

# Securing Canada's MEAT Work Force

## REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT

A detailed look at the labour supply and demand in

### Wynyard Region Saskatchewan



**FPSC**



FOOD PROCESSING SKILLS CANADA  
COMPÉTENCES TRANSFORMATION ALIMENTAIRE CANADA



SECURING CANADA'S  
MEAT WORKFORCE

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**Food Processing Skills Canada**

201 – 3030 Conroy Road  
Ottawa, Ontario K1G 6C2  
Tel. (613) 237-7988  
Toll Free: 1-877-963-7472  
Fax: 613-237-9939

[Imi@fpssc-ctac.com](mailto:Imi@fpssc-ctac.com)  
[www.fpsc-ctac.com](http://www.fpsc-ctac.com)



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# SUMMARY

## REGIONAL OVERVIEW

The Town of Wynyard (pop. 1,798) is located along the Yellowhead Highway (Highway #16) in East-Central Saskatchewan. Wynyard is about equal distance from three major centres, namely Regina (175 km), Saskatoon (200 km) and Yorkton (150 km). The regional population is approximately 12,200. Meat processing in the Wynyard Saskatchewan region is focused mainly on poultry with some additional processing of hogs.

## LABOUR MARKET OVERVIEW

Regional labour market analysis suggests that after accounting for labour requirements in other sectors, regional labour supply is well below projected meat processing employment demands during the forecast period. Supply constraints are even more acute among lower-skill workers in the region, potentially due to wage differentials with competing sectors. This analysis suggests significant numbers of workers are required from outside the region to meet labour requirements.

Regional meat employment is expected to grow by over 2.0% annually, rising from 580 workers in 2017 to 600 by 2020 and over 700 workers by 2030. Local processors will likely need to hire 400 additional workers between 2017 and 2030, due both to industry growth and the need to replace workforce retirements. This figure does not include turnovers which can add significantly to total annual recruitment demands.

The region's population is expected to grow at an average annual rate of 1.1% over the forecast period, reaching 12,500 by 2020 and just over 14,000 by 2030. Net in-migration of 2,500 individuals is expected to be the main source of population growth in the region, outpacing births. Despite moderate population growth rising retirements will cause labour force growth to lag behind employment, resulting in a decline in the regional unemployment rate from 8.7% in 2017 to 7.0% by 2030.



POPULATION  
**12,166**



LABOUR FORCE  
**5,775**

# LABOUR MARKET TIGHTNESS

The labour market tightness, a measure calculated by estimating labour requirements in other sectors in Wynyard Region and subtracting those requirements from the total labour force estimates, reveals substantial challenges facing this industry.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	AVERAGE 2021 TO 2025	AVERAGE 2026 TO 2030
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>LOWER SKILL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>

1 = Meat processing employment demand is less than 50% of regional labour force at annual average employment levels

2 = Meat processing employment demand is between 50 and 100% of regional labour force at annual average employment levels

3 = Meat processing employment demand is greater than 100% of regional labour force at annual average employment level

# 3

## HR CHALLENGES

As meat processors struggle to remain competitive and increase productivity, common challenges experienced by plants throughout the region include ongoing retention and recruitment issues, along with challenges with industry image.

## MEAT PROCESSING ESTABLISHMENTS



# 2<sup>1</sup>

## MEAT PROCESSING EMPLOYMENT



# 580<sup>2</sup>

1 The number of establishments is based on 2016 data from Statistics Canada's Business Register.

2 Meat processing employment is estimated based on 2016 Census data for the Yorkton-Melville economic region.



# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report is one in a series of 14 regional reports developed to provide detailed labour market information (LMI) for the meat processing industry in Canada. The regionally focused LMI is one component of a broader study undertaken by Food Processing Skills Canada (FPSC) in collaboration with the Employment and Social Development Canada, and various provincial and industry partners entitled **Securing Canada's Meat Workforce: Real Challenges, Practical Solutions and Fresh Perspectives**.

The aim of the overall study is to identify the scope of human resource (HR) challenges for the meat processing sector, and compile HR best practices that would help employers meet their labour force current and future needs. One important aspect of understanding HR challenges in the sector, some of which are region specific, was to gather detailed information and profiles of areas that rely heavily on meat processing for their local economies. Fourteen regions across Canada were selected for specific focus based on the amount of processing activity, and proportion of labour force working in the industry. The Wynyard Region within the Yorkton-Melville region in Saskatchewan was selected as one of these regions for detailed focus.

The initial sections of this report provide overviews of the Wynyard Region, meat processing overall in the province of Saskatchewan, and specifically in the Wynyard Region. This is followed by sections that provide an overview of the region's labour force, and the specific findings for the labour supply and demand, current and future. The final two report sections outline the HR challenges identified in the region and some of the promising practices and innovative solutions that employers and communities are trying to address labour supply issues.

## THE STUDY METHODS USED TO DEVELOP THESE DETAILED REGIONAL PROFILES INCLUDED:

- ✓ Two robust econometric models that provide detailed quantifiable projections for both labour demand and supply at the regional level (the first time these numbers have been produced at the regional, provincial and national level for the meat processing industry);
- ✓ A broad survey of meat processing facilities (n=417) across Canada covering approximately 75 per cent of the industry workforce; and
- ✓ Qualitative information focused on themes and issues collected through site visits and interviews with plant managers, employees, unions and community stakeholders. For the Wynyard Region, the study team collected information from one poultry processing plant (approximately 200 employees).

**REAL  
CHALLENGES,  
PRACTICAL  
SOLUTIONS  
AND FRESH  
PERSPECTIVES**

## 2.0 OVERVIEW OF THE WYNYARD REGION

### 2.1 GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

The Wynyard Region is in East-Central Saskatchewan and includes the Town of Wynyard (pop. 1,798). The Town of Wynyard is located along the Yellowhead Highway (Highway #16). Wynyard is about equal distance from three major centres, namely Regina (175 km), Saskatoon (200 km) and Yorkton (150 km).



## 2.2 POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

The population of the Town of Wynyard is older relative to the Canadian average and is expected to grow over the next decade primarily due to in-migration. Compared to the province overall, the population has lower levels of immigrants, non-Canadian citizens, people identifying as Aboriginal (according to Census definitions) and visible minorities.

