

Employment of seasonal workers from overseas on farms in Herefordshire – 2011

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Seasonal workers from overseas on farms in Herefordshire 2011

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Summary

This report presents the full analysis of all information obtained from farms in Herefordshire about their expected employment of seasonal workers from overseas during the course of 2011. It replaces the interim report published in March 2011.

The results are based on the information provided by 19 farms in Herefordshire that expected to employ seasonal workers from overseas during the course of 2011, including four of the largest growers in the county: S & A Produce (Marden), Cobrey Farm (Ross-on-Wye), Homme Farm (Ross-on-Wye) and Haygrove Farm (Ledbury).

The total number of individual seasonal workers from overseas expected to be employed during the course of 2011 was 5,000. This represents a 10% increase (400 workers) in the overall number compared with 2010 - the first rise since 2008 - although it is still 25% lower than the 6,700 expected that year. However, changes in the overall number can be affected by some farms not responding every year; there may have been an even larger 'real' increase in numbers between 2010 and 2011 than the overall increase of 400 suggests - farms that responded in both years were expecting to employ 700 more workers between them.

The maximum number of seasonal workers expected to be working on the farms at any one time was 3,100 in May, dropping to 2,900 in June. The highest numbers of arrivals were expected during the period March to May. This follows the pattern started last year of earlier arrivals; peak months for arrivals have shifted from May-June (prior to 2010) to April-May (at least half of all arrivals since 2010).

As in previous years, more men (60%) were expected than women (40%) and no dependents were expected to come with the overseas workers during the course of 2011. The vast majority (82%) of seasonal workers were expected to be under 35 years old with a roughly equal split between 18-24 and 25-34 year-olds.

As has been the case since 2008, seasonal workers were expected to come mainly from Bulgaria (42%), Romania (20%) and Poland (17%). The majority of seasonal workers have been Bulgarian and Romanian since SAWS became exclusively for nationals of these countries in 2008, but 2011 is the first year that a greater proportion are expected to be Romanian than Polish.

All but one of the 17 farms responded stated that they provide accommodation for almost all of their workers (96% of all expected workers); the accommodation is mainly caravans/mobile homes.

Sixteen farms (94% of those who expected to recruit in 2011) said that they actively try and recruit workers who have worked for them before. Based on the responses to this question, around 1,900 (38%) of the 5,000 seasonal workers expected in 2011 may have worked in the county before.

Of the 17 farms that said that they intend to recruit seasonal workers from overseas in future years, seven expressed concerns about the future supply of workers. Most comments referred to the possible end of SAWS and/or increased competition for labour with other countries.

Introduction

The annual survey about seasonal workers from overseas on farms in Herefordshire (Annual Farm Survey) was launched to gather information about the numbers of seasonal workers from other countries employed on Herefordshire farms. This information helps the Council, Police and other local public and voluntary sector organisations anticipate demands on their services such as access to information and advice, public transport and health care.

West Mercia Constabulary had gathered some information from farmers about numbers that they expected to employ since 2006, with data entry and analysis support from Herefordshire Council's Research Team since 2007. Since 2010 the Research Team has run the whole survey on behalf of the Herefordshire Partnership, working with the Diversity Team's project officer for Migration and Integration in Rural Areas (MIRA) to ensure comprehensive coverage of farms.

Methodology

In response to feedback from some of the larger growers, this year's survey was sent out earlier than in previous years and was carried out in two phases so that farms who hadn't yet finalised their plans would still be able to respond. The questionnaire to gather the information was sent (by post or email where contact details had been provided before) to Herefordshire farms who are believed to employ seasonal workers from overseas (see appendix).

Farmers were asked to give their best estimates on:

- Total number of seasonal workers that they plan to recruit over the course of 2011
- Some biographic information about the seasonal workers (e.g. age and gender)
- Countries that these seasonal workers come from
- Accommodation provided for the seasonal workers

For further information, farmers were also asked about their previous experiences and future plans for recruiting seasonal workers from overseas.

Responses to the first phase were accepted up to the end of March, when the results were analysed and an interim summary report was published.

During the second phase of the survey, follow up contact was made with farms that hadn't responded since publishing the interim summary. The intension was that responses would be accepted up to the end of April, with a final report published in May, but this was extended to allow for as many responses as possible. There were four further responses received by early July 2011, which are included in the final report.

This report presents the final results of the 2011 survey of seasonal workers from overseas on farms in Herefordshire.

Results

Forms were sent to 52 farms, and some form of response was received from 24 of these, giving an overall response rate of 46%. Twenty-one farms completed the questionnaire, two provided some basic information about overall numbers over the phone or via email, and one requested to be removed from the survey contact list since they are no longer in business.

Of the 24 responses, 19 farms were expecting to employ seasonal workers during 2011 and five farms said that they would not be recruiting including the one who asked to be removed. Among the farms who expected to recruit seasonal workers from overseas in 2011, four farms responded for the first time to this survey.

