

Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program as a Model of Best Practices in Migrant Worker Participation in the Benefits of Economic Globalization Project

“Mexican Farm Workers’ Participation in Canada’s Seasonal Agricultural Labour Market and Development Consequences in their Rural Home Communities”

Executive Summary

Prepared for The North-South Institute

by

Gustavo Verduzco and Maria Isabel Lozano

“Mexican Farm Workers’ Participation in Canada’s Seasonal Agricultural Labour Market and Development Consequences in their Rural Home Communities”

Executive Summary

During the early years of the Program (1974-80), there was not much promotion for recruiting workers, and this was done only in states near Mexico City. By 1994, 80 per cent of the participants came from six states in the central part of the country: Puebla, Tlaxcala, México, Morelos, Hidalgo, and Guanajuato. With the increase in the demand for workers and the decentralization of certain procedures for selecting and documenting workers, potential candidates have been incorporated from all the states. However, 70 per cent of the participants still come from the central region of the country.

Since 1974, the year in which the program of Mexican workers began, the number of participants has increased on an average by 18 per cent annually. This growth has been determined by Canadian employers’ demand for workers: the periods showing the greatest increases were 1985 to 1989 and 1996 to 2000. Nominal workers account for 48 per cent and 68 per cent, respectively, of the total number of workers going to Canada each season.

The year 1989 was the first in which Canadian farmers requested women workers through this Program. At present, women’s participation in the total number of workers per season is around 3 per cent. Although these numbers are very low, it is clear that women’s participation in the Program has more than doubled in just a few years. This is due, above all, to an increase in the demand among Canadian employers, so that the women who have participated during all the seasons are the ones who are explicitly requested by their gender.

Operation of the Program

Throughout the years, several changes have been made to improve the Program’s operation. A “single-window” system was set up to facilitate procedures, allowing workers to conduct most of the procedures in the Program Office without having to go to the different government agencies. As of 1993, electronic files were prepared with data on each worker that has joined the Program; the aim is to be able to update the database.

Similarly, the participation of State Employment Services (SES) has been quite positive. The SES’ 139 offices throughout the country promote the Program, provide orientation for interested candidates, and give support to the Program Office in contacting workers who have already participated and who have been requested by their employers by name.

However, the decentralization of certain other functions has been difficult because there are not enough funds to provide the required training to the staff at the State Employment Services.

Research indicates that despite these significant advances, the Program's centralization still entails an additional cost for the workers, who have to pay, on average, for six trips to Mexico City in order to conduct the necessary procedures every season.

Since May 2002, the Mexican government has been giving financial support in the amount of 3,000 pesos (about US\$300) to first-time workers for their trips to Mexico City in order to process their applications. According to the evaluation for the 2002 season made by the Program Office, 88.3 per cent of all new workers received the grant in 2002.

More than three-fourths of the workers in our sample stated that they were provided with information prior to each trip to Canada. Responses about the information they received referred principally to the type of work they would be doing in Canada, the rules for behaviour on the farms, and the rights of the workers. Although 144 of the subjects mentioned that they were given information on various topics, only nine referred specifically to labour rights and 99 answered that they were informed principally about the type of work they would be doing in Canada.

According to the survey findings, workers do not know clearly enough what their rights are as temporary workers in Canada. When asked to mention labour rights, 113 workers (31 per cent) responded that they did not know what they are or did not remember them. Even those who responded that they did know their rights did not know very clearly what these consist of and how they can demand them. When workers were asked to mention some of these rights, there were 15 responses that referred to obligations and even prohibitions for the workers.

The growth of the number of participants has not been accompanied by an equal development of the administrative capacity of Mexican consulates in Canada. Those interviewed are aware that the consulates' function is to help them and to represent them while they are in Canada; they also have information on how to contact the staff of these offices. Yet only 30 per cent of those interviewed stated that they have needed help from the consulate. Although this proportion is low, not all of them requested assistance from the consulate. Of the 98 workers who said that at some time they needed support from the consulate to report an accident or health problem, only 59 made contact. And out of 80 workers who found it necessary to conduct some transaction while in Canada, only 61 requested support from the consulate. And even so, consulate staff can only attend to a limited portion of these requests for help.

Less than one-fourth of those interviewed consider the attention and representation given by the consulate to be adequate; 44.4 per cent feel that they are not represented "as they should be"; 21 per cent preferred not to give an opinion because they have never needed the consulate's services; the rest did not specify.