The overall population for the region in 2017 was 12,166. According to Census 2016 profiles, the proportions of immigrants (5.1%), non-Canadian citizens (3.1%), visible minorities (4.3%) and the population that identifies as Aboriginal (3.9%) are all lower than those observed for the province of Saskatchewan overall (see Table 1).

TABLE 1: WYNYARD REGION POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

CHARACTERISTIC	WYNYARD REGION	SASKATCHEWAN
FEMALE	5,760	552,565
SHARE OF POPULATION	50.3%	50.3%
IMMIGRANTS	550	112,495
SHARE OF POPULATION	5.1%	10.5%
NOT CANADIAN CITIZENS	340	72,525
SHARE OF POPULATION	3.1%	6.8%
VISIBLE MINORITIES	240	115,875
SHARE OF POPULATION	4.3%	10.8%
ABORIGINAL IDENTITY	220	175,020
SHARE OF POPULATION	3.9%	16.3%

Source: Census 2016

According to projections, the population levels are expected to increase over the upcoming 13 years (12,166 in 2017 and then 13,702 by 2030). The population is currently slightly older than other regions in Canada with the Town of Wynyard having a median age of 47.0 years compared to the provincial median of 45.8 and a national median age of 41.2 (Census, 2016). Although the total population will increase, it will begin to be an aging population with the proportion of the age cohort 65 years or older rising from 25.8% in 2017 to approximately 31.4% by 2030 (see Figure 1). While population growth will be negatively impacted by the continued aging of the population and increased number of deaths outpacing births, this will be countered by a predicted continuation of a pattern of net in-migration of approximately 2,500 people by 2030. Overall, the period under study will be impacted by the predicted in-migration in the region, which will result in a small rise in population (see Figure 2).





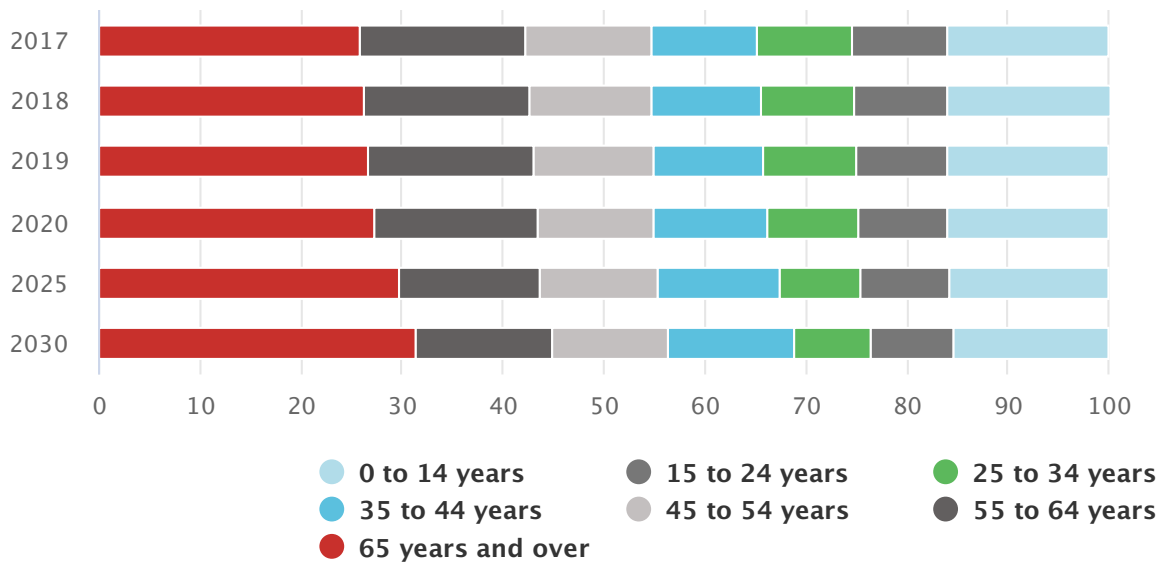


FIGURE 1: POPULATION BY AGE GROUP (%) (2017 TO 2030)

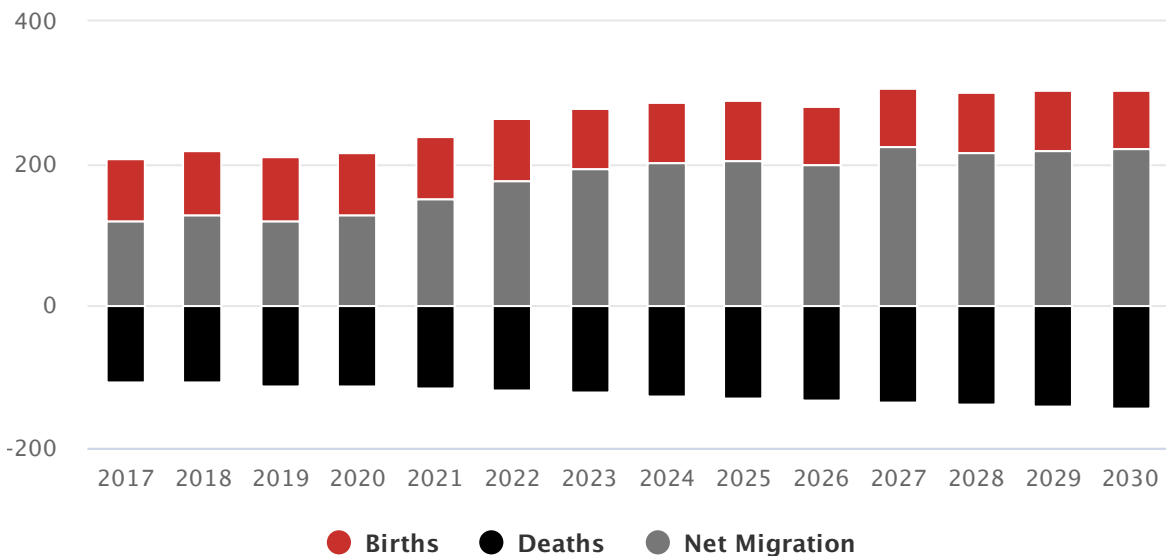
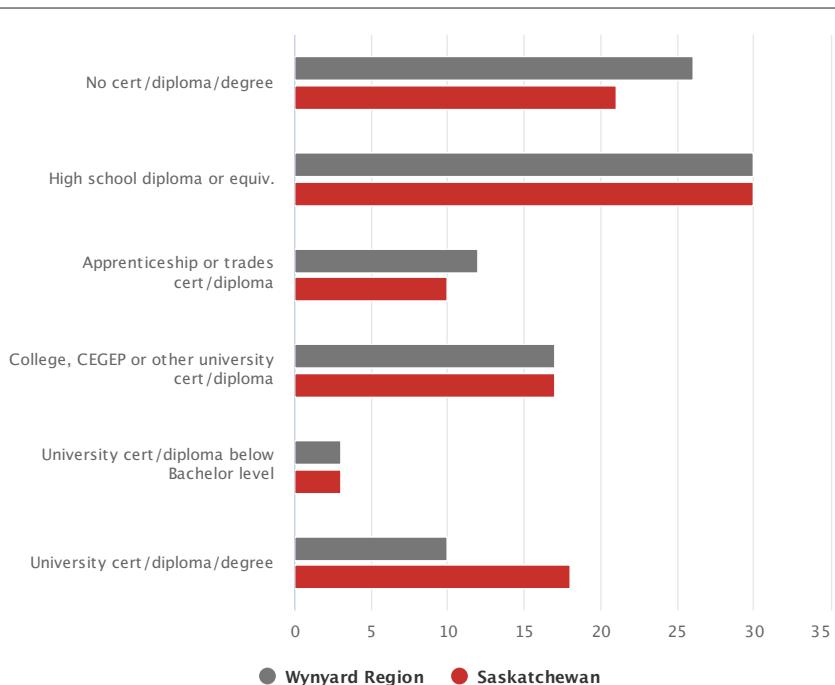


