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Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Guatemala

# SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS PROGRAM



Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare  
Guatemala

## GUATEMALA - CANADA

The Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program Guatemala-Canada is a result of joined efforts by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, with the cooperation from the International Organization for Migration - IOM.

The Program was established in 2003 through an agreement with the Fondation des Entreprises de Recrutement de Main -D'oeuvre Agricole Etrangere (FERME, Foundation of Recruiting Enterprises of Foreign Agricultural Labor), of the province of Quebec, under the supervision of the Department of Human Resources Development of Canada.

The Government of Guatemala and FERME agreed to promote migration of seasonal agricultural workers. This benefits the country of origin and the host country while intending to reduce irregular migration and the associated risks. The Government of Guatemala has requested technical cooperation by IOM and implementation of the agreement as follows:

- 1) Assisting with the selection process of candidates that will fulfill the Canadian demand for seasonal agricultural workers;
- 2) Working in coordination with the Ministry of Labor to assure compliance with work procedures and immigration requirements for seasonal workers; and
- 3) Making all travel arrangements for seasonal migrant workers. IOM has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with FERME regarding this Project.

Guatemalan workers are also protected by Canadian labor laws and have life insurance and medical insurance. The Program is monitored by consular representatives of Guatemala in Canada who supervise the farms where Guatemalans work, with the aim of supporting Guatemalan workers as well as Canadian employers.





## 1. MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE PROGRAM

Promoting regulated migration of seasonal migrant workers, which benefits the country of origin and the host country. In addition, avoiding irregular migration and the associated risks.

## 2. MAIN PROCESSES OF THE PROGRAM

### a) Demand

Associated farms in Canada submit their requests for seasonal agricultural workers to FERME. All requests undergo a process of assessment and approval. Once the requests have been approved FERME sends them to IOM Guatemala and sends a copy to the Guatemalan Embassy in Canada. Each request includes the number of workers, expected date of arrival in Canada, duration of the work contract, type of crop of the farm.



### b) Recruiting

Recruiting is carried out in different communities and municipalities of the departments of Guatemala. This process involves interviewing and assessing each worker to see if they fulfill requirements to be included in the Program and completing a form with general information for their possible selection. In addition, some Canadian entrepreneurs participate in the recruiting process. The worker then visits the IOM office and submits the required documents in order to be included in the Program. Once the above mentioned documents have been received a visa application is completed and the respective file is created.

### c) Visa Application to the Canadian Embassy

The visa application and all the appropriate documents are sent to the Canadian Embassy so that Medical Examination Forms can be issued. The test results are issued in Trinidad and Tobago indicating if the workers are fit to carry out seasonal agricultural work in Canada.

### d) HRSDC (Work Permit) Application

If medical examinations are approved the worker is appointed to a request for seasonal agricultural workers and the HRSDC (work permit) is requested through FERME. Once the Canadian Embassy has the HRSDC the corresponding visas are issued.

### e) The Journey

The workers who will travel are asked to visit the IOM office a few days before the journey to receive instructions regarding the journey and appropriate behavior and discipline norms that they need to comply with during work and with other people on the farms. Each worker receives a folder with all travel documents on the day the journey begins. The documents are classified to facilitate clearing Migration in Guatemala and Immigration in Canada, and include the documents that the worker needs to give to the employer.

### 3. MAIN RESULTS OF THE PROGRAM

The Program is successful. It continues being consolidated through a constant increase in the numbers of beneficiaries as well as the strengthening of inter-institutional coordination mechanisms between national institutions - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labor - and with technical cooperation by IOM. Program evaluations that have been carried out with participation of national authorities and Canadian employers confirm the positive results of the Program.



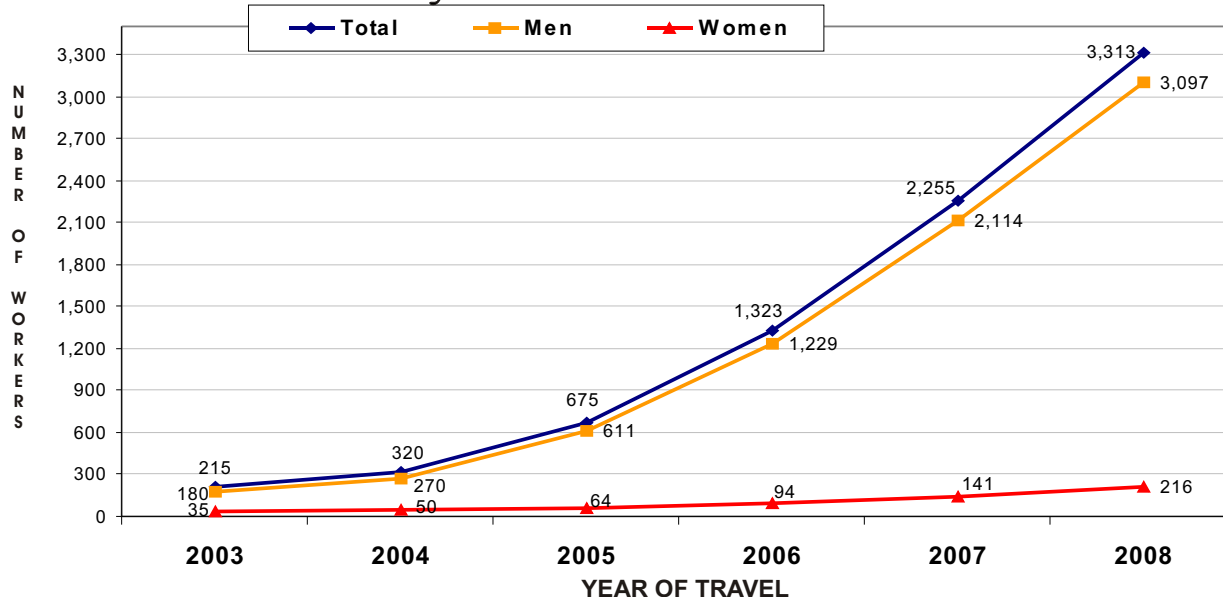
The Program began in 2003 when 215 workers were sent. 180 (84.7%) workers were men and 35 (16.3%) were women.