Perhaps because workers do not feel that they are attended to properly, 60 per cent expressed that it would be advisable to have a union organization. A similar group (14%) would agree with this under certain conditions, while 21 per cent were in disagreement.

The consulate's personnel is analyzing if it would be feasible to create an Administrative Fund for the Program, similar to the one existing in the Program for Caribbean workers, which is managed by deducting 5 per cent of the workers' incomes. In the case of the Mexican workers, the consulate recommends that this fund might work only if workers' wages were increased, since otherwise it would become a heavy burden for them.

Regarding what workers like best in the Program, 37 per cent said "everything"; 28 per cent replied that what they like best is that it provides them with a job; 7.5 per cent referred to the earnings and the benefits as the biggest advantage; for 6 per cent, the personal and work experience that they get from participating in the Program is important; 5 per cent said that what is best in the Program is the way it operates; and 4.2 per cent were most pleased by how they were treated by their employer.

The question regarding what they like least about the Program was answered by only 183 workers. The rest feel that it has no disadvantages. Almost half of those who responded (87) referred to problems related to the way the Program operates, such as the trips to Mexico City to make arrangements, the medical examination, or some incidents that occurred because of organizational deficiencies. Another 26 workers (14 per cent of those who answered the question) also replied to this effect, pointing out that the most negative aspect of the Program is its poor attention at the offices and in the Mexican consulate. For 11 per cent (21 cases), the environment is the disagreeable aspect of the Program. By this they are referring to aspects such as being far away from their families, the difficulties of living on the farms, the climate, etc. For 10 per cent (18 workers), the biggest disadvantage of the Program is that employers treat the workers badly. A smaller proportion of workers made negative comments about the work in general, about the working conditions, about the low wages, or about amounts deducted from their wages.

The workers' suggestions for improving the program had to do with the disadvantages mentioned. 38 per cent of those interviewed who answered this question had no suggestions because they felt that everything is working well. Almost half of them (44.5 per cent) made recommendations about the Program's operations, the functioning of the office in Mexico and the consulate's, amongst others. Some aspects to which they referred are expediting and decentralizing the arrangements, improving service, and for the consulate to really meet the workers' needs. The remainder of the replies referred to improvements in wages and in working conditions.

The research project did not seek to make a cost-benefit evaluation of the Program; however, it gave us some elements to put on the table. It seems that through the years, the Mexican government has accepted some conditions that have meant a heavier workload, as well as a higher economic cost, for both the government and the workers.

One example refers to the modifications made to the. The first Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) stated that the Human Development Research Center must request workers 45 days before the date they are needed in Canada. This period has been reduced to 20 days according to the last MOU. However, requests often arrive at the Program Office only 10 days in advance.

At the beginning of the Program, the Mexican government had to prepare a 100-worker reserve in order to respond to any sudden demand. Now, this reserve must be 10 per cent of the total request, which means that the Mexican government needs to prepare 1,000 workers more every season. According to the 2002 evaluation of the Program, 10,681 workers went to Canada; however, 11,659 applications were made, including the medical exam.

Another example of the work and economic costs that the Program Office has accepted in Mexico is the medical exam. In earlier years, workers were examined at the Canadian Embassy. Later, governmental medical centres in Mexico subsidized the exams, but as of 2001, the government charges 70 pesos (US\$7) per exam to the workers. In addition, since the 2003 season, workers have had to take an HIV test and pay an additional fee of around 175 pesos (US\$17.50).

At present, it is not easy to ascertain the cost of the Program for the Mexican government. The Federal Government Budget for 2002 is the first one to show a sum of funds allocated to the Program Office. In the section for the Ministry of Labor, the entry "Program of Mexican Migrant Temporary Farm Workers to Canada" records 23,396,454 pesos (US\$2,339,645). This means that in the 2002 season, that office alone spent around 2,190 pesos (US\$219) per worker who went to Canada to work. This budget does not include the 3,000 pesos (US\$300) in economic support that new participants are receiving. According to the Evaluation of the 2003 season, 2,341 workers received that support, which means 7,023,000 pesos (around US\$702,300).

Participation and Characteristics of the Workers

The next section covers some of the general characteristics of the workers who participate in the Program, according to the survey findings. The workers have an average level of schooling of 7.7 years, almost equal to the national mean.

The main occupation of workers while they are in Mexico is agriculture, mostly as day labourers; a few work as masons; and to a lesser degree, in service-related activities. In the case of the occupation of the children of the workers, the trend is for them to devote themselves more to non-agricultural activities.