Most of the largest farms recruiting seasonal workers from overseas who responded to the survey last year also responded this year; including Cobrey Farm (Ross-on-Wye), S & A Produce (Marden), Homme Farm (Ross-on-Wye) and Haygrove (Ledbury).

There were 23 responses to the 2010 survey; 7 of those who said they intended to employ seasonal workers from overseas in 2011 didn't respond this year – and between them they planned to recruit at least 240 workers last year.

Please note that the trend analysis presented throughout this report can be affected by different farms responding each year as well as reflecting real trends in seasonal workers coming to Herefordshire.

Total number expected

A total of 5,000 individual workers from overseas were expected to be employed by 19 farms in Herefordshire during the course of 2011.

Considering the overall response, this suggests a 10% increase compared to the total expected in 2010 (4,600) – although is still significantly (25%) lower than the 6,700 expected in 2008. However, this figure is particularly sensitive to variations in which farms respond, so it is worth breaking the changes down by whether they are due to 'real' trends, or a result of individual farms responding in one year but not another.

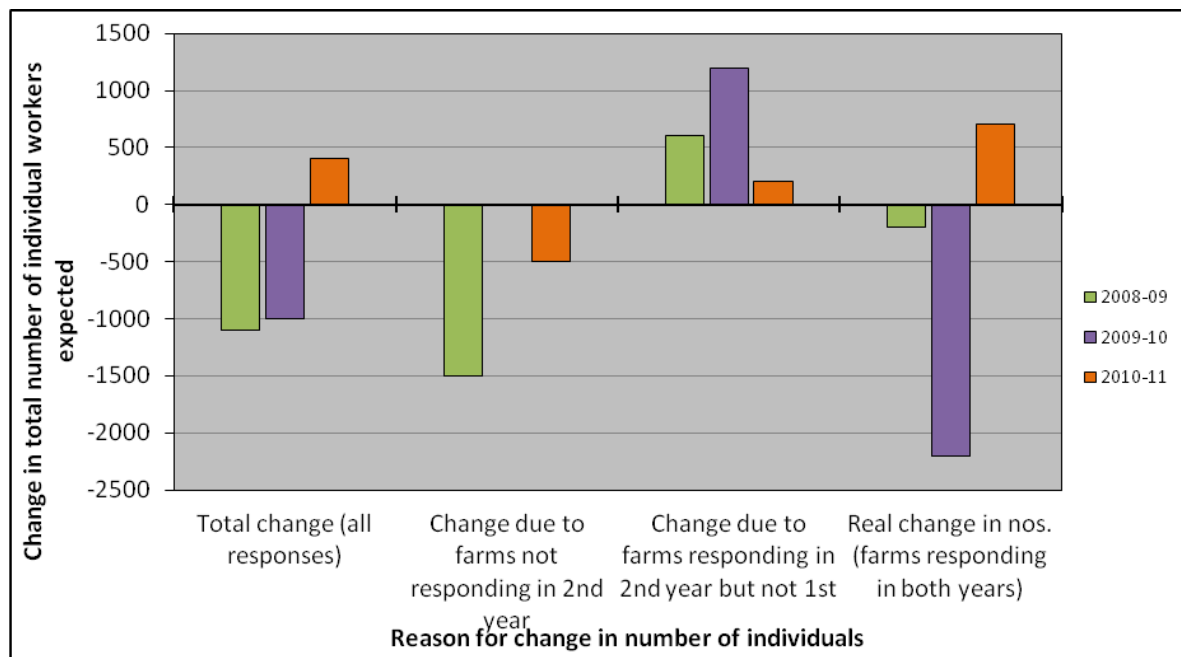
Chart 1 illustrates the impact that this can have, an apparent large decline (-1,100) between 2008 and 2009 (the green bars) was mainly a result of farmers responding in 2008 but not in 2009. By contrast an overall decline of 1,000 between 2009 and 2010 (purple bars) was masking a 'real' decline of twice this amount because of several farms responding in 2010 but not 2009.

When comparing 2011 to 2010 (orange bars), the overall increase of 400 masks a 'real' increase of 700 workers based on the farms that responded in both years. The overall increase includes this, plus a few farms responding in 2011 but not in 2010 (a total increase of 900), but is counteracted by the few farms that responded in 2010 but not in 2011 (a decline of 500).

All but two of the 14 farms who responded to the survey both in 2010 and 2011 were expecting to recruit more seasonal workers in 2011. Among these, there were five farms expecting to recruit at least 50 more individual workers in 2011 than in 2010.

The overall conclusion regarding trends in total numbers therefore, is that numbers of expected individual seasonal workers have increased for the first time in 2011 since 2008.

Chart 1: Changes in total number of individuals between different survey years by the reason for change



Please note that not all respondents answered every question, so the following analysis about the characteristics of the seasonal workers may not include all 5,000 individual workers expected to be employed during 2011.

