

Submitter information

Please provide your name and phone number, and preferred email address for contact if it is different from the one used to send this form:

s 9(2)(a), s 9(2)(g)(i)

In what capacity are you providing feedback?

e.g. on behalf of: your company, the company you work for, an industry organisation, a union, a licensed immigration adviser etc.

I am a director of our farming business that employs farm staff

If you are representing a company or group, what is the name of that group?

What industry or industries does that group work in?

We farm dairy cows and sheep.

In your company or industry, what are the most common occupations for migrant workers?

Herd managers.

What visa categories are commonly used by those workers?

i.e. resident visa, Essential Skills work visa, Work-to-Residence work visa (under the Talent or Long Term Skill Shortage List categories), Post-Study work visa (open or employer assisted), open work visa.

Essential skills or Work to Residence

Only answer the following questions if you directly employ migrant workers:

How many migrant workers do you currently employ? (Refer to the visa categories in the question above)

2

Have you supported an Essential Skills visa application for any of these workers?

No

Using wage or salary information to help determine skill level and access to Essential Skills migrants

Proposal 1: Introduction of remuneration thresholds to determine skill levels and associated visa conditions for Essential Skills visas

Consider the proposal of aligning the remuneration thresholds for the Essential Skills visa with the remuneration thresholds for the Skilled Migrant Category.

What impacts or implications do you foresee from defining lower-, mid- and higher-skilled Essential Skills migrants in this way?

Give details of the occupations or sectors and wage or salary levels you are thinking of.

Pay levels should be based on industry standards and assessments of experience. It would worry me that farmers would feel forced to pay wages higher than they could reasonably afford just to enable them to get the staff that they need. This would have a negative effect on the industry undermining profitability and unnecessarily increasing overall wages to the sector. This threshold would need to include total package including fringe benefits farm staff receive such as house etc.

Reinforcing the temporary nature of the Essential Skills visa and managing the settlement expectations of temporary migrants

Proposal 2a: Introduction of a maximum duration for lower-skilled Essential Skills migrants

Consider the option of a three years for a maximum duration for lower-skilled Essential Skills visas.

What impacts or implications do you foresee from the proposed maximum duration for lower-skilled Essential Skills visa holders?

Give details of the occupations and industries you are thinking of.

Mainly uncertainty for staff and employers. Farm staff are just getting well trained and more valuable after this timeframe as they've experienced multiple seasons within the farming calendar year and be lost to the industry would be a waste of the effort and training put in over the previous years. Maybe this wouldn't encourage people to invest in their staff as they do now.

The time frame should be constantly assess every 2 years or so based on contribution to local/regional society, good behaviour, language, skills development, investment and such like.

Proposal 2b: Introduction of stand down period for lower-skilled Essential Skills migrants

Consider the option for a year-long stand down period following the maximum duration for lower-skilled Essential Skills visas.

What impacts or implications do you foresee from these proposed changes?

Give details of the occupations and industries you are thinking of.

From a farming standpoint we could lose these valuable employees for good and along with it all their acquired knowledge and skill set to other countries. We couldn't just employ someone else for a year and then expect to get the original one back after a year stand down. What would we do with the staff member that replaced them we can't just fire them.

Just seems a little silly for a farming business.

Proposal 3: Require the partners of lower-skilled Essential Skills visa holders to meet the requirements for a visa in their own right

Consider the proposal to require the partners of lower-skilled Essential Skills visa holders to meet the requirements for a visa in their own right.

What impacts or implications do you foresee from these proposed changes?

Give details of the occupations and industries you are thinking of.

Again agree with this in part, partners should have to apply for visa as well. There is real merit in assessing them as a couple in terms of their joint contribution, development, and investment into NZ. Only issue would be that we wouldn't want families to be split up if that was the case. Partners in a rural environment are critical to looking after each other mentally and physically. Farming is a lonely job and support is needed. Also having actively engaged young people with families that help out local schools and such like are a fantastic way to ensure funding of rural based amenities. We really need families in our rural areas to stimulate and retain our regional economies.

Proposal 4: Require the children of lower-skilled Essential Skills visa holders to meet the requirements for a visa in their own right

Consider the proposal to require the children of lower-skilled Essential Skills visa holders to meet the requirements for a visa in their own right.

What impacts or implications do you foresee from these proposed changes?

Give details of the occupations and industries you are thinking of.

Not sure here. Just refer to comments above about wanting families. That those families contribute and aren't a burden, speak good English and invest in our communities both in kind and in cash.

Reinforce that Essential Skills visas should only be granted for the period for which the employment is offered

Proposal 5: Make it explicit how the 'period of employment' condition applies to seasonal work

Consider the option to reinforce that Essential Skills visas for seasonal work are only for the length of the season and that the offer of employment must match the length of the season.

What impacts or implications do you foresee from these options?

Give details of the occupations or sectors you think are likely to be affected.

Consider the list of seasonal occupations being considered.

Are there any seasonal occupations that should be added or removed from this list? Why?

Consider the list of seasonal occupations being considered.

If you employ seasonal staff, or represent a sector with seasonal staff:

- What are the occupations of the seasonal staff within the sector that you are commenting on?
- For each of the occupations that you have identified, what is the typical period that you require seasonal staff to cover (e.g the peak of the season)?