

Protecting the Health and Safety of Niagara's International Agricultural Workers (IAWs): The Role of Public Health Inspectors

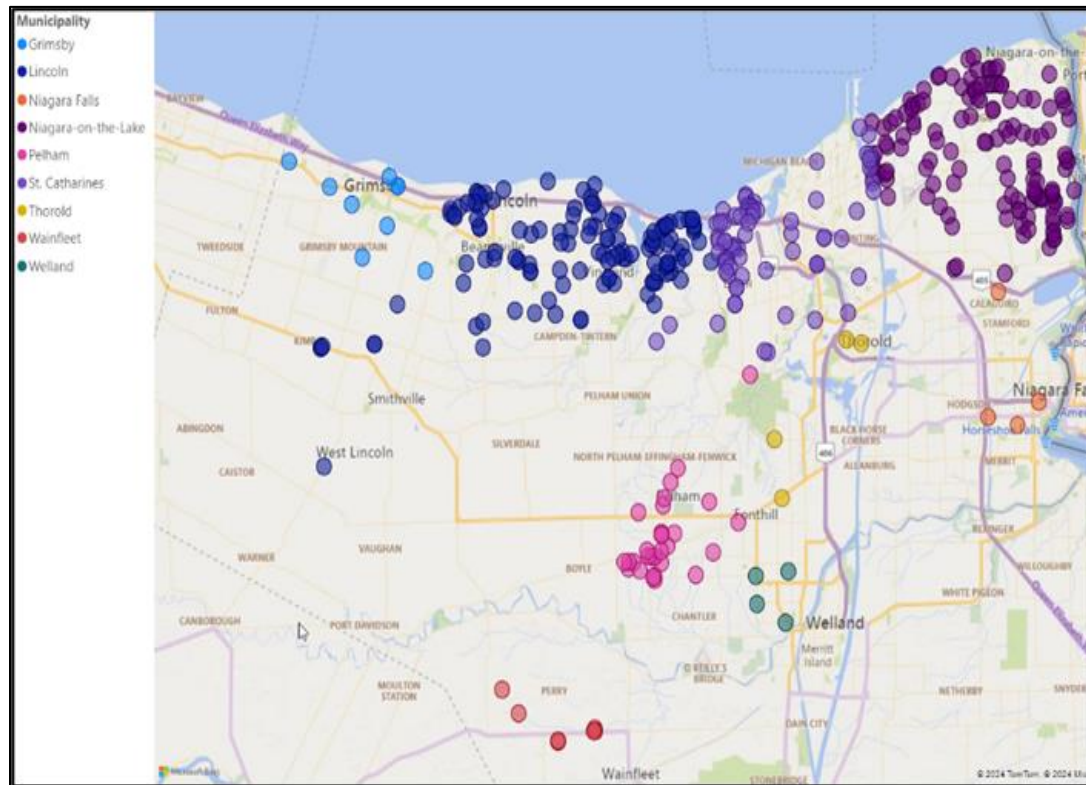
Prepared by: Niagara Region Public Health & Emergency Services
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Who We Are...

Public Health Inspectors

- Possess specialized training and educational expertise in the field of environmental health
- Conduct risk assessments to inform follow-up to eliminate or mitigate a potential health hazard

International Agricultural Workers in Niagara



On a local level, Ontario brings in the highest number of international agricultural workers in Canada and the **Niagara Region has the second highest concentration of workers in Ontario**

Why We Inspect...

- To ensure compliance with provincial/federal regulations/guidelines
- To protect and promote the health and well-being of our IAWs

Interagency Collaboration

- Municipal Fire, Building, and By-law Departments
- Niagara Region's Planning Department
- Community/Sector Partners

Jurisdictional Documents

Three Key Documents:

- Seasonal Farm Worker Housing Guidelines (2010)
- Service Canada – Schedule F Housing Inspection Report
- Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA)

Inspection Overview

Approval inspections include assessment of:

- Housing units exterior and interior
- Sanitary and laundry facilities
- Food service areas
- Safe water and sewage disposal
- Maximum occupancy

IAW Approval Inspection Report

Niagara Region Public Health

International Agricultural Worker (IAW) Housing Inspection Report

Facility Inspected: Test Farm	Inspection #: MF-03-00001-121200
Primary owner:	Inspection Date: 17-Apr-2024
Site Address: ON	Inspected By: Chris Haggerty
	Facility Type: IAW Housing
	Inspection Type: On Demand
	Violations: 41

C = In Compliance N/A = Not Applicable X = Not in Compliance

IAW Housing

Housing Inspection Summary

- This inspection report is for the:
 - Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program administered by FARMS (Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Service) as per the requirements specified in the Seasonal Farm Worker Housing Guidelines.
 - Agricultural Stream (previously NOC C&D) administered by Service Canada as per the requirements specified in the Seasonal Farm Worker Housing Guidelines.
- Type of Housing provided:
 - Apartment
 - Mobile home
 - Single family dwelling
 - Bunkhouse
- MAXIMUM CAPACITY:
- WATER SUPPLY:
 - municipal
 - private
 - drilled well
 - dug well
 - cistern
- SEWAGE SYSTEM:
 - municipal
 - private
- WASHROOM FIXTURES:
- LAUNDRY:
- WORKERS EXPECTED ARRIVAL DATE:

Housing Exterior

- Dwelling(s) are located 98 feet or 30 meters away from any building used or intended to be used for sheltering animals or poultry. X
- Dwelling(s) are detached from any building where highly flammable materials are used or stored. X
 - Dwelling(s) to be free of safety hazards.
 - Dwelling(s) to be free from any chemical substance or condition that may become hazardous to the workers.
- Multiple dwellings have 10 meters of space between each housing unit. X
- The dwelling(s) exterior is in good condition, weatherproof and rodent/pest proof. X
 - Exterior components include: roof, wall surfaces, downspouts, gutters, windows and doors.

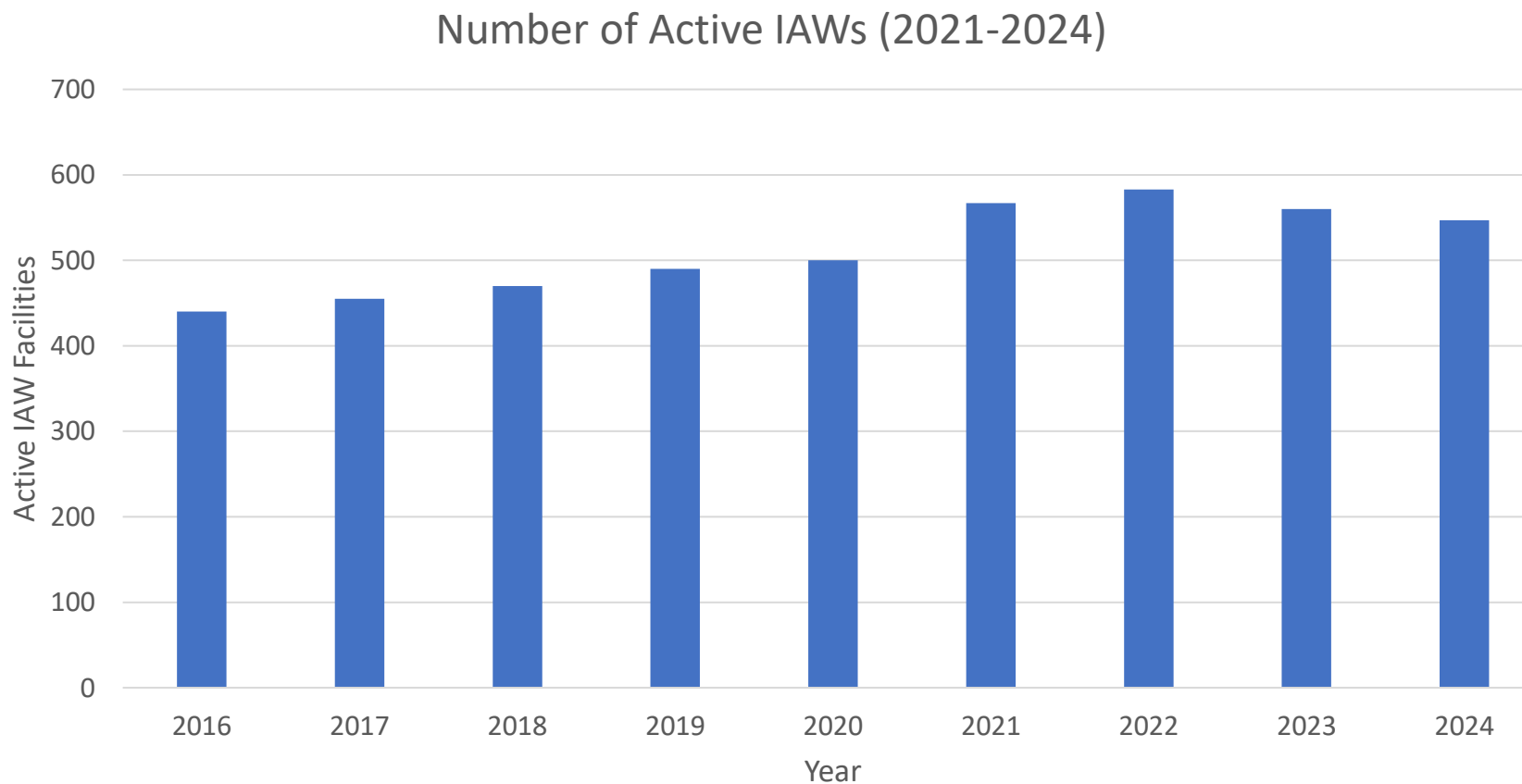
Inspection # MF-03-00001-121200

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IAW Approval Inspection Report cont'd

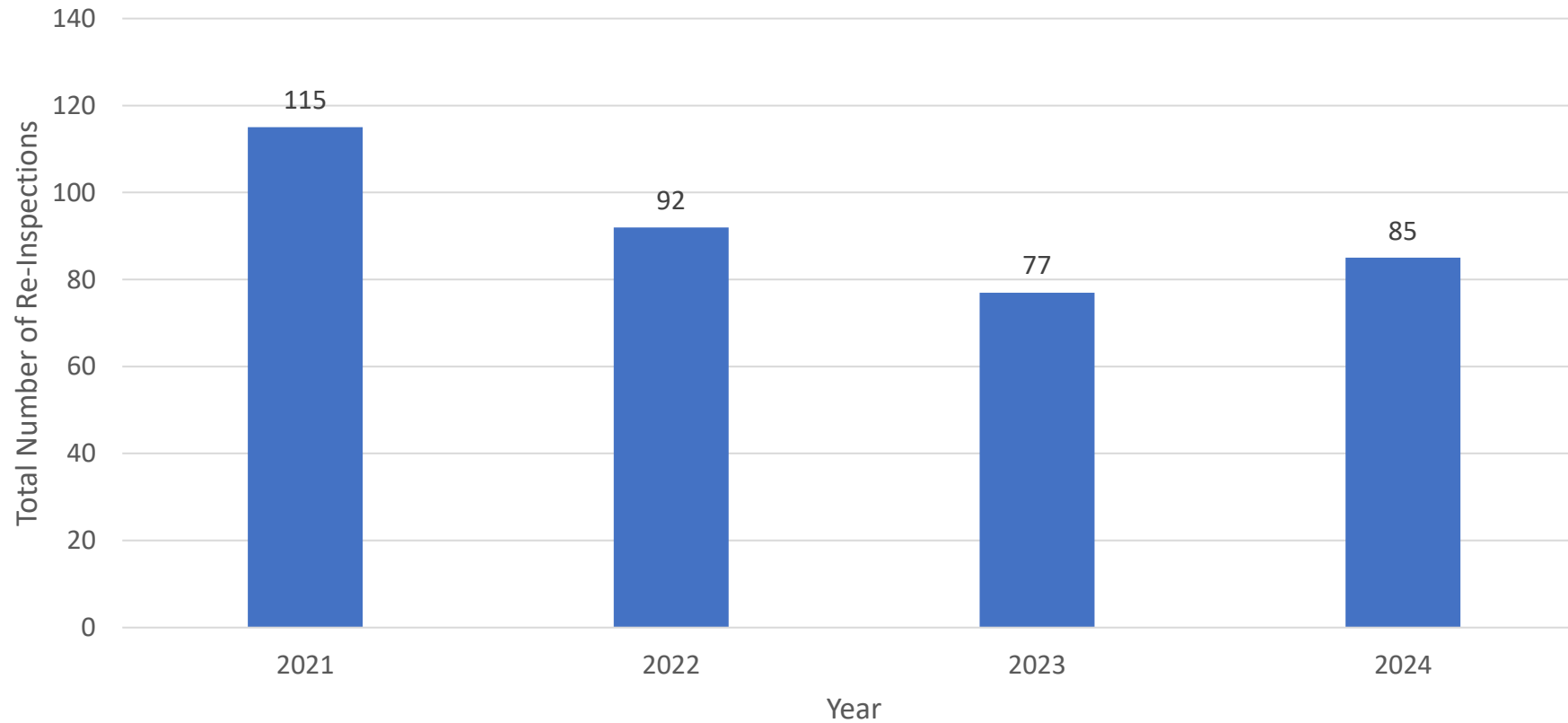
Test Farm [MF-03-00001]	International Agricultural Worker (IAW) Housing Inspection Report
Facility Contact:	
Facility Address: ON	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exterior walls to be tight fitting to prevent rodent/pest entry. - Roofs are to be tight fitting and waterproof. - Mobile homes to have skirting around the bottom perimeter. - Rodent and/or pest control to be implemented. 	
Housing Interior	
13. Dwelling interior is in good condition and rodent/pest proof. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interior components of the house to be appropriately sealed from the outside and free from drafts of external air. - Interior walls to be tight fitting and non-absorbent. - Floors to be tight fitting, smooth, non-absorbent and readily cleanable. - Rodent and/or pest control to be implemented. 	X
14. Adequate lighting by either natural or artificial means is provided in each dwelling unit. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Easily accessible light switches and fixtures to be provided. 	X
15. Adequate ventilation by either natural or artificial means is provided in each dwelling unit. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Window(s) to be provided for natural ventilation. - Exhaust fan(s) to be provided for artificial ventilation (i.e. ceiling fans). 	X
16. Windows and doors have a screen covering. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Screens to windows and doors to be provided between the first day of May to the first day of November. - Repair all ripped/torn screens. - Exception to screen coverings are permitted for windows that hold portable air conditioning units or where central air conditioning is provided. 	X
17. A minimum temperature of 20C (68F) is maintained within the dwelling unit. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A permanent heating system that can maintain a minimum temperature of 20C is to be available within the dwelling(s). - Portable space heaters cannot be used as a primary source of heating for any living space within the dwelling(s). 	X
18. Combustion-type stoves or heaters are directly vented to the outside. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contact local Fire Department for review of ventilation. 	X
19. There is sufficient basic furnishings available inside the dwelling(s) to accommodate the number of workers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic furnishings include tables, chairs, couches, etc. - Basic furnishings may accommodate different schedules/shift work (i.e. number of kitchen chairs may be lower than total number of workers). 	X
