



MIGRANT WORKERS

Leamington is at the frontlines of the boom in migrant workers. Here's how it's changed

Thousands of low-wage temporary farm workers from Mexico and the Caribbean have transformed Leamington.





THE HANDS THAT PICK YOUR FOOD

Unscrupulous recruiters keep migrant workers in 'debt bondage'

Employers seeking low-wage temporary foreign workers are required by law to bear the costs of bringing the workers to Canada. In practice, many of the low-wage workers end up paying Canadian job recruiters.

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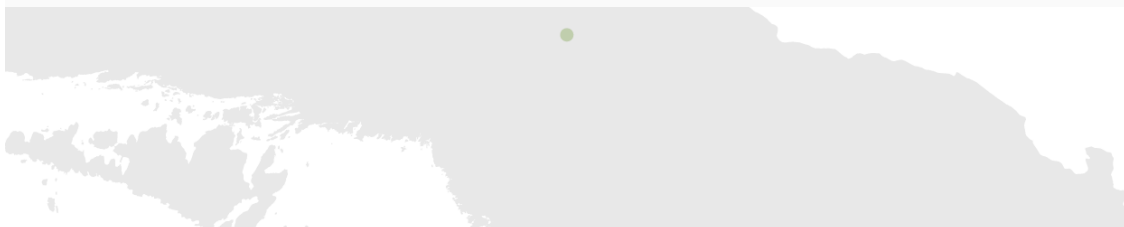
This sexually abused migrant worker is now safe — but she knows others aren't
DOWN ON THE FARM

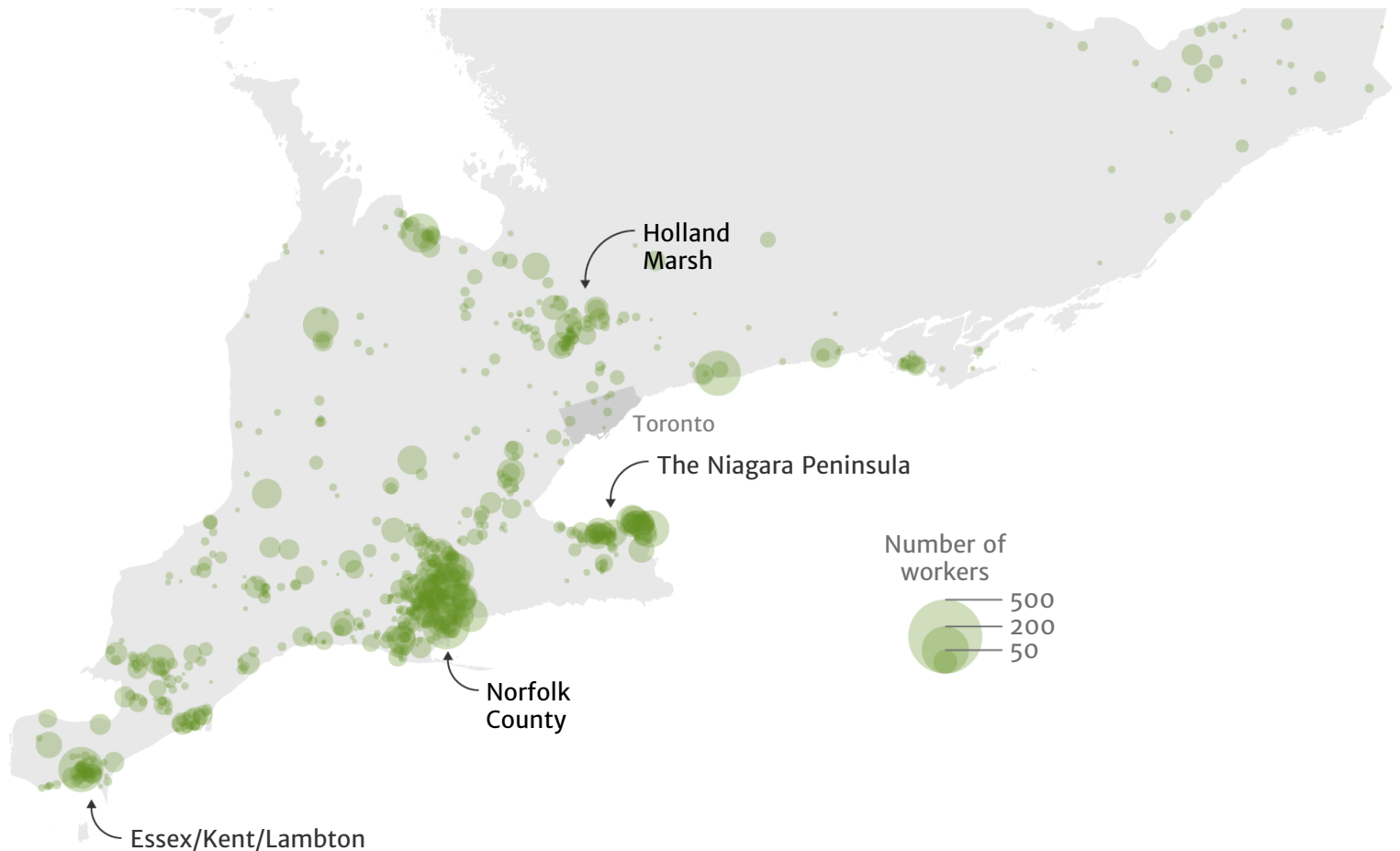
Why Canada's farm industry is ripe for change: Wells