Gender

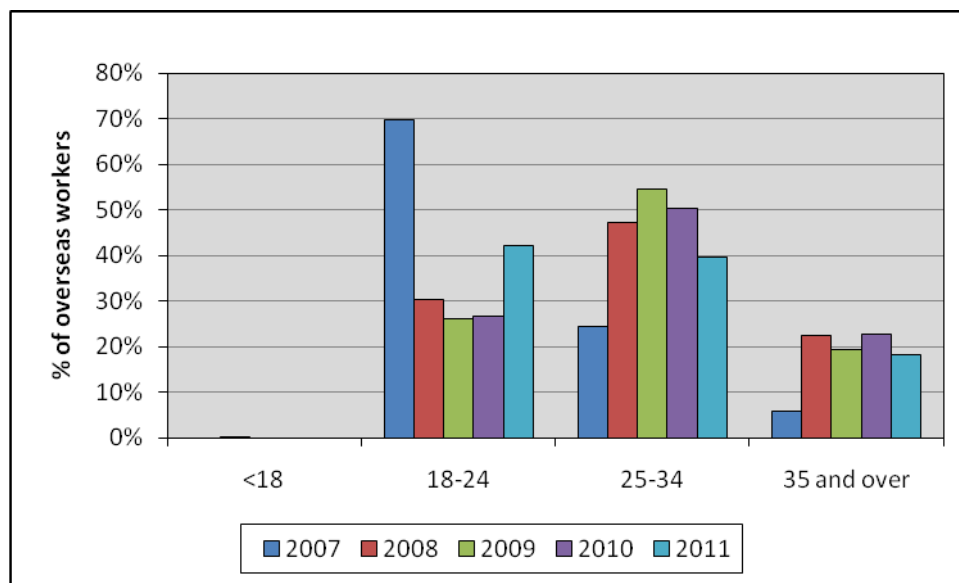
As in previous years, the majority (60%) of seasonal workers were expected to be men; 40% were expected to be women.

Age groups

As in previous years, the vast majority (82%) of seasonal workers were expected to be under 35 years old with roughly equal proportions aged 18-24 and 25-34. A further 18% were expected to be over 35, mostly aged 35-44.

The most noticeable change this year compared to previous years was the increase in the proportion of workers aged 18-24 years: still much less than in 2007, but a lot higher than all years since. The proportion aged 25-34 years has decreased but not reached the initial levels seen in 2007, although it is much lower than all years since. The proportion aged 35 years and over has remained at a similar level for the last four years.

Chart 2: Age group of seasonal workers from overseas expected to be employed on farms in Herefordshire in 2011



Dependents

From the information received, no dependents were expected to come with the seasonal workers from overseas in 2011 – the same as since 2009. In 2008, 17 dependents were expected to accompany the seasonal workers and in 2007, there were 5 dependents expected.

Nationality

Just under two thirds (63%) of the expected seasonal workers from overseas in 2011 would be recruited through the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS), which is similar to 2010 (65%) and 2009 (60%) but significantly higher than 2008 (43%) and 2007 (39%) – although please note that these trends may be affected by individual farms responding in one year and not another.

This quota based scheme enables farmers to recruit temporary overseas workers to carry out planting and gathering crops, on-farm processing and packing of crops and handling livestock.

Prior to 2007 SAWS applied to students from outside the European Economic Area, but from January 2008 it has been exclusively for Bulgarian and Romanian nationals as part of the transitional controls on migration from these ‘A2’ states when they joined the European Union.

Workers arriving under SAWS are issued with a work card which gives them permission to work for one employer for a fixed period of five weeks up to six months. They must be paid at least the Agricultural Minimum Wage and be provided with accommodation by the farmer or grower employing them.

The scheme is managed by nine approved operators on behalf of Home Office; operators in Herefordshire are SFC Personnel, Fruitful Jobs, Concordia, HOPS Labour Solutions, SASTAK , S & A Produce and Haygrove.

The Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS) is due to end this year, although it could be extended until the end of 2013 under EU laws about migration controls on new member states.¹ The government will be making a decision later this year².

As shown in Chart 3, just over two thirds (68%) of the SAWS workers in 2011 were expected to come from Bulgaria and a third (32%) from Romania - the same pattern as last year, which saw an increase in the proportion from Romania. The significant change between 2007 and 2008 was as a result of SAWS becoming exclusive to Bulgaria and Romania.

Chart 3: Nationality of seasonal workers expected to be employed on farms in Herefordshire through SAWS over the years.