Access to cropland among workers in this sample is very limited, and the few who have this possibility have small rain-fed plots (of one to two hectares). The main crop is corn, which mostly goes to family subsistence; very few workers grow commercial crops. For most of the workers who have access to land, farming does not represent an important source of income. According to our survey, during the last season in which they planted, 32 per cent indicated that their production was insufficient and 16 per cent said that although they planted, there was no harvest; 29 per cent stated that production was sufficient for family consumption but not enough to cover all other household expenditures.

With regard to trips to Canada, almost half of those interviewed (173) indicated that they had a close relative who had gone previously under the Program; they referred principally to their brothers and in a few cases to their parents (124 cases). Recruitment for work in Canada is more closely linked to family ties than to community networks. The other important source for recruitment has been the activities performed by the Program Office for this purpose.

The main reasons that workers indicated for joining the Program were the lack of employment in Mexico as well as the uncertainty of income if they had a job. In the sample, 58 per cent of the workers indicated that although they had some form of income in Mexico, it was not sufficient or stable and 14 per cent decided to enter the Program because they did not have a job. At present, while workers are in Mexico, their economic activities are usually temporary and the average income reported was 544 pesos per week (about US\$55).

Working Conditions in Canada

Our sample included workers who have gone to Canada for one to 25 seasons from 1977 to 2002. Nearly three-fourths of the workers (73%) continued to be active during that last season. This reveals a high degree of continuity of the workers in this Program, and can be interpreted not only as a sign of satisfaction among the workers themselves, but also as an overall expression of the Program's stability.

According to the 2002 Season Evaluation of the Program Office, of the total of workers participating, 70 per cent of Mexican workers went to the Province of Ontario, 24.6 per cent went to Quebec, and the rest to Manitoba and Alberta. The main agricultural industries that required Mexican workers that season were the production of vegetables and the greenhouses, with 41.6 per cent and 18 per cent, respectively.

The interviewed workers spent an average of 4.9 months in Canada each season. In practice, workers do not have the chance to decide the time of their stay, first because many of them are requested by name and they must adjust to the employers' needs. For the rest, their period of stay is also determined by demand, as well as by the candidate's labour profile: his or her physical condition and the date on which the worker initiated the procedures.

Moreover, during the 2002 season, around 60 per cent of all the Mexican workers who went to Canada returned before their contracts had expired because there was no more work on the farms. In our fieldwork, those interviewed stated that sometimes when they arrive at the farms, they find that there is not enough work for them to complete an eight-hour day. The employer can attempt to transfer the worker to another farm, but when that is not possible, the worker returns to Mexico with much less money than he or she had expected to earn.

Mexican workers are hired by Canadian farmers mostly to harvest the crops. In our research we found only two workers who performed activities that require more technical knowledge in the productive process.

Housing that employers provide to workers consists of the following: the old farm house; hostels built by the employer specifically for workers; and lodging in trailers. The housing provided by the farmers usually has the necessary utilities. In general, a little less than half of the workers stated that the housing and the services provided to them by their employers in Canada are of better quality than what they have in their communities in Mexico; for 18 per cent, their housing in Mexico is of better quality, and for 27 per cent, the quality of both lodgings is similar.

Even though for most of them, the work that they perform on Canadian farms is easy as or even easier than the agricultural work that they do in Mexico, one-fourth felt

that the work is very hard, and one-fifth felt that occasionally they had been asked to work too much. They mentioned that on many occasions the work pace, as well as the long working days, make work more difficult.

We recorded some complaints about mistreatment, but the return report for the 2002 season is more illustrative on that matter: according to it, one-fifth of the participants believe that they were treated either “regular” or “bad,” but mostly “regular.” It may be that this answer is, in fact, concealing some sort of bad treatment which the workers are afraid to state explicitly.

In the fieldwork, we also found that many of those interviewed who said that they had suffered some kind of abuse by their employers or supervisors, preferred not to report the incident for fear that their employer would not request them for the following work season. In this regard, the system of requesting workers by name provides workers with a certain guarantee of continuity, but may also function as a control mechanism.

Of the total number of workers interviewed, 24 per cent have applied agrochemicals on Canadian ranches and 34 per cent have gone to work in fields recently sprayed with agrochemicals. Of those who have worked applying agrochemicals, only 43 per cent have protected themselves with a mask and the proper gear.