The following chart and graph show the gradual increase in the number of agricultural workers included in the Program.

**Distribution of Seasonal Agricultural Workers Traveling to Canada, by Gender and Year of Travel**

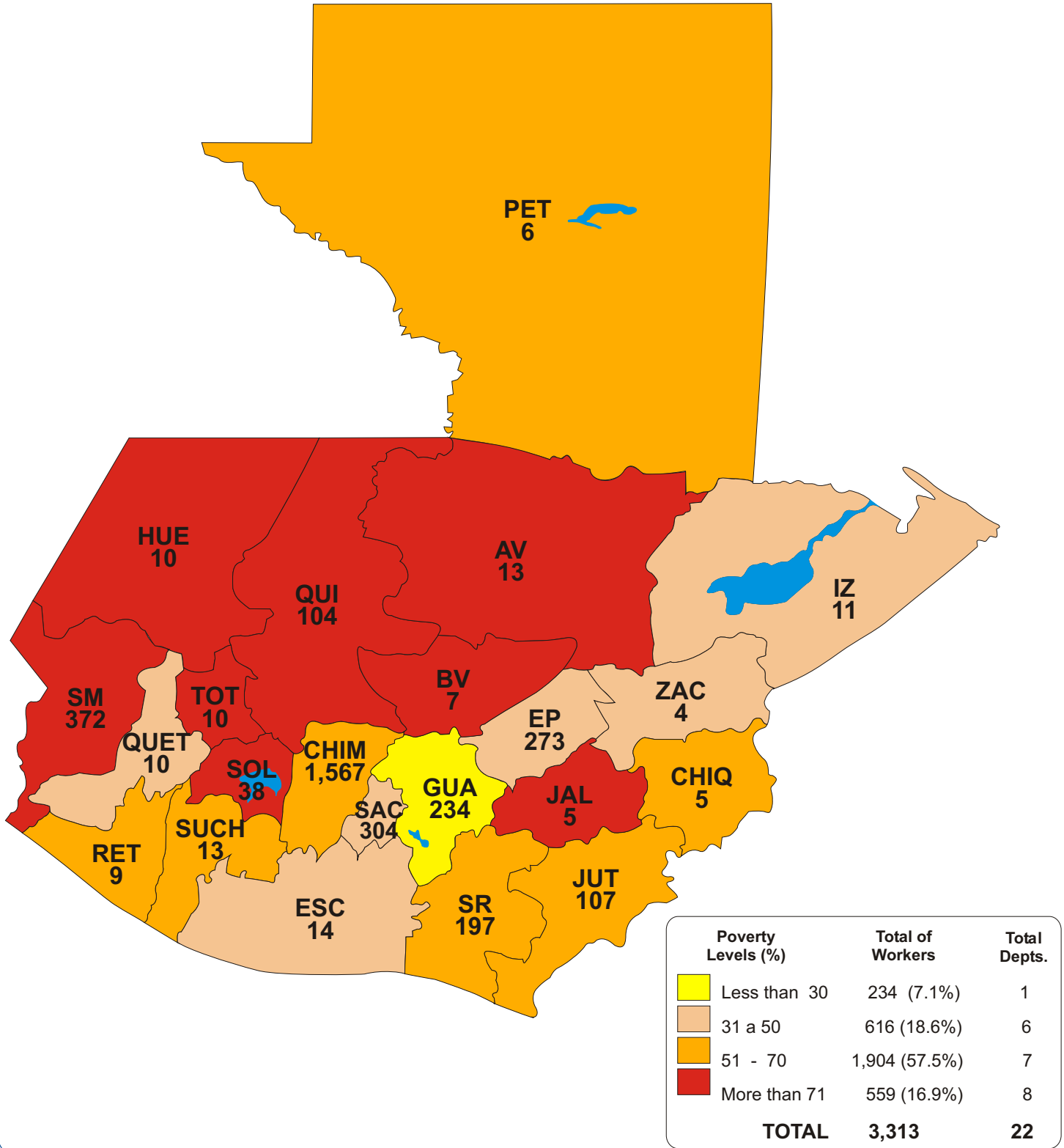
YEAR	WORKES			INCREASE	% INCREASE
	TOTAL	MEN	WOMEN		
2003	215	180	35	-	-
2004	320	270	50	105	48.8
2005	675	611	64	355	110.9
2006	1,323	1,229	94	648	96.0
2007	2,255	2,114	141	932	70.4
2008	3,313	3,097	216	1,058	46.9

**Distribution of Seasonal Agricultural Workers, by Gender and Year of Travel**





## MAP OF DISTRIBUTION OF SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS TRAVELING TO CANADA, BY DEPARTMENT OF RESIDENCE AND POVERTY LEVELS IN GUATEMALA





## MAP OF DISTRIBUTION OF SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS TRAVELING TO CANADA, BY STATES IN CANADA