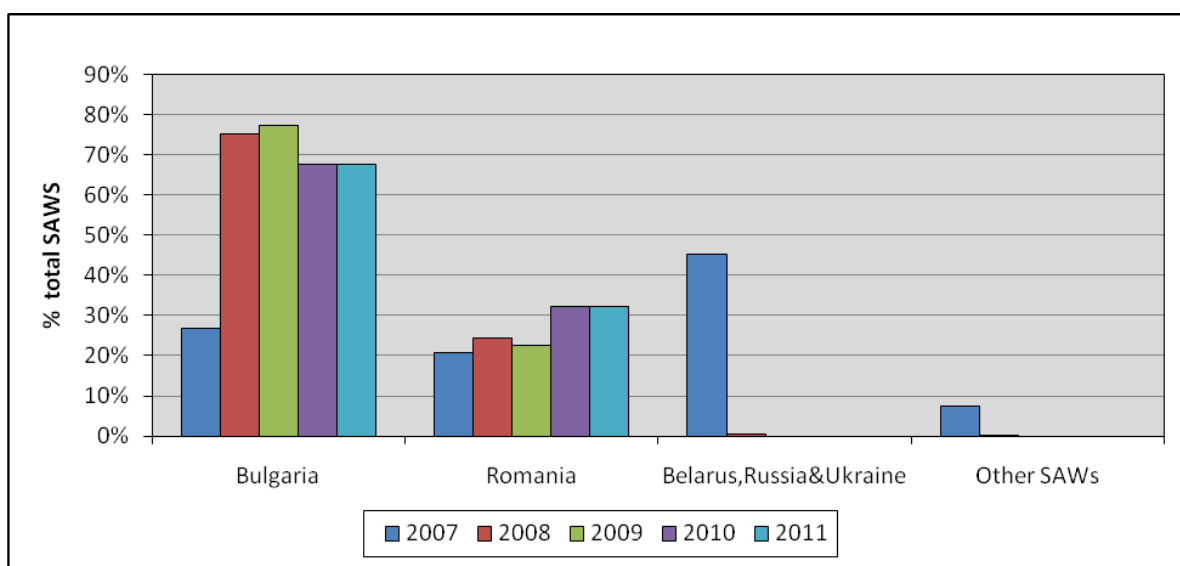
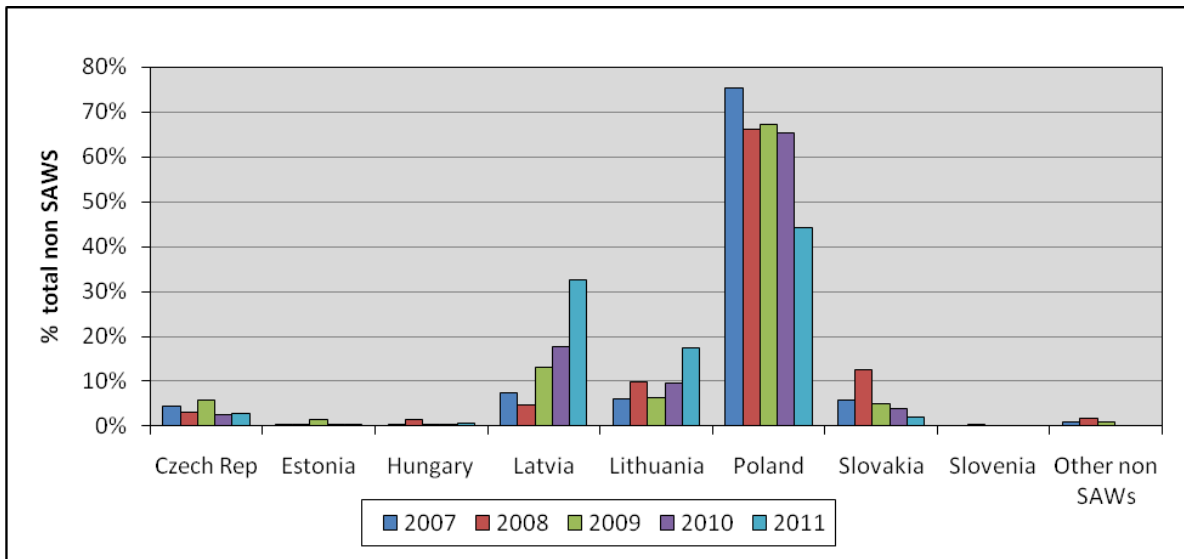


Chart 4 shows that even though there has been a drop compared to previous years, the biggest proportion of seasonal workers from countries not covered by SAWS were still expected to be from Poland (44%). Most of the remainder were expected to come from Latvia (33%) and Lithuania (17%).

The expectations for this year show a continuation of trends seen since 2007, that is declining proportions expected from Poland (from 75% to 44%) and increasing proportions expected from Latvia (from 7% to 33%) and Lithuania (from 6% to 17%).

¹ For more details see:
<http://archive.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/food/policy/partnership/fvtf/documents/briefing-fv-labour.pdf>
² www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm110513/text/110513w0001.htm

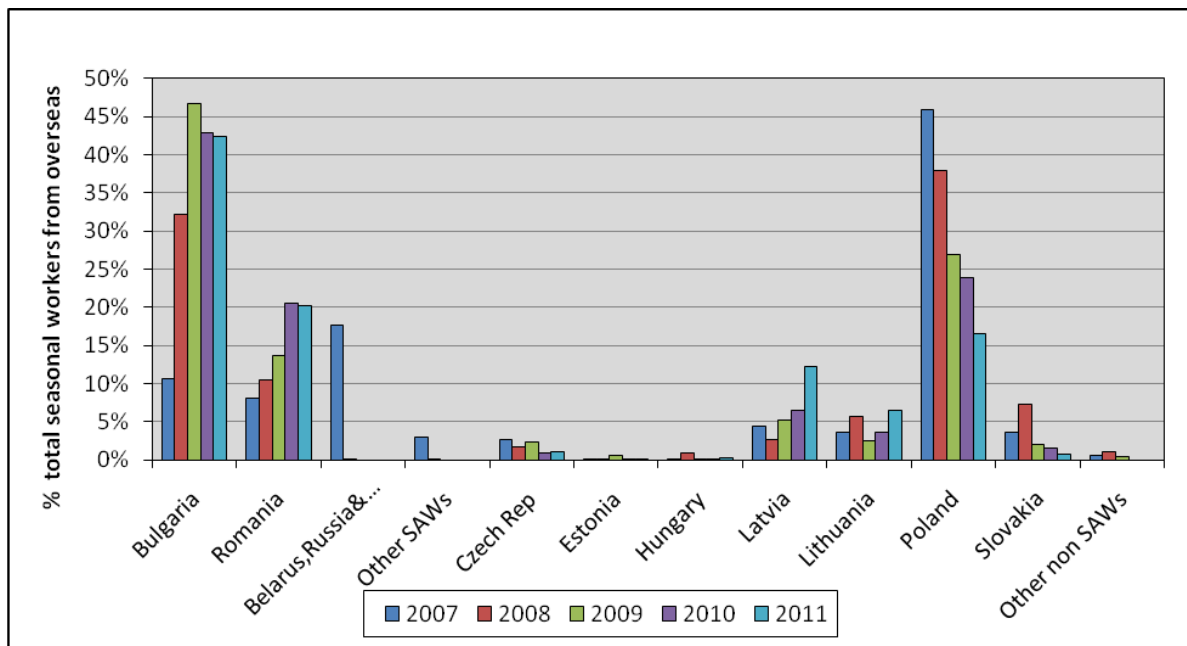
Chart 4: Nationality of seasonal workers expected to be employed on farms in Herefordshire via other means (non – SAWS) over the years



All of the countries shown in chart 4 became European Union member states in 2004. People from these countries are allowed to work in the UK without any restriction since 1st May 2011³. Prior to that people from these countries were able to work in the UK without permission, but if they wished to work for an employer here for more than a month they were required to register on the Worker Registration Scheme.

Chart 5 shows that since 2009 regardless of the scheme permitting work the highest proportion of workers have been expected to be from Bulgaria (around 42%). Romania (20%) has become the second highest in 2011 though it was Poland (17% in 2011) in previous years.

Chart 5: Nationality of all seasonal workers expected to be employed on farms in Herefordshire (SAWS + non – SAWS)



³ See: www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk/eea/wrs/

Seasonality

In order to identify the peak months for the employment of seasonal agricultural workers, farms were asked to estimate:

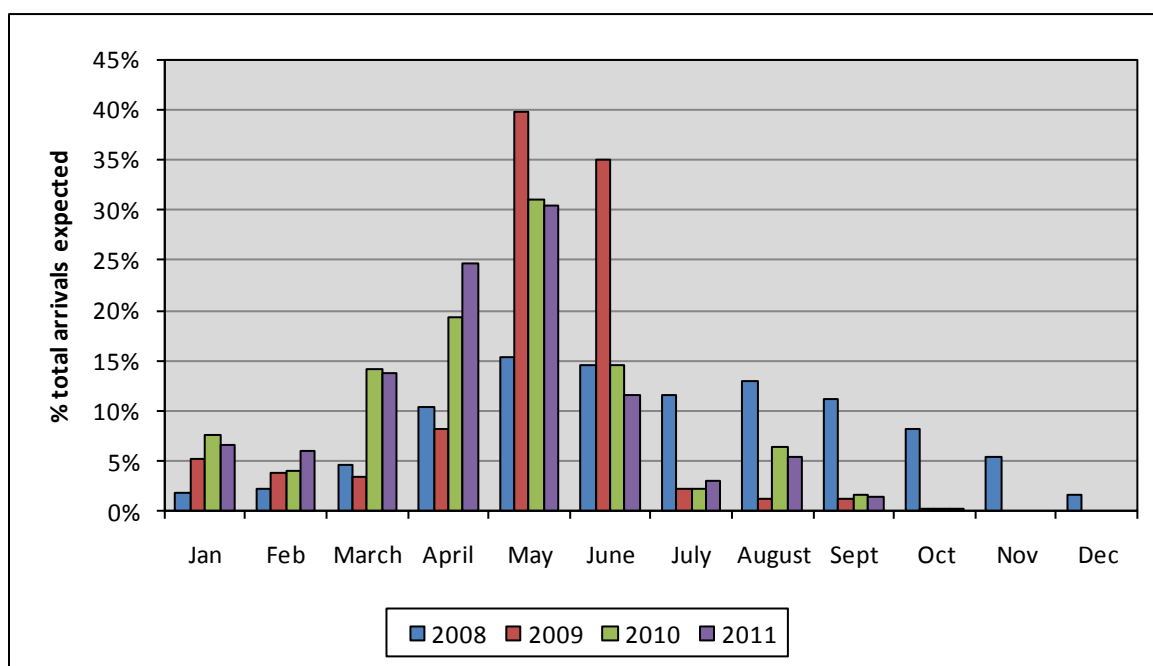
- The total number of individual seasonal workers that they expected to arrive during the course of the month.
- The maximum number of seasonal workers that they expected to employ at any one point in the month.