Despite the fact that the activities they conduct are simple, in general the training the workers received was scarce. Only 45 per cent of those interviewed responded that they had received some training. In these cases, they referred to information received in the field while they were working. Only six workers answered that they had received broader training.

In general, responses concerning attention given to them for accidents and health problems are favorable. The workers have received proper attention in those cases. Nonetheless, when the workers’ illnesses arise after their work contract has expired, the workers have to cover the cost of treatment or see to it that they are taken care of in some government-run hospital in Mexico.

Wages and Deductions

It was difficult to obtain precise data on this. Both the records of the Program Office and the data captured by the interview are at times imprecise or omit information. The best source for this should be employers’ records.

However, with its limitations, the data obtained clearly indicates that the income of Mexicans on Canadian farms is much higher than what they could earn in Mexico, even if they had the opportunity to work all year long. This confirms the fact that the income is the main appeal of the Program for the workers.

For that reason, and with a few exceptions, the workers pointed out that they have no problem about working overtime. Yet Canadian legislation does not oblige farmers to pay overtime at a higher rate in all cases. All the workers in the sample have worked overtime, but the pay has been equal to that of regular work hours. It is common for those interviewed to work on Sundays and holidays; some pointed out that they have worked for as long as 17 hours in one day. The average for the sample was 9.3 hours per day.

There is ignorance among the workers regarding deductions of taxes and services from their wages, as well as the mechanisms that are applicable for reimbursement. But the workers feel that too much money is being deducted from their wages, and in some cases they feel this is unfair. According to the answers obtained in the questionnaire, the difference between the gross and net earnings of the workers is close to 20 per cent.

The workers do not know how the pension program operates. And they would like to know more about it, especially since some have worked for many years and are near the age at which they will stop working in the Program. But since the pension is determined by the number of weeks worked, the work situation of these temporary workers limits the amount of their pension. In fact, the two workers from the sample who are receiving their monthly pension stated that they were disappointed with how little money they were getting.

Relations between Workers and Communities in Canada

Mexican workers in Canada face several kinds of obstacles that hinder their integration into Canadian communities. The main obstacles are lack of knowledge of the local language, and the isolation of the farms.

Out of the total, 96 per cent (346) of the subjects work on farms remote from towns; most frequently the farms are located at a distance of 20 km. Not all the ranches have access to public transportation. More than 70 per cent go into town if taken by the employer even to purchase groceries, make telephone calls, and effect bank transactions.

The isolated condition of the farms, as well as the fact that the workers are dependent upon the employers, leads to a limited degree of freedom for workers.

Employers provide some forms of entertainment on the ranches (TV, VCR, table games, fields for practicing soccer or basketball, etc.). On their own, and in a limited fashion, some workers have become involved in the organization of sports tournaments or trips to tourist attractions.

Although few workers have had contact with volunteer groups and non-governmental organizations devoted to helping agricultural workers, the answers obtained give the impression that the work that has been done by these organizations is important to the workers.

Program Impacts

As regards the Program's impact, we can sum up the conclusions as follows:

- The greatest impact is felt at the individual and family level of the workers
- It is derived from the money earned by the worker and
- It can be appreciated after several seasons in which the worker participates in the Program

Almost all the workers pointed out that their family's well-being has improved. The proportion of those who feel this way is greater as the time they have participated in

the Program increases. According to their statements, their families have better clothing and food; greater access to health services; and what seems to be very important to them, their children can continue their education and achieve a higher level of schooling than they did.

The information obtained on changes in housing conditions allows us to observe the relationship between longer participation in the Program and family well-being. All the indicators concerning better-quality housing show that the more seasons a worker has participated in the Program, the better the features of his or her housing.

During their first seasons of participation, the workers allocated their income to family consumption, especially to subsistence, health, and education, or to pay off debts. Only after several years of working temporarily in Canada do they have surplus income with which they can make other expenditures. That is when they may acquire, enlarge, or modify the family home. Therefore, the impact is different according to the frequency and number of trips made by the worker. That is why it is important to continue the practice of allowing workers to continue to go to Canada for several seasons, perhaps as many as 10 or more.

Nevertheless, the money obtained by the workers in Canada does not appear to be sufficient for them to acquire other types of goods. Very few of those interviewed currently have an automobile.

Similarly, there is practically no investment in some sort of agricultural or non-agricultural business, partly due to the limited money available to the workers and partly due to the traits of the workers' communities.

