# Section 3

# CALLS FOR CHANGE

## RECOMMENDATIONS



### Permanent Resident Status on Arrival

1. All migrants in the country without permanent resident status must be regularized and given permanent resident status immediately. All migrants that arrive in the future must have permanent resident status on arrival.

### Protect Health and Safety

2. Ensure social distancing and provision of Personal Protective Equipment for all migrant workers, both in housing and at work, throughout the course of the pandemic (and not just during the quarantine period). Conduct random, unannounced, and proactive inspections of workplaces, including housing. Ensure health information and care is provided in workers' languages, including during hospitalization and ensure hospitals have the appropriate resources required to provide language-specific care. Workers should be provided with public health information, in appropriate languages, on handwashing and physical distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic. End the practice of medical repatriation, and remove medical inadmissibility rules.

### Suspend Work at COVID-19 Farms

3. If working and living conditions on farms where there is COVID-19 cannot be immediately adapted to protect the safety of workers, all work must be stopped. Facilities must be fully disinfected and only reopen when worker safety can be guaranteed. Names of farms where there have been COVID-19 outbreaks must be released. The federal government must ensure that all workers who want to change jobs receive expedited open work permits and permanent resident status.

### Ensure Income for All

4. Provide immediate income support to all workers at workplaces impacted by COVID-19 outbreaks. Language, phone and internet access barriers make it nearly impossible for individual migrant farm workers to access the Canada Emergency Response Benefit. Federal income support (Canada Emergency Response Benefit, CERB) must be extended to all migrant workers who have not been able to travel to Canada to work, for loss of income due to COVID-19. Workers who were delayed in travelling to Canada for work must receive income support for lost wages for those periods. Income support should be made available to workers who may not have valid Social Insurance Numbers. Applications for CERB should be accessible for workers who do not speak English or French, and do not have reliable access to local phone numbers or internet. As an immediate measure, provide open work permits for all who request them.

### Make Quarantine Work for Workers

5. A responsive monitoring and proactive enforcement system must be set up, in consultation with migrant worker organizations which includes swift, unannounced, and in-person inspections on employers where complaints have been made, in coordination with local public health officials.

6. COVID-19 quarantine requirements for employers must be made available directly to workers, with information on how workers can assert their rights and make anonymous complaints.
7. An accessible interface for workers and their support organizations to make complaints must be established. All workers at a workplace must be informed about the results of inspections following anonymous tips.
8. Employers must ensure adequate hygiene products and meals for workers during their quarantine period without deductions. Workers' ability to reach social supports must be facilitated through guaranteed wireless internet and phone access, and connecting workers to local support organizations.
9. Workers must be appropriately compensated where employers put workers' lives at risk through non-compliance with guidelines.

### **Create Dignified Living Conditions**

10. Create a national housing standard so that workers can live safely and with dignity.
11. Particularly during COVID-19, frequent and random in-person inspections should be mandated throughout the season. Employers who are found to be in noncompliance with standards for adequate housing that enables social distancing should be terminated from the TFWP and adequate new jobs and open work permits provided for the affected migrant workers.
12. If workers request it, mandate employers to ensure adequate hygiene products and culturally appropriate and nutritious meals for workers throughout COVID-19 without deductions.
13. Employers must ensure full and easy access off farms, for sending remittances, buying groceries, receiving social support, accessing healthcare as well as Wi-Fi and phones.

### **Ensure Decent Work**

14. Increase wages for essential agricultural workers permanently.
15. Ensure that agricultural workers have access to all labour rights including worker compensation without exemptions and exclusions.
16. Require all employers to provide adequate Personal Protective Equipment to all workers in group settings and ensure workers ability to socially distance at work or at home.

### **Public Health not Policing**

17. There should be no sharing of information or contacting of law enforcement, private security or consulates, either by employers or by compliance units in cases where workers make complaints. This provision must be communicated directly to workers. Specific anti-racism measures must be developed in conjunction with migrant workers by all levels of government.

The logo for the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change features the words "MIGRANT WORKERS" in white, uppercase, sans-serif font inside a blue, wavy banner. Below the banner, the words "Alliance for Change" are written in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font.

**MIGRANT WORKERS**  
**Alliance for Change**

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