The maximum number of overseas workers at any point of the month is important but it does not give a measure of those who are already staying in the farm or number of new arrivals or how many left the farm during the month. Hence, requested for information about total arrivals of seasonal workers (total new individuals) that are expected during the course of the month as well.

Chart 6 shows the arrivals of overseas workers during the course of each month as a proportion of all arrivals expected over the year. As last year, the highest proportion of arrivals in 2011 were expected in May (30%), whilst significant proportions of seasonal workers were also expected in March (14%), April (25%) and also in June (12%).

The arrivals appear to have been getting earlier over the last few years with peak months shifting from May and June to April and May (around 55% of arrivals in 2011). For the first time, a larger proportion was expected to arrive in March this year (14%) than in June (12%). The proportions arriving in January and February have increased since 2008, whilst arrivals after June have fallen with none expected after September.

Chart 6: Arrivals of seasonal workers expected per month as a proportion of total arrivals expected on farms in Herefordshire.

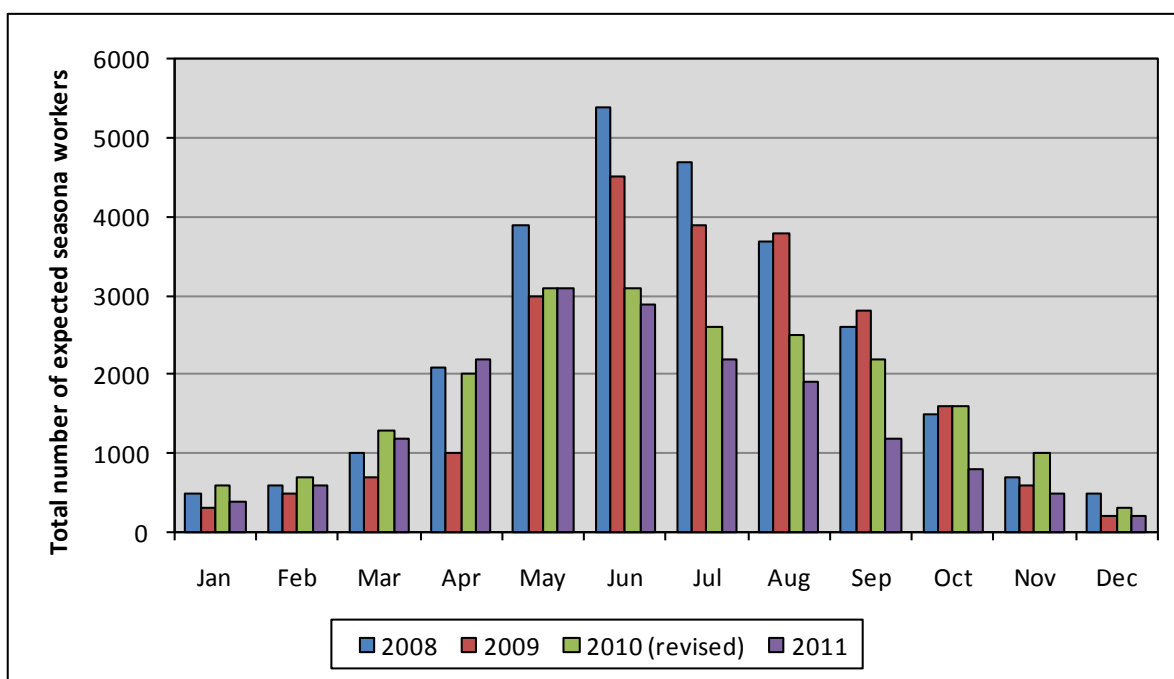


As Chart 7 shows, in terms of the maximum number of expected workers from overseas employed at any point of the month, the peak months in 2011 were expected to be May (3,100) and June (2,900), broadly similar to the revised figures for 2010 (see note under chart 7).

The overseas workers were mainly expected to be employed from March to September, though some are expected to be employed on the farms during the winter months too. This is a similar period to 2010 but wider than in previous years (May-October in 2009 and April-October in 2008) reflecting the fact that more early arrivals have been expected since 2010.

Please note that the analysis of trends in the maximum numbers is particularly sensitive to variations in which farms answer the question each year, and how accurately they are able to predict their monthly numbers. Nevertheless, as well as the season appearing to be widening, peak months appear to be getting earlier: May and June in the last two years compared to June and July in previous years.

Chart 7: Maximum number of seasonal workers from overseas expected to be employed on Herefordshire farms per month.



NB: an error in the maximum monthly figures published in the 2010 report has been corrected in the revised figures shown in this chart.

Expected length of stay

The farmers were asked whether any of their seasonal workers from overseas would already be living in Herefordshire, and whether they expect any to stay for more than a year. The reasons for asking these questions are to try and understand patterns of short term migration to the country, as well as the fact that those workers already living in the country may have different needs to new arrivals.

Four farms said that a total of approximately 100 workers (2% of total individuals) would already be living in the UK, 77% of whom would already be living in Herefordshire. This is about twice as many as in 2010, where approximately 50 seasonal workers (1% of total individuals) were already lived in UK, of which 86% were already in Herefordshire.

Six farms stated that they expect some of their overseas workers will stay in Herefordshire or the UK for more than one year; three of these also expected to employ people who were already living in the county.

Variation during the course of the year in terms of the gender, age group or nationality

One farm stated that students will be arriving during April-June. This information might be useful to service providers in relation to a specific farm but is not enough to make overall conclusions.

Provision of accommodation

Farmers that recruit SAWS workers are required to be able to provide them with clean and sanitary accommodation. As the majority of seasonal workers in Herefordshire are expected to be recruited under SAWS it is unsurprising that all but one of the 16 farms that answered this question stated that they will provide accommodation for their expected workers in 2011.

According to the responses, the vast majority (96%) of seasonal workers are accommodated by their employer. The most common type of accommodation, provided by 14 of these farms, are "caravans/mobile homes". Two farms said "cottage/house", and two others said "cabins" and "pods".

Method of recruitment of overseas workers

Of the 19 farms who expect to recruit seasonal workers from overseas, 17 farms answered this question:

- 7 recruit their staff via a mixture of going to an agency and directly by themselves;
- 4 recruit only through an agency;
- 6 directly source all of their seasonal work force themselves.

The most commonly stated agencies by these farms are "Concordia", "Fruitful", "HOPS" and "Sastack". These are all SAWS multiple operators who recruit on behalf of farmers.

All but one of the 17 farms that provided information said that they actively try and recruit workers who have worked for them before. Five of these expected returnees to make up at least 50% of their seasonal workforce from overseas in 2011; one farm expected all of their seasonal workers to have worked for them before.

Based on the responses to this question, around 1,900 (38%) of the 5,000 seasonal workers expected in 2011 may have worked in the county before.

Experience last year

In recognition of the fact that each year's survey asks for best estimates for year ahead, and that this might not reflect what actually happened, farmers were asked about their experience last year.

All but one of the 18 farms that provided any information said that they had recruited seasonal workers from overseas last year and also expected to recruit in future years. Of these 17 farms, 15 said that they recruited as many over the course of 2010 as they expected to, whilst the other two recruited fewer seasonal workers from overseas than they

expected. One of the farms which recruited seasonal workers in 2010 closed their pack house during the course of the year and made their staff redundant. They won't recruit workers in this year or in the future.

Four of the 15 farms who said they recruited as many over the course of 2010 as they expected stated that they had more seasonal workers than they needed at some point last year; they were laid off or given reduced hours. One of the two farms who had recruited fewer than expected but still had more than they needed had delayed the start dates and rotated work.

Plans for future years

Sixteen of the 19 farms who were recruiting this year expected to employ seasonal workers in the future years; the remaining didn't provide this information.

Respondents were asked whether they have any concerns about the future supply of seasonal workers from overseas; seven expressed a concern.

Amongst the concerns expressed, there were five comments about SAWS being due to end this year and three mentions of competition for labour with other countries. Another referred to the difficulty in finding the right people for the jobs.

The exact comments were:

"Yes, if SAWS was to finish end 2011, we would struggle to get our crop picked efficiently and cost effectively."

"What will happen when the SAWS scheme ends and EU economies came out of recession"

"Concerned about end date of SAWS seasonal workers, This provides a supply of focussed, short term workers. Generally all staff not as dedicated; prefer more glamorous jobs."

"As the borders are opened up so the employment, eastern Europeans will find work closer to home, SAWS ending also means more competition for labour. Our industry is labour dependent!"

"As the prosperity of other countries increases it will be harder to get people to come to the UK because of low wages."

"Man be difficult if SAWS disappears"

"Yes! Its getting more difficult to get right people and people does not stay longer than 2 months"

Appendix: Questionnaire

Seasonal workers from overseas on farms in Herefordshire 2011

By **seasonal workers from overseas** we mean foreign nationals who are employed on a temporary basis, probably over the growing season. They may be Bulgarians or Romanians recruited via the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS) or people from other countries (e.g. Poland) who don't need permission to work. These seasonal workers could arrive directly from abroad, or could already be in Herefordshire or elsewhere in the UK.

