

Vulnerable, Inequitable, and Precarious Impacts of COVID-19 on Newcomers, Immigrants, And Migrant Workers in Rural Canada

Brief Summary

- ❑ Immigration is not only present in rural Canada, but a central component of many rural communities' strategies for development and long-term resilience.
- ❑ Rural immigrants, newcomers, and migrant workers face challenges different from their urban counterparts.
- ❑ Rural immigrant & migrant workers often fill jobs that are precarious, dangerous, or otherwise undesirable, particularly in agriculture and agri-food production.
- ❑ COVID-19 increased long-standing structural inequities faced by newcomer, immigrant, and migrant agriculture and agri-food workers.
- ❑ Foreign labour, specifically temporary foreign labour, is central to the Canadian agriculture and agri-food industries - 27.4% in crop production, 5.6% in animal production, and 3.4% in food manufacturing
- ❑ Higher rates of COVID-19 experienced on farms and in meat processing facilities, particularly impacting immigrants and migrant workers
- ❑ COVID-19 has been a catalyst for acts of violence and discrimination against racial and cultural minority groups.
- ❑ COVID-19 created a disproportionate effect on the employment of recent immigrants, particularly female immigrants.
- ❑ Many newcomers, immigrants, and migrants working in the agriculture and agri-food sector experience precarious employment.

- ❑ Newcomers to rural areas frequently experience difficulty in accessing services, language barriers, poor housing, underemployment, isolation, and discrimination/racism
- ❑ Immigrants, newcomers, and migrants impacted by closed borders/no travel, economic hardship, and a public health crisis, but also the additional challenges created by social distancing in places with reduced access to public services and often a lack of high-speed internet.
- ❑ Extended separation from loved ones outside of the country due to travel restrictions.

Call for Actions

- ❑ Need to ensure worker safety and satisfaction in Canada's rural-based agriculture and agri-food industries.
- ❑ Need for national standards in health and safety, housing, and employment for migrant agriculture workers, as well as inspection of worker treatment.
- ❑ Need to ensure access to health care for immigrants, newcomers, and migrants.
- ❑ Need for place-based approaches to ensure rural-appropriate supports for newcomers, immigrants, and migrant workers.
- ❑ Need for more awareness and funding for rural immigration, newcomers, and migrants.

Further Information

The original research article was written by Louis Helps, Ray Silvius, and Ryan Gibson. The article was published in the [Journal of Community and Rural Development](#).

Acknowledgement

This research summary was generated through an initiative funded by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs through the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance.