



## Mark Sweeney, P. Ag., Consulting Horticulturist

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30619 Taylor Rd., Abbotsford, BC | 778-255-0726 | [markesweeney55@gmail.com](mailto:markesweeney55@gmail.com)

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**Agrologist Report**  
**Pertaining to Seasonal Agriculture Worker Accommodation**  
**at**  
**13000 Harris Road, Pitt Meadows, BC**

Prepared by:  
Mark Sweeney, P.Ag.  
Consulting Horticulturist  
[markesweeney55@gmail.com](mailto:markesweeney55@gmail.com)

**Applicant/Owner:**

Ryan Thiara, Thiara Farms

**Authoring Agrologist Credentials**

P. Ag designation, BC Institute of Agrologists

Education: BSc (Agr) UBC

Over 35 years of experience working in horticulture crop management, research and extension with BC Ministry of Agriculture. Currently working as a consulting horticulturist in the BC berry industry.

**Agricultural Rationale**

Thiara Farms owns and operates multiple blueberry farms in Pitt Meadows and Langley totaling 79 hectares total land area (67 hectares planted blueberry crop). Average annual production is 1.5 million lbs. Blueberries are the sole crop grown.

Blueberry growing is a very labour-intensive enterprise, requiring hundreds of person-hours per acre of skilled and semi-skilled labour on a year-round basis for tractor operations, irrigation management, pruning, harvesting and other activities.

As the supply of local farm workers is inadequate, most BC berry farms now participate in the federal Seasonal Agriculture Worker Program (SAWP) whereby they can bring in foreign workers to meet their labour needs. Over the last two years, due to the pandemic and demographics, the shortage of local workers has greatly intensified and farms are now even more dependent on foreign sources.


Thiara Farms currently employs 10 seasonal agriculture workers with accommodation at their Ford Rd farm. It now must increase its number of foreign workers to 40 workers in order to meet its labour requirements. For 2022, SAWP employees can stay for a 9 month work duration. While the workers are required on a year-round basis, the peak labour periods are at harvest in July and August and during the pruning season from October to March. Therefore, the timing and number of SAWP workers will be staggered and vary to comply with the program and to meet work demands.

To meet the requirement of the SAWP program, the farm needs to provide worker accommodation. As a result, they plan to construct accommodation for 40 workers at 13000 Harris Rd.

The proposed site is a 13.8 ha parcel with 10 hectares of producing blueberries. The proposed worker accommodation will consist of a two-story structure with a total living area of 358 sq m which will provide in excess of the minimum 7.44 sq m per person floor area. As the farm grows a total 67 hectares of blueberries, they are in compliance with the limit of ten persons for each 4.05 acres of land.

In my professional opinion, given the scale and labour demands of Thiara Farms, their proposed foreign worker housing plan is necessary and justified to maintain the viability of their farm operation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Sweeney', is centered below the text 'Sincerely,'.

Mark Sweeney, P.Ag.  
Consulting Horticulturist