This form is divided into four sections; asking for your best estimates for this year, your experience last year, your thoughts for the future and finally your contact details. If you **don't** employ seasonal workers from overseas, just answer 'no' to questions 1, 13 and 16, fill in your contact details and return the form.

Your completed questionnaire will be treated in strict confidence by the Herefordshire Council Research Team. The Research Team will use the information you give for statistical analysis and will only publish it in summary and / or anonymised form. We will share some individual information (e.g. maximum number employed at any one time; whether accommodation is provided) with other Herefordshire Council and NHS Herefordshire departments for service planning purposes.

Section 1: Your best estimates about this year

Q1 Do you expect to employ any seasonal workers from overseas on your farm over the course of 2011?

Yes No

If not, please go to section 2

Q2 If yes, **how many seasonal workers from overseas** do you expect to employ on your farm over the course of 2011 (i.e. the **total number of individuals arriving to work**)

Q3 Based on the total from question 2, what numbers of **males and females** would you expect over the course of 2011?

Male	Female	Total
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Q4 Based on the total from question 2, what number of people would you expect over the course of 2011 in each of the **age groups** below?

<18	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Q5 Would you expect any of these seasonal workers to bring **dependents** with them? If so, what numbers would you expect over the course of 2011 in each of the age groups below?

<4 (i.e. pre-school age)

4-11 (i.e. primary school age)

11-15 (i.e. secondary school age)

Other (e.g. spouse/partner who is not working)

Q6 Based on the total from question 2, what number would you expect over the course of 2011 **from each of the countries** listed below?

Countries covered by SAWS

Bulgaria

Romania

Total SAWS

Other countries

Czech rep.

Estonia

Hungary

Latvia

Lithuania

Poland

Slovakia

Slovenia

Other, please specify and state the number:

Total non SAWS

Q7 Now thinking about **each month in turn**, please use the table below to give estimates for:

a) The number of individual seasonal workers from overseas that you expect to arrive for work on your farm(s) **during the course of the month** (unless any were already working for you last December, this should equal the total from question 2)

b) The maximum number of seasonal workers from overseas that you expect to employ **at any point in the month**.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Arrivals (a)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Maximum (b)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Q8a i) Do you expect that any of the seasonal workers from overseas that you employ will **already be living in Herefordshire or in the UK?**

 Yes

 No

ii) If yes, how many?

Herefordshire

UK

Total

Q8b i) Do you expect that any of the newly arrived workers from overseas will **stay in Herefordshire or elsewhere in the UK for more than a year?**

 Yes

 No

ii) If yes, how many?

Q9 Would you expect there to be any marked variation during the course of the year in terms of the gender, age group or nationality? (e.g. an influx of students from a particular country in particular months). If so, please use the space below to give details.

Q10a Do you **provide accommodation** for any of the seasonal workers you employ?

Yes No

Q10b i) If yes, based on the total from question 2 please indicate how many individual seasonal workers from overseas you will accommodate in each of the following types:

Caravans/ mobile homes

Cottage/ house

Other (please specify)

Total

ii) What is the maximum number of people that will be accommodated at any one time?

Q11a How do you recruit your staff?

Directly sourced ourselves Through an agency

Q11b If agency (ies) used, please specify which:

Q12a Do you actively try and recruit seasonal workers who have **worked for you before**?

Yes No

Q12b If yes, how many of the total from question 2 would you expect to have worked for you before?

Section 2: Your experience last year

Q13 Did you employ any seasonal workers from overseas during 2010?

Yes No (Please go to section 3)

Q14a Broadly speaking, did you employ as many over the course of 2010 as you expected to this time last year?

Yes No - fewer No - more

Q14b If no, please say why

Q15a Was there any point in 2010 when you had more seasonal workers than you needed?

Yes

No

Q15b If yes, how did you deal with the situation? (tick all that apply)

Reduced hours

Laid off

Other (please specify)

Section 3: Considering future years (i.e. 2012 and beyond)

Q16a Do you expect to employ seasonal workers from overseas in the future?

Yes

No (please go to section 4)

Q16b If no, please say why and what you will do instead.

Q17 Do you have any concerns about the future supply of seasonal workers from overseas? Please give details below.

Section 4: Contact details

Q18 Please provide the address of the farm and contact details of someone who could answer any queries about the figures (if necessary):

Name:

Address:

Post code:

Tel. number:

E mail:

Q19 Do the seasonal workers from overseas work at this address?

Yes

No

Q19a If no, please give postcode(s) for the farm(s) where they work (with rough numbers at each if more than one):

Many thanks for taking the time and trouble to complete this form.

Please return in the reply paid envelope provided. If the reply paid envelope has been mislaid, please send your completed questionnaire to: Herefordshire Council Research Team, FREEPOST SWC4816, PO Box 4, Hereford, HR4 0BR

A report of the overall findings will be published on our website (www.herefordshire.gov.uk/factsandfigures) by the end of May 2011, or tick here if you would like us to send or email you a copy.