Garbage Disposal	
20. There is sufficient rodent/pest proof garbage containers provided inside and outside of all housing units. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Garbage containers to be large enough to allow for proper disposal between collection. - Garbage containers to be rodent/pest proof. - Garbage containers to be provided that can be easily cleaned and sanitized. - Garbage is to be collected and removed from the property at least once per week. 	X
Sleeping Facilities	
21. Bedrooms are separated from other living areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beds to be located within the assigned sleeping areas. - Sleeping facilities to be separated from other living areas by walls. 	X
22. Separate bed(s) are provided for each worker. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Separate mattress to be provided for each worker (each bunk must only sleep one person). - Suitable amount of space above/below each bunk provided. - Bunk/mattress is located 18 in or 45 cm apart from another bed/mattress (except when lengthwise on the wall). - At minimum, a twin size mattress (99 x 109 cm) with a bed base is provided for each worker. 	X
23. The bed/mattress is located 12 in or 30 cm off the floor.	X
24. The mattress provided is maintained in good condition.	X
25. There is a supply of clean blankets, sheets, pillow and pillowcase provided and available.	X
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Number of Active IAWs from 2016-2024



Number of IAW Re-inspections

Number of IAW Re-inspections per Year (2021-2024)



Operational Pressures

Mandated work increasing exponentially

- Number of inspected businesses
- Number of complaints/investigations

A direct result of increased tourism and economic growth and development witnessed within the Niagara Region

Planning For The Future

- Forecasted growth in IAW housing inspections
- Public Health Inspector capacity is diminishing due to the demands of growing mandated work
- Public Health Inspectors continued involvement ensures:
 - The availability of safe/suitable housing; and
 - The seamless arrival of IAW's to support employer's business needs

How can we achieve sustained IAW program delivery?

Through Cost Recovery

Plan: To move towards an approval inspection fee model in 2026

Purpose: To ensure sustainable program delivery for our local employers of International Agricultural Workers

Objectives:

- Reduce re-inspections
- Increase customer service
- Reduce wait times through embedded efficiencies
- Use technology to innovate and enhance service delivery

Cost Recovery Plan – January 1, 2026

IAW Program Delivery Hours / Service Delivery Hours = 1.28 FTE

1.28 FTE Costs / 570 IAW Inspections = \$250.79 per Inspection

Fee per Inspection = \$250.00

Fee per Re-inspection = \$125.00

Thank you!