FIGURE 2: COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE (2017 TO 2030)

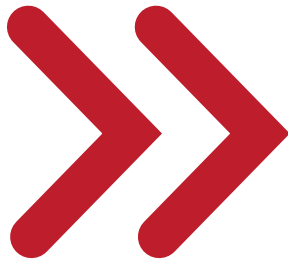


### FIGURE 3: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT - WYNYARD REGION AND SASKATCHEWAN

The education level of the region's working age population is slightly lower when compared with Saskatchewan overall (see Figure 3). Approximately one-quarter (26%) of residents do not have a high school diploma (vs. 21% for the province), and an additional 30% (same proportion as the province) have a secondary school degree, for a total of 56% without any postsecondary certification. From interviews, it was determined that part of this might be attributable to the ongoing youth out-migration from the region into often more urban centres with the youth often having higher levels of education than older cohorts. This also corresponds to the aging demographics for the region.

# 3.0

## OUTLOOK OF SASKATCHEWAN MEAT PROCESSING



### 3.1 SASKATCHEWAN MEAT PRODUCT OUTLOOKS

Total real gross output for meat processing (or total end market demand) is forecast to expand at a moderate pace of 1.8% on average over 2018-21, then remain similar with an average 1.6% over 2022-26 and 1.5% over 2027-30. Growth will be sustained by some increases in overall processed meat consumption from 0.7% on average over 2018-21 to 1.2% over 2022-26, and 1.2% over 2027-30 as poultry and lamb consumption boosts overall meat consumption.

International exports are forecasted to expand at a moderate pace over the projection period, averaging 1.0% over 2018-21, and 2.2% over 2022-30. There are broad-based gains in beef, veal, pork and poultry product exports. Meat of all types will benefit the implementation of the Canada-EU CETA and the TPP with ten other Pacific Rim nations. Saskatchewan's exports to other provinces will gain from the overall rise in meat consumption in those provinces, with interprovincial exports forecast to expand at a moderate rate of 1.4% over 2018-21 and 1.8% over the 2022-27, and 1.6% on average over 2027-30. Interindustry demand is reliant on the demand for meat products by other industries, particularly food processing, and is forecast to average 3.4% over 2018-21, and 1.5% over 2022-27 and 1.3% over 2027-30.



TABLE 2: SASKATCHEWAN PREPARED MEAT END MARKET GROWTH (ANNUAL AVERAGE % CHANGE)

END MARKET	2013-2017	2018-2021	2022-2026	2027-2030
Consumption	0.2	0.7	1.2	1.2
International Exports	-16.2	1.0	2.2	2.2
Interprovincial Exports	1.4	1.4	1.8	1.6
Interindustry Demand	4.3	3.4	1.5	1.3
Imports	1.0	1.0	1.4	1.3
Total End Market Demand	1.4	1.8	1.6	1.5

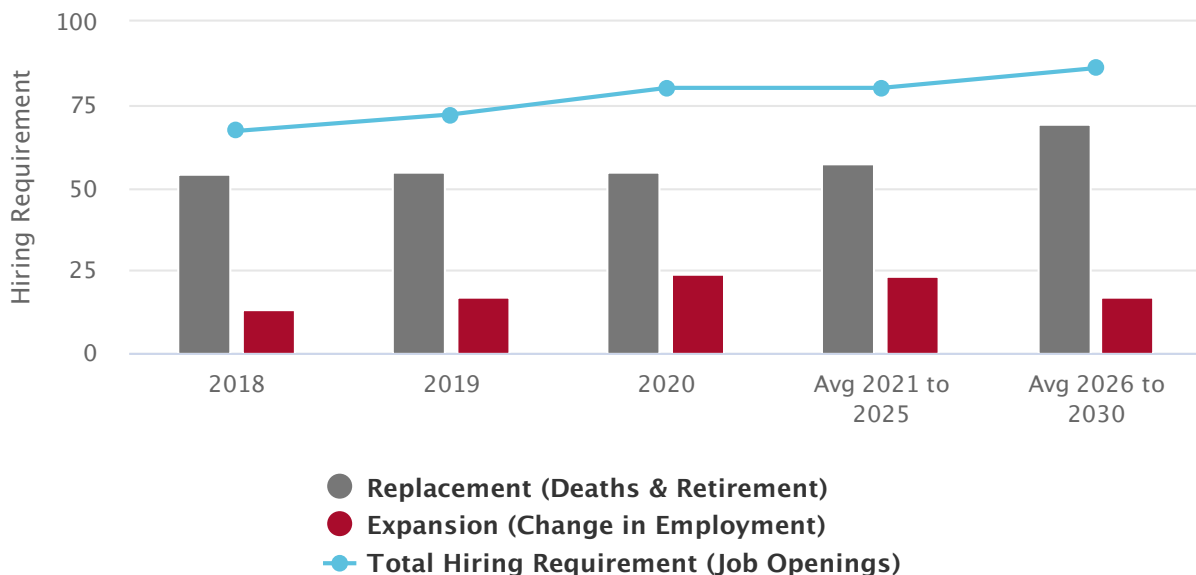
### 3.2 MEAT PROCESSING EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK FOR SASKATCHEWAN

Meat processing employment is expected to rise by 2.7% between 2017 and 2020, an increase of 50 jobs from 1,990. Total employment is expected to surpass 2,400 by 2030.