As regards the level of schooling attained by their children, those interviewed stated that thanks to their participation in the Program, their children have been able to continue with their education. Although in Mexico it has been possible to increase the level of schooling in recent decades, our research confirms that the Program has also had a positive effect. Thus, the greater the number of years that the head of the household has participated in the Program, the higher the level of schooling of his or her children.

Moreover, the children's level of schooling has a bearing on their occupations. We have found a greater tendency for workers' children to devote themselves to non-agricultural activities. In particular, we discovered that 15 children are professionals and, in almost all the cases, these are children of workers with longer periods of participation in the Program.

Therefore, we can state that the Program is helping to alleviate the effects of rural poverty.

In addition, although to a lesser extent, the Program has had certain indirect effects on the communities where the workers live, either through an increase in their families' purchasing power or through the effects of greater economic activity thanks to housing construction.

Main Recommendations

To the Program Office in Mexico. Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare

1. In cases in which workers, men or women over the age of 45, who have been participating in the Program as nominal workers, cease to be requested by their employers, it is recommended that the Program Office give them preference in the selection process.
2. It is important to continue the process for decentralizing the Program in Mexico City for the main purpose of reducing the number of trips made by workers to that city, since this would help cut back the costs for the workers and undoubtedly also for the Program as a whole.

Other Recommendations

1. Regarding entry for the Program, the single workers who participate in the Program usually name their parents as financial dependents. The workers fear that they will be rejected once their parents have passed away. It would be advisable to make this requirement more flexible, at least in those cases.
2. Due to the growth of the employers' demand for women workers, it would be advisable to analyze whether the current entry requirements for the Program will promote or hinder the supply of female labour in the near future.
3. It would be a good idea to develop an orientation program for new workers and a refresher course for older ones. It is important to define the topics that should be delved into more deeply and to determine the participation of the State Employment Services, the Program Office in Mexico City, and the Consulates in Canada. According to our research, among the topics that require the greatest attention are: the work situation, workers' rights, fringe benefits (health insurance, pension, reimbursement of taxes, workers' compensation, etc.), the legal deductions made to workers' wages and, especially, the mechanisms for claiming these benefits.
4. In particular, the guidance program that is derived from the previous recommendation should include among its goals that of providing workers a safe workplace so that they may demand that their employers provide protective gear when required.
5. It is necessary to review the expenditure per worker currently made by the Mexican government each season, as well as the total amount of expenses incurred by each worker to complete arrangements for documentation, since this may be an important subsidy that should be common knowledge for all concerned.

To Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC)

1. It is important to review the legal work status of Mexican temporary workers in Canadian agriculture. Despite the fact that they work year after year for the same employer, the workers are considered temporary and have limited benefits.
2. With the aim of promoting the activity of non-governmental organizations, HDRC could identify the groups that are working on the farms, and analyze with them and with the staff of the Mexican consulates, both the workers' needs and the availability of services on the part of these organizations; it would also be advisable to make cooperation agreements aimed at coordinating these efforts. Among the activities, we suggest the following: accounting assistance (for reimbursement requests, pension arrangements, etc.), language training in English or French, recreational activities, and support for familiarizing the workers with local stores, churches, banks, etc.
3. It is necessary to regulate and to enforce that all documents needed by workers are available in Spanish, as well as the announcements and posters at the workplace, which should be in Spanish so as to give the workers more security; this will also have a positive impact on their efficiency.
4. A review should be made of the possibility of not withholding income tax from the workers' wages since due to the length of their contract, they will not obtain income greater than \$14,000 dollars. According to the sample, this measure could spare 77 per cent of the workers from having to start procedures for income tax reimbursement.
5. Any other possible program similar to this should have the existing controls of the agricultural program; it should also operate with governmental bilateral links. This is of utmost importance since otherwise, abuses and illegal practices might expand even to recruiting process and labour activities.

Other Recommendations

1. It is important to search for mechanisms to extend the coverage of health insurance for workers who have health problems derived from their work in Canada, even after the work contract has expired. It might be possible to set up an agreement between the Canadian insurer and the Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social (Mexican Social Security Institute) so that the workers can continue to be covered even after their return home.
2. The request made by the Canadian government that all workers take an HIV test has entailed an additional cost that has to be assumed by the workers

themselves. It would be advisable for HRDC to look into the possibility of reimbursing this expense or compensating the workers in some way for it.

