



# Fresh. Simple. Good.

## Fact Sheet

December 11, 2008

### **Migrant Workers\* on Mushroom Farms**

Before you pass judgment on mushroom farmers, consider the following:

1. The impact of the economic slow-down affects agriculture the same as it affects the auto, forestry, mining and oil industries. With thousands of auto and forestry workers being laid-off, it is no surprise that there are lay-offs in agriculture.
2. The market for fresh mushrooms in North America is continental, with mushrooms moving freely among Canada, Mexico and the USA.
3. The North American mushroom industry is rationalizing to reduce production. Evidence of that is the announcement in November of the total shut-down of [Quincy Mushroom Farm](#) in Florida, with the loss of over 300 jobs, mostly Mexican-American.
4. The loss of 70 jobs in Canada is consistent with the rationalization of supply and demand for fresh mushrooms across North America.
5. Many of the jobs on Canadian farms are filled by Temporary Foreign Workers, because there are not enough Canadians to fill the positions.
6. The Temporary Foreign Worker Program is a legal program legislated by the Government of Canada. It has been used extensively by many Canadian industries, such as construction and mining, as well as agriculture. There are thousands of Temporary Foreign Workers throughout Canadian industries. The Government sets strict rules with which the employers must comply. Work visas are issued for one year, with the provision for renewal for a second year.
7. The program was constructed to allow employers to harvest Canadian crops for fresh delivery to Canadian consumers. The alternative is foreign foods, harvested by foreign workers, delivered over long distances to Canadian consumers.
8. Granted that mushroom harvesters do not make the wages that are common in the auto and forestry industries, Temporary Foreign Workers on mushroom farms in Canada earn wages well in excess of provincially-set minimum wage rates.
9. Unions do not guarantee employment. If they did, then the auto workers and forestry workers would not be unemployed.

10. The obvious question is, “Did these workers perform according to the standards of the industry?”

\*This is a misnomer propagated by trade unions who see farm workers as the salvation of their fee-paying membership. The official term is Temporary Foreign Worker (Employment & Immigration Canada).

*Visit [www.mushrooms.ca](http://www.mushrooms.ca) to learn more about mushroom varieties, recipes, and the nutritional & wellness attributes of fresh Canadian mushrooms.*