Meat processing real GDP is forecast to expand on average by 1.7% over the 2018-21 period, 1.5% over 2022-26 and 1.4% over 2027-30. Labour productivity (GDP per hour worked) is forecast to increase by 0.6% on average over the projection period. This means that the needed total hours of work will rise at a modest pace of 1.0% on average over 2018-30, 0.9% over 2022-26 and 0.8% over 2027-30. Average hours worked per employee is forecast to fall slightly over the projection period, which leads to the total number of jobs rising by 1.1% over 2018-21, 0.9% over 2022-26 and 0.8% over 2027-30.

Taking account of both replacement and expansion demands, the industry will likely need to hire just over 1,050 new workers, or (53%) of the current workforce over the next 13 years (see Figure 4). These hiring requirements are net numbers of new workers and do not include annual hiring requirements due to turnover.

FIGURE 4: ANNUAL MEAT PROCESSING HIRING REQUIREMENTS (EXCLUDING TURNOVER), SASKATCHEWAN





# 4.0 WYNYARD REGION MEAT PROCESSORS

## 4.1 EMPLOYERS

The region has on large poultry processor located in the Town of Wynyard<sup>3</sup> and one smaller meat processor.

Overall, there are two meat processing establishments in the Wynyard Region, with a focus on poultry processing. As noted on the map in Section 1, there is one large and another relatively small plant (under 50 employees).



**THE CURRENT INDUSTRY WORKFORCE IS APPROXIMATELY 577 WORKERS WITH APPROXIMATELY ONE-HALF BEING LABOURERS AND PLANT WORKERS.**

## 4.2 WORKERS

### 4.2.1 WORKFORCE SIZE & OCCUPATIONS

The estimated total number of individuals employed by the sector in the Wynyard Region in 2017 was 577 (see Table 3). More than one-third of all employed (36%) were working in occupations at a foundational skill level (NOC 9617), and 13% were employed in occupations at an intermediate skill level (NOC 9461; 9462). Approximately 1% of the workforce is in the higher skill occupations of specialized meat cutters and master butchers. This approximate distribution was confirmed in interviews with indications that the majority of the floor personnel in the plants were working in positions at the foundational or intermediate skill levels. The plants interviewed indicated that they have on-the-job training for all their positions ranging from the foundational to the higher skill level occupations. While a high school diploma is often preferred, it is often not necessary to secure a starting position according to the plant and HR managers interviewed for the study.



<sup>3</sup> Number of establishments is based on the 2016 data from Statistic Canada's Business Registrar.

TABLE 3: PROFILE OF WORKERS BY OCCUPATIONS FOR WYNYARD REGION - 2017

	AVG 2017 (#)	AVG 2017 (%)
<b>Total Employment</b>	577	100%
<b>FOUNDATIONAL (NOC 9617)</b>		
Production Labourer	19	3%
Poultry Production	188	33%
<b>INTERMEDIATE (NOC 9462; 9461)</b>		
General Meat Cutter/Knife Person	71	12%
Machine Operator	2	0%
Slaughter Person	6	1%
<b>HIGH (NOC 9213)</b>		
Master Butcher	2	0%
Specialized Cutter	5	1%
<b>SUPERVISORY (NOC 9213)</b>		
Supervisors	35	6%
<b>MANAGEMENT (NOC 0911)</b>		
Management	39	7%
<b>OTHER CATEGORIES</b>		
Maintenance	47	8%
Skilled Trades	57	10%
Quality Control Technician	9	2%
Office Staff	40	7%
Other Occupations*	57	10%

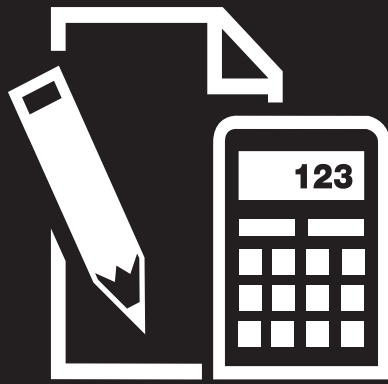
\* this includes occupations in areas such as transport, logistics, material handlers that do not fall within the main NOC codes identified above.



**577**

**AVERAGE NUMBER OF WORKERS EMPLOYED IN THE MEAT PROCESSING INDUSTRY IN 2017**





## 4.2.2 WAGES

Median hourly wages for labourers in food processing in the region are the same as the provincial average. These median wages are higher than median wages offered in similar C and D level occupations in food services but lower than median wages offered in similar retail service occupations available in the region.



The median hourly wage for labourers in food processing (NOC 9617) in the Yorkton-Melville region of Saskatchewan in 2017-18 was \$16.00/hour (see Table 4) which is the same as the provincial median rate for this occupation as well as the median wage rate in the closest urban region in the province (Regina-Moose Mountain Region). To provide some context, the minimum wage in Saskatchewan in 2018 was \$11.25/hour. Through interviews with plants, it was noted that the large poultry processing plant was paying higher wages in the Town of Wynyard with considerable benefit packages when compared with other local employers.

When compared with other C&D Level Occupations in the same region, the median wages for labourers in food processing were higher than median hourly wages in food services occupations (\$13.25/hour) but lower than same level occupations in retail sales (\$17.00/hr).