MIGRANT WORKERS 📷

He's worked legally in Canada for 37 years but the government considers him 'temporary'

Where Ontario relies most on migrant farmworkers





Norfolk County

Known as Ontario's Garden, Norfolk County farmers are Canada's top growers of asparagus, cabbage, sour cherries, ginseng, other specialty vegetables, peppers, pumpkin, squash, zucchini, strawberries, sweet corn and sweet potatoes.

Essex/Kent/Lambton

Southwestern Ontario is known for crop production including tobacco, sweet corn, winter wheat and tomatoes. Summers are hot and humid with a longer growing season than in most of Canada. It has the country's highest concentration of greenhouse operations.

The Niagara Peninsula

The Niagara Peninsula offers fertile soil for fruits and vegetables and is one of Canada's richest fruit-growing areas. The fruit belt spans from Niagara-on-the-Lake to Hamilton, where 90 per cent of Ontario's tender fruit crop originates. It is famous for its wine production, especially ice wine.

Holland Marsh

Holland Marsh's fertile "muck soil" is best for garden crops such as onions, leafy greens, celery and carrots. Some 125 farms spread over 7,000 acres of prime agricultural land and grow 60-plus crops. About 90 per cent of all Asian vegetables eaten in Ontario are grown here.

Source: Employment and Social Development Canada

*Data comes from 2016 Labour Market Impact Assessments for temporary foreign workers in agricultural positions.

Voices of Migrant Workers



**GABRIEL
ALLAHDUA**

45

From St. Lucia

“I’m trapped in a cycle — a vicious cycle — of poverty and social ills. My hope is that being in Canada I will get the opportunity to break out of that cycle and, you know, create something better for myself and my family.



Listen to Gabriel's story



KEVON SMITH

34

From Trinidad &
Tobago



For migrant workers, we give a service that Canadians don't want to give. And we understand now why they don't want to give it — because of the conditions ... Citizens need to think about, the next time they put our next fruit or our next vegetable on their plate, right, to feed their family, the story behind it.



Listen to Kevon's story



GINA BAHIWAL

43

From The Philippines

“

I would suggest status upon arrival so migrant workers don't have to be separated from their families. I just want my son to be with me now. I don't have my son with me here in Canada. I got my permanent residency, but it still — it feels empty without my son here in Canada.



Listen to Gina's story



LEON FERGUSON

40

From Jamaica

“I think of the migrant work program is a slavery program. The reason why is because most of these workers don't know their rights, they don't know who to turn to in terms of their rights.



Listen to Leon's story



PATRICK STANIO

66

From St. Lucia

“Anytime the boss man call on me to go and do something for him I never say ‘no, I’m not going.’ Anytime the boss man call me, 3 o’clock, 4 o’clock in the morning, 2 o’clock in the morning, anytime he call me I am welcome to come.



Listen to Patrick's story