3. At present, the Mexican government is under pressure due to certain clauses in the Memorandum of Understanding, and this hinders the efficiency in the Program's operation and increases costs. In particular, we recommend revising the period of 20 days currently set by the MOU for the Mexican government to recruit, select, and document the workers requested. Similarly, the requirement of documenting as a workers' pool or reserve, a number of workers equivalent to 10 per cent of those requested entails a high cost for the Program. We recommend that this problem be analyzed.
4. It is difficult for the Mexican government to gain information on the net and gross income of the workers, and the records of the hours worked by each person. It is important for the Canadian government to make available each season's data to the Mexican consulates and to the Program Office. This is with the aim of better orienting the workers in their need to recover the taxes they have paid, a review of the number of hours worked, and other related issues.
5. It is recommended that the legal situation of overtime payments in agricultural activities be examined. At present, employers are not obligated in all work activities to pay overtime at a rate of at least 1.5 times the rate of a regular work hour.
6. The workers interviewed do not agree with the deduction made to their wages for unemployment insurance, since this does not involve any kind of benefit for them. It would be advisable to review this situation.
7. The pension scheme sets a very limited monthly amount for retired workers. Moreover, the response to requests for checks and their distribution and collection have not been efficient. It is necessary to evaluate this scheme for the purpose of making it more efficient, since the number of workers who request their retirement from the Program will grow in the coming years.

To the Mexican Consulates in Canada

1. It is necessary to continue to make efforts to see to it that the banks reduce the costs or the transfer for worker's remittances. An important element influencing workers' decisions on a remittance alternative is whether the bank or other service is accessible to the family member who will collect the money in Mexico.
2. Workers do not have easy access to telephones, nor do they have free time to contact the consulate, so they easily give up. Those limitations must be considered when making proposals to improve the situation of workers in Canada.

Other Recommendations

1. One measure that could alleviate the excessive workload that the Program demands of the Mexican consulates in Canada could be the establishment of agreements with Mexican universities for the purpose of setting up programs so that, in particular, students of international relations may conduct their social service? by working with the Program in Canada.
2. The research findings clearly indicate that the workers need more attention and support from the Mexican government while they are in Canada.

To the Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Services (FARMS)

1. The research indicates that the workers require more support than they are presently receiving from their employers. One of these needs is help in translating the different instructions given to them in their workplaces. In addition, it is necessary to search for the necessary means to guarantee that workers can express their concerns and needs to their employers throughout their stay in Canada.
2. Some of the conditions of the Mexican workers, such as the isolation of the ranches and their lack of knowledge of the local language, limit their possibilities of becoming involved in activities outside of work. In fact, around a third of those interviewed do not feel free to come and go from the ranches without asking for permission, even after the work day has ended. It is recommended that employers consider these limitations and support workers so that they feel freer.

Other Recommendations

1. It is proposed that employers do not make requests for workers if they are not sure there will be sufficient harvesting work for all of them.
2. It is recommended that contracts for less than the time specified in the MOU (six weeks) not be made.
3. It would be very advantageous for the workers if FARMS asks the telephone companies to install pay phones outside the ranches that do not have this service nearby.
4. It is important for employers to provide workers with more recreational alternatives on the farm.
5. The workers feel pressured by the work pace. One of the reasons for this is the great demand imposed upon those who work with programmed machinery. It is recommended to ensure that work paces in keeping with the abilities of the workers are scheduled, taking into account their physical condition and age.

6. It is important to provide adequate rest periods that are sufficient for the workers who undertake activities of repetitive strain (stooping down, working on their knees, carrying heavy loads, etc.) and to see to it that these activities are alternated with other less stressful ones.
7. Various conditions faced by workers in the Program are a cause of tension, and therefore we recommend that FARMS encourage the farmers employing Mexican labour to be cordial to their workers in order to avoid friction.
8. When a worker is required to apply agrochemicals, procedures must be followed “to make sure that workers who are assigned to handle chemical substances or pesticides have protective clothing, without any cost to the worker, that workers have received adequate training, formal or informal, and that they perform the work under supervision, in the cases that are required by law”, as is required by the work agreement.
9. The workers point out that the conditions of certain activities are harmful to their health and to their work performance. It would be advisable to look into possible ways of protecting the workers from the consequences of temperature conditions in the greenhouses and tobacco ovens.
10. It is important to search for mechanisms to extend the coverage of the health insurance for workers who have health problems derived from their work in Canada, even after the work contract has expired.