TABLE 4: WAGE LEVELS FOR SELECTED OCCUPATIONS - 2017 (\$/HOUR)

	Low Wage (10th percentile)	Median Wage (50th Percentile)	High Wage (90th percentile)
<b>Labourers in food processing (NOC 9617)</b>			
Yorkton Melville (SK)	12.15	16.00	28.37
Regina—Moose Mountain Region (SK)	12.15	16.00	28.37
All Saskatchewan	12.15	16.00	28.37
<b>Other C&amp;D Level Occupations Yorkton Melville (SK)</b>			
Retail Sales (NOC 6421)	11.06	17.00	25.00
Food Services (NOC 6711)	11.06	13.25	19.49

Source: Employment and Social Development Canada – Job Bank – Labour Market Information



On a provincial level, the average hourly wage in food manufacturing (\$22.60) is lower than other forms of manufacturing (\$23.93) and higher than the average hourly wage for all industries combined (\$19.63) (see Table 5). The hourly wage in food manufacturing is higher than that found in retail (\$13.20), agriculture (\$18.19) and construction (\$21.88), but lower than other industries such as educational services (\$28.38) and health care and social assistance (\$25.30).



TABLE 5: AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE – SASKATCHEWAN, 2016-2017 – (\$/HOUR)

	Avg. hourly wage
<b>All industries</b>	<b>\$19.63</b>
Food Manufacturing	\$22.60
Manufacturing (Total)	\$23.93
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	\$18.19
Transportation and warehousing	\$23.34
Retail trade	\$13.20
Health care and social assistance	\$25.30
Construction	\$21.88
Educational services	\$28.38

Source: Job Vacancy and Wage Survey Q3 2016 – Q2 2017



# 5.0

## REGION'S LABOUR FORCE

THE REGION'S LABOUR FORCE IS APPROXIMATELY 5,777.



### 5.1 OVERVIEW OF LOCAL LABOUR FORCE

#### 5.1.1 SIZE OF LABOUR FORCE, MAIN SECTORS AND WORK PATTERNS

The overall size of the labour force for the region in 2017 was estimated at 5,777 (out of a total population of 12,166). The largest proportions of the labour force for the Town of Wynyard are manufacturing (18% of labour force - includes meat processing), retail trade (16%), and health care and social assistance (12%) (Census 2016).

#### 5.1.2 UNEMPLOYMENT

The average unemployment rate for the region in 2017 was 8.7%.

The average annual unemployment rate for the region in 2017 was 8.7%. According to Census data, approximately 5.2% of the population in the Wynyard Region 15 years or older who had income received regular Employment Insurance (EI) payments at some point in 2016.

According to EI data provided by ESDC for the Southern Saskatchewan region, there has been a growing trend in the number of workers from the food and beverage processing sector (not just meat processing) making EI claims (see Table 6). The highest number of EI beneficiaries, as well as the highest proportional increase has occurred among process control and machine operators, food and beverage processing in the sector (89 EI beneficiaries in 2016 with an average annual increase of 162% since 2015) and manufacturing managers (135 EI beneficiaries in 2016 or an average annual increase of 77% between 2014 and 2016).

TABLE 6: EI BENEFICIARIES BY OCCUPATION – SOUTHERN SASKATCHEWAN REGION

Occupation	2014	2015	2016	Avg. Annual % Chg.
Manufacturing managers	53	92	135	77%
Material handlers	225	353	451	50%
Supervisors, food and beverage processing	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Process control and machine operators, food and beverage processing	N/A	34	89	162%
Industrial butchers and meat cutters, poultry preparers and related workers	N/A	37	43	16%
Labourers in food and beverage processing	118	128	167	21%

Source: Employment and Social Development Canada 2017



## 5.2 OVERVIEW OF IMMIGRANT SOURCES OF LABOUR

Currently, temporary foreign workers do not play a significant role in addressing labour supply issues in the meat processing industry in the Wynyard Region. The meat processing sector employs some recent immigrants, but many of these workers had immigrated through various pathways, and with a variety of employers and sectors.

Overall, the proportion of immigrants in the Wynyard Region is lower when compared with Saskatchewan overall (5.1% vs. 10.5%). The plant interviewed indicated that their worker supply is primarily local, with a small proportion of immigrants who have entered Canada through various immigration programs and with a variety of employers from various sectors. They have made their way to settle in Wynyard and have been hired by the plant with referrals from relatives or friends.

## 5.3 OVERVIEW OF INDIGENOUS SOURCES OF LABOUR

There is an ongoing effort by the local plant to work directly with the leadership of the local Indigenous communities to find or develop a successful approach in integrating Indigenous workers into the sector's workforce.

The Wynyard Region is close to a number of Indigenous communities that are within approximately an hour's drive from the Town of Wynyard. However, the proportion of self-identified Aboriginal residents living within the region is relatively low (3.9%). Interviews with one of the larger plants indicated that there had previously been considerable outreach and engagement with some of the Indigenous communities via career fairs, meeting with band councils and assistance with providing local transportation to the plant for workers from reserve communities. These initiatives were assessed as not that successful in part due to the lack of job readiness of among candidates and the limited desire to maintain full-time, year-round employment, particularly during the summer months. It was noted that there are a few Indigenous workers employed by the large poultry plant, but they would make up less than 5% of the employees.



# 6.0

## CURRENT AND FUTURE LABOUR DEMAND VS. SUPPLY

### 6.1 LABOUR MARKET TIGHTNESS

THERE IS CURRENTLY AN INSUFFICIENT LOCAL LABOUR FORCE TO MEET THE REGION'S LABOUR REQUIREMENTS (FOR ALL INDUSTRIES) LEAVING AN OVERALL POTENTIAL GAP. THIS TREND CONTINUES THROUGH TO 2030 AND IS EXPECTED TO WORSEN (I.E., INCREASED LABOUR MARKET TIGHTNESS IS LIKELY TO BE OBSERVED).

TABLE 7: POPULATION AND LABOUR FORCE OUTLOOK SUMMARY – WYNYARD REGION – 2017-2030

	2017	2018	2019	2020	AVG 2021-2025	AVG 2026-2030
Total Population	12,166	12,176	12,374	12,478	12,904	13,702
Avg. Annual Change (%)		0.9%	0.8%	0.8%	1.2%	1.2%
Total Labour Force	5,777	5,801	5,795	5,804	5,919	6,257
Avg. Annual Change (%)		0.4%	-0.1%	0.1%	0.7%	1.1%
Total Employment	5,277	5,321	5,331	5,363	5,504	5,818
Avg. Annual Change (%)		0.8%	0.2%	0.6%	0.8%	1.1%
Unemployment Rate	8.7%	8.3%	8.0%	7.6%	7.0%	7.0%

The model projections indicate that taking into account the trends in migration and aging, the Wynyard Region will experience some population growth within the period under study (2017 to 2030) (see Table 7). These factors will also contribute to a growing labour force for the region, albeit at a slower rate than population growth given the aging population and anticipated retirements. As a result, unemployment rates are expected to decline from an average of 8.7% to 7.0% based on increased opportunities, but slower growth in the overall labour force.







# LABOUR MARKET TIGHTNESS EXPLAINED

Specifically, for this project, the analytic team developed an approach to demonstrate the “tightness” of the labour market in supplying the employment demands from meat processing in the identified regions. This was calculated by estimating labour requirements in other sectors in the region (non meat-processing labour requirements) and subtracting those requirements from the total labour force estimates. This difference results in an estimated “residual” labour force for the region from which meat processing needs to draw. Not all the meat processing workers come from the residual pool, as the sector actively competes with other sectors for workers; however, the “tightness” measure indicates where shortages are likely occurring for not only the meat processing sector but likely other sectors drawing from the same labour supply. Using this approach, the current and future labour market tightness was calculated to determine the extent to which the region’s labour force can meet the labour requirements of all sectors (both non-meat processing and meat processing).

As illustrated in Table 8 and Figure 5, the Total Meat Processing Employment (Annual Average) is higher than the Residual Total Labour Force. This suggests that there is currently (2017) an insufficient local labour force to meet all of the region’s labour requirements (for all industries) leaving an overall potential gap. This trend continues all the way through to 2030, and the labour market tightness is expected to increase as the residual total labour force decreases while the projected employment in meat processing increases.

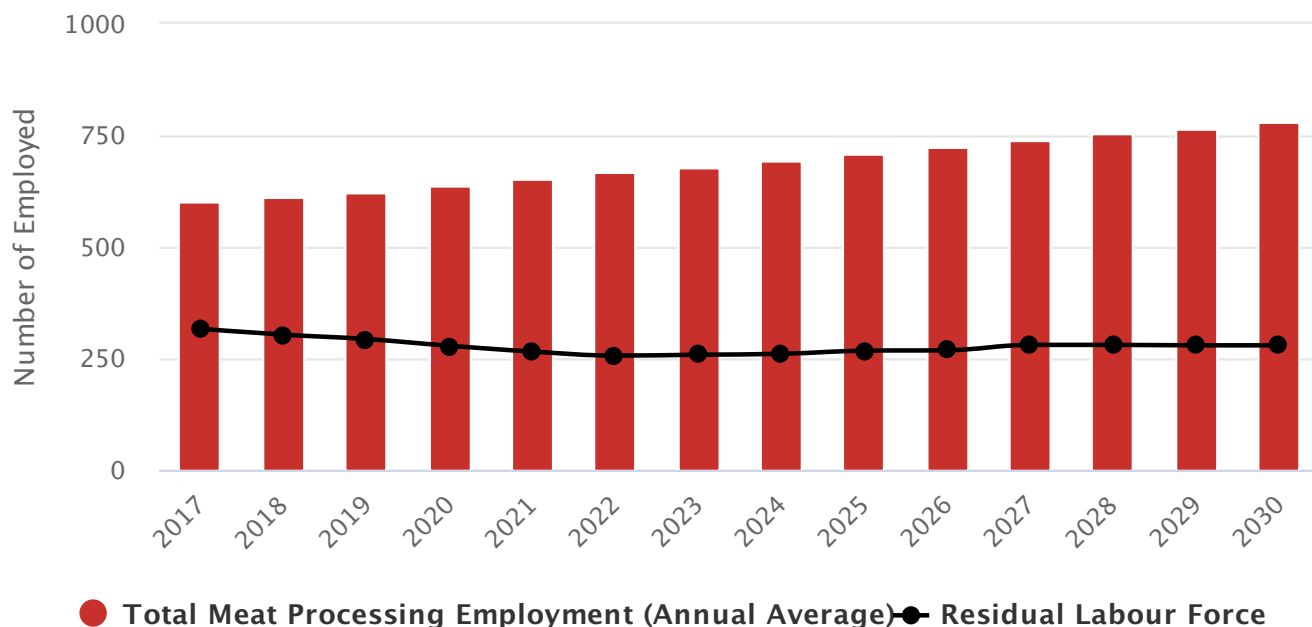
The analysis outlined in Table 8 and Figure 6 describes the labour market context within which the meat processors in the Wynyard Region are operating with respect to finding sufficient numbers of workers from the local labour supply. Within this very tight, competitive labour market, the industry employers have had some success recruiting. For example, in 2017, the meat processing industry was able to recruit and employ 577 within a labour market that had a residual total labour force of only 317. This means that the meat processing industry was likely recruiting workers from other industries and from outside the local region. While the industry did experience vacancies, these would likely have been substantially higher had it not been successful in recruiting labour external to the region, and/or competing with other industries in recruiting workers. In interviews with the local large plant, it was noted that with the more recent economic downturn for various Saskatchewan industries (i.e., mining, oil and gas), the number of available workers from which to recruit has increased, making it somewhat easier to attract and maintain a full complement of workers for the plant.



TABLE 8: TOTAL LABOUR MARKET TIGHTNESS – WYNYARD REGION – 2017-2030

	2017	2018	2019	2020	AVG 2021-2025	AVG 2026-2030
Total Labour Force <sup>4</sup>	5,777	5,801	5,795	5,804	5,919	6,257
Total Non-Meat Processing Labour Requirement <sup>5</sup>	5,460	5,496	5,501	5,524	5,657	5,978
Residual Total Labour Force <sup>6</sup>	317	304	294	279	262	279
Total Meat Processing Employment (Annual Average)	577	588	598	609	642	696

FIGURE 5: TOTAL MEAT PROCESSING EMPLOYMENT AND RESIDUAL LABOUR FORCE – WYNYARD REGION – 2017-2030



4 The labour force includes all individuals who are either employed or unemployed and actively seeking work. The unemployed would include those on regular EI claims along with those receiving other sources of income (e.g., social assistance) who are actively looking for employment.

5 Non-meat processing labour requirement consists of employment demand from other sectors with an allowance for typical levels of sector-specific unemployment.

6 The residual labour force is the difference between the labour force and the non-meat processing labour requirement.

As noted in the description of the occupations, approximately 50% of the occupations in the industry in this region are in the “C” and “D” levels which are often referred to as “lower-skill level” occupations, not requiring post-secondary education. Given much of the focus is on the lower-skill level labour force, the study also analyzed the “tightness” of the lower-skill level labour market (see Table 9 and Figure 6). The tightness of lower-skill level labour market is also high. For example, in 2017, the meat processing industry was able to recruit and employ 344 workers within a labour market that had a residual total labour force of only 148. This means that the meat processing industry was likely recruiting workers from other industries, and from outside the local region. This level of tightness suggests that many of the industries that rely on a lower-skill level labour market are also experiencing labour shortages in this region.



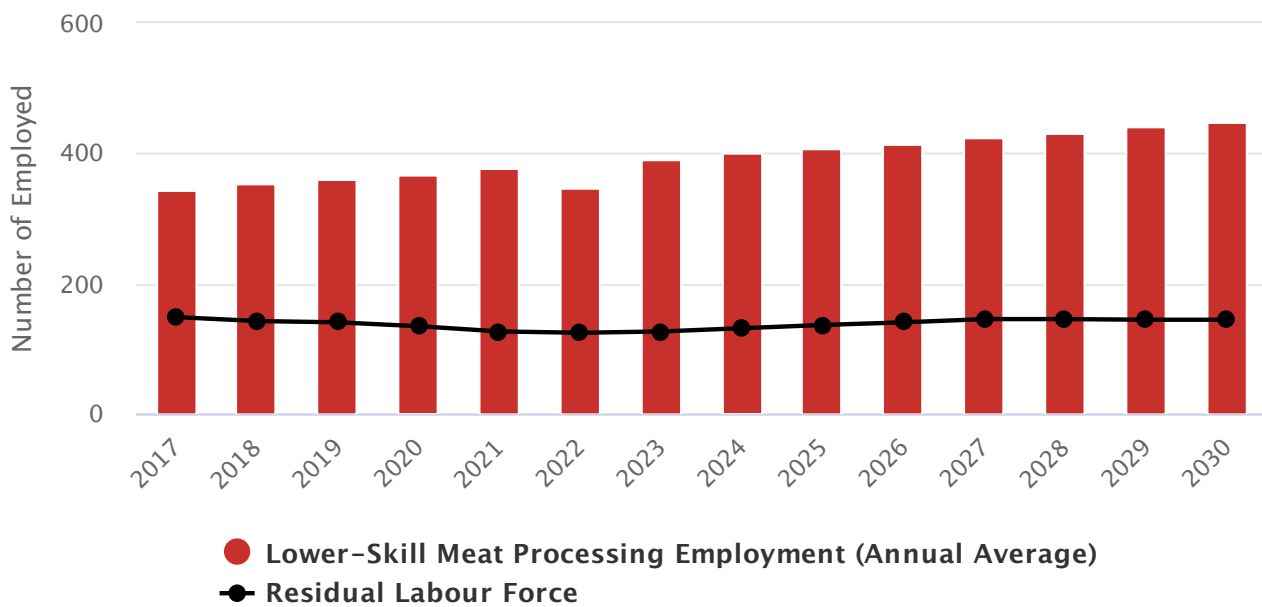
TABLE 9: LOWER-SKILL LEVEL LABOUR MARKET TIGHTNESS – WYNYARD REGION – 2017-2030

	2017	2018	2019	2020	AVG 2021-2025	AVG 2026-2030
<b>Lower-Skill Labour Force<sup>7</sup></b>	524,257	532,036	538,141	541,509	549,847	560,071
<b>Lower-Skill Non-Meat Processing Labour Requirement</b>	515,708	523,776	529,970	533,158	540,145	552,198
<b>Residual Lower-Skill Labour Force</b>	8,549	8,260	8,172	8,350	9,702	9,873
<b>Lower-Skill Meat Processing Employment (Annual Average)</b>	1,880	1,913	1,946	1,980	2,080	2,225

7 The lower-skill labour force is the portion of the total labour force with no education beyond a high school diploma



FIGURE 6: LOWER-SKILL LEVEL MEAT PROCESSING EMPLOYMENT AND RESIDUAL LABOUR FORCE  
WYNYARD REGION – 2017-2030



The overall summary of the labour market tightness as modelled for the Wynyard Region (Table 10) demonstrates that the local labour force is unable to meet the employment requirements of employers in the area at average levels. This tightness is demonstrated for the overall labour market as well as the lower-level skill workers. This trend is anticipated to continue throughout the period of study (2017 to 2030). These results assume similar industry employment demand (e.g., no new major employers arriving or leaving the area), and no major changes in net migration patterns.



TABLE 10: SUMMARY OF LABOUR MARKET TIGHTNESS – WYNYARD REGION – 2017-2030

	2017	2018	2019	2020	AVERAGE 2021 TO 2025	AVERAGE 2026 TO 2030
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>LOWER SKILL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>

1 = Meat processing employment demand is less than 50% of regional labour force at annual average employment levels  
 2 = Meat processing employment demand is between 50 and 100% of regional labour force at annual average employment levels  
 3 = Meat processing employment demand is greater than 100% of regional labour force at annual average employment level

## 6.2 NUMBER OF WORKERS REQUIRED

Within a very tight labour market, projections indicate that the Wynyard Region employers will need to attract approximately 365 new workers to the meat processing industry by 2030. This is equivalent to approximately 63% of their current annual average workforce. This requirement is due to both anticipated industry growth and replacement of anticipated retirements over this period. Unfortunately, this recruitment will be occurring within the context of a very tight regional labour market that is currently experiencing labour shortages which are predicted to continue during this period. This tightness in the labour market is contributing to the high number of current vacancies experienced by employers in meat processing (estimated at 5% in Western Canada), and to some degree the higher turnover rates in the industry as workers have more employment opportunities from which to choose, particularly in the lower-skill level occupations (estimated imputed turnover rate of 43% in Saskatchewan in meat processing industry). All of these factors contribute to the substantial challenges facing Wynyard Region meat processors in their attempts to recruit enough workers to replace retirements, fill ongoing vacancies, while also trying to grow, remain competitive and increase productivity.

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Overall, it is anticipated that as of 2017, there will be a need for increased numbers of new hires, due to both industry growth and the need for replacements due to anticipated retirements and deaths among the workforce (see Table 11). Overall, this results in the need to attract 365 new workers to the industry between 2018 and 2030. This equates to replacing approximately 63% of the 2017 average meat processing workforce in the region.





TABLE 11: HIRING REQUIREMENT OUTLOOK – WYNYARD REGION – 2017-2030

	2017	2018	2019	2020	SUM 2021-2025	SUM 2026-2030
<b>Net Hiring Requirement<sup>8</sup></b>	<b>28</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>146</b>
Industry Growth	12	10	10	11	55	54
Retirements and Mortality	15	16	16	16	85	92

The employment outlook according to occupation is detailed in Table 12 (Annual Average).



<sup>8</sup> Net hiring requirement does not include hiring required as a result of turnover (i.e. hiring workers to replace individuals who quit or are fired from their positions). The imputed turnover rate (total number of people workers hired as a share of the total number of workers) for Saskatchewan meat processors is estimated at 43%.

TABLE 12: EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK (ANNUAL AVERAGE) – WYNYARD REGION – 2017-2030

	2017	2018	2019	2020	AVG 2021-2025	AVG 2026-2030
<b>Total Employment</b>	<b>577</b>	<b>588</b>	<b>598</b>	<b>609</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>696</b>
<b>FOUNDATIONAL (NOC 9617)</b>						
Production Labourer (including Processor, Packer, Barn Worker)	19	19	19	20	21	22
Poultry Production Labourer (including Plant Production Worker, Poultry Worker, General Labourer)	188	192	195	198	209	227
<b>INTERMEDIATE (NOC 9462; 9461)</b>						
General Meat Cutter or Knife Person/Poultry Cutter	71	73	74	75	79	86
Machine Operator (including Saw Operator)	2	2	2	2	3	3
<b>HIGH (NOC 9213)</b>						
Master Butcher, expertise in multiple cuts (includes Butcher or Lead Hand of a shift)	2	2	2	2	2	2
Specialized Cutter, expertise in one cut (including Pull tenderloin, Drop (seam) Inside Round, Lead Hand, Specialized Meat Cutter)	5	5	5	5	5	6
<b>SUPERVISORY (NOC 9213)</b>						
Supervisors (including Kill Floor Supervisor, Abattoir Supervisor, Production Supervisor, Raw Room Supervisor)	35	35	36	37	38	42
<b>MANAGEMENT (NOC 0911)</b>						
Management (including Plant Manager, Director of Operations, Sales, Kill Floor Manager, Food Safety Managers)	39	39	40	41	43	47
<b>OTHER CATEGORIES</b>						
Maintenance (including Janitors, Sanitation Workers, Cleaners)	47	48	49	50	53	57
Skilled Trades (including Millwright, Industrial Electrician, Truck Driver)	57	59	59	61	64	69
Quality Control	9	9	9	9	10	11
Office Staff (including Administrator or HR Manager)	40	41	41	42	44	48
Other Occupations*	57	58	59	60	64	69

\* this includes occupations in areas such as transport, logistics, material handlers that do not fall within the main NOC codes identified above

# 7.0 OVERVIEW OF HR ISSUES ENCOUNTERED

Interviews with plant managers in the region outlined various HR issues that they have experienced in the attempt to retain and recruit an adequate labour force. While issues and challenges vary from plant to plant, these are some of the common themes that were identified and may be characteristic of this region. Main themes include:

## » Recruitment

Despite the relative labour market tightness outlined in the previous sections, it was noted during interviews with plant representatives that the recruitment of adequate numbers of workers has recently not been that challenging compared with previous years when the Saskatchewan economy was growing fast, particularly in the mining and oil/gas sectors. The main source of labour supply has been maintained (local, long-term residents) and has been augmented to some extent by recent immigrants and workers from other sectors either returning to work locally and/or being attracted by the steady employment and wages. Interviews with plant representatives indicated that they could be much more selective in new hires compared with previous years.

## » Retention issues

The recent annual turnover rate in the plant interviewed was very low (<2%) compared with the Saskatchewan meat processing industry average (43%). This was noted again as a recent change from previously when there were many more options available for workers in the area in other sectors. During that period, the turnover rate was significantly higher. Currently, the plant interviewees indicated that it is paying higher wages than most other regional employers, is unionized, and offers a good benefits package. These positives were echoed by the employees interviewed who indicated that they appreciated the wage rates, benefits, the predictability of work, and the overall team environment.

## » Challenges with industry image

Given that the large poultry plant is located in a largely agricultural region, and the plant has been there for many years, the industry image is not as much of an issue in recruiting and retaining employees compared with more urban settings, or areas where there is less knowledge among the general population of meat processing and agricultural production. Food production is a key area of focus from many sectors in the region.









# 8.0 PROMISING PRACTICES AND INNOVATIONS

Employers in the region are trying various approaches to address the challenges with labour supply and retention. Some of those that were identified during interviews include:

## OFFERING COMPETITIVE WAGES AND BENEFITS

It was noted in interviews that an attempt was being made to offer wages and benefits that would be considered competitive within the region's context. This was pointed to as one of the main factors in attracting and maintaining a productive workforce for the plant.

## MAINTAINING SIZE/SCOPE OF PLANT WITHIN LOCAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE

The processing plant interviewed is a relatively small poultry processing plant overall for Western Canada. However, interviewees noted that the size fits well within the local, regional context and can maintain its level of importance and role in the supply chain for the overall corporation (with multiple sites and plants).

## AUTOMATION WHERE WARRANTED

It was noted that there have been some recent investments in increasing automation in the plant. Factors involved in deciding when automation was desirable was to consider savings in the number of resources required for specific tasks, the type/nature of the job (focus on automating less desirable jobs), and financial resource required to obtain, implement and maintain the automated processes.

## SUPPORTING A TEAM ENVIRONMENT

Interviews with plant managers, supervisors and employees indicated that one of the key factors to which they attribute retention success is the team environment of the plant. This is supported in part due to the size of the plant (less than 150 employees on the floor) where many people know one another, the structure of the lines, rotating positions within lines/areas, and the fact that many of the people working at the plant also live in the Town of Wynyard (the plant employs approximately 10% of the town or about 25% of workers in the Town).









## **FOOD PROCESSING SKILLS CANADA**

201-3030 Conroy Rd,  
Ottawa, ON K1G 6C2  
Tel 613.237.7988  
[www.fpsc-ctac.com](http://www.fpsc-ctac.com)

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