**Level 2: Future proofing influence - Political**

**Teacher Note:**This worksheet provides an example of **a political influence**.

**Discussion questions** - Stimulate discussion and understanding of visas and the impact of these on the primary sector.

**New seasonal work visas a boost for agriculture**

**Federated Farmers of New Zealand**

Medium shot of a person

AI-generated content may be incorrect.Two new forms of seasonal work visas will give farmers and growers better access and certainty for securing skilled staff in specialised roles, Federated Farmers (Feds) says.

“Once again this Government has listened carefully to what industries need to keep productivity ticking over, and responded with practical and balanced policy settings,” Feds immigration and employment spokesperson Karl Dean says.

Karl Dean says the two new forms of visa will help farm employers fill specialised roles at seasonal workload crunch points.

“Federated Farmers and allied sector representatives have been working with Minister Erica Stanford and her officials on this and we’re very pleased with the outcome.”

Sheep scanners, shearers, rural contracting mobile plant operators and others in specialist roles often move between the southern and northern hemispheres chasing work in the busy seasons.

“It will really give employers a lot more certainty to know those specialised workers who prove themselves can return for subsequent seasons for three years under the new Global Workforce Seasonal Visa.”

Likewise, the new Peak Seasonal Visa (PSV) gives farmers, rural contractors and the meat processing industry more confidence they can secure staff when seasonal workloads ramp up, Dean says.

“Employers can now recruit overseas for calf rearers, relief milkers, wool handlers, meat boners and process workers, to help ensure they have the numbers they need for those seasonal crunch points.   Until now, the Working Holiday Visa has served as a pseudo seasonal visa for these kinds of workers, but not all countries can access this visa, and age restrictions cut people out from applying,” Dean says.  “The PSV is more practical for both employers and seasonal workers and should prove much better for tracking uptake and seasonal workforce needs.”

Employers will need to advertise these seasonal roles, and engage with the Ministry of Social Development, to ensure New Zealand workers continue to be prioritised.

“Farmers prefer to hire able Kiwis, but the fact is they’re often just not willing or available to work in the more remote rural areas,” Dean says.  “Having the option of employing migrant workers provides a much-needed lifeline for many farming employers.  Without them, productivity suffers, and existing team members are at risk of burning out during seasonal peak workloads.”

These two visas, alongside last year’s changes to the Accredited Employer Work Visa, mean farmers and growers now have a suite of migrant worker settings that are fit-for-purpose, and attractive to skilled overseas workers.

“Now we just need a smooth transition for highly skilled agricultural workers into ‘green list’ roles and pathways to permanent residency,” Dean says.   “We’ll continue to work with the Minister on that.”

**Discussion Questions.**

1. What is the purpose of the two new seasonal work visas mentioned in the article?
2. How do these new visas help New Zealand farms during their busiest times of the year?
3. What might happen to farm productivity if there were not enough workers available during peak seasons?
4. Why do you think some New Zealanders do not want to work in rural or seasonal jobs?
5. How might having overseas workers affect small rural communities, both positively and negatively?
6. How can bringing in overseas workers reduce stress for the workers already on the farm?
7. Why is it important that migrant workers have proper work visas instead of just coming on working holiday visas?
8. How do these visas help "future-proof" the agriculture industry in New Zealand?
9. What could happen to our food supply and exports, if there are not enough workers to grow and process farm products?
10. In the box below, are statements related to seasonal work visa policies and their role in future-proofing the agricultural sector.

Match each statement to the correct future proofing influence it represents.

* Political Influences
* Social Influences
* Ethical Influences
* Economic Influences

**Match each statement to the correct future proofing influence it represents.**

* The Government is listening to sector needs, showing a positive relationship between industry groups like Federated Farmers and policymakers.
* Ethical concerns are acknowledged by requiring employers to try and hire local workers first, upholding fairness in employment practices.
* With seasonal workers available, existing farm teams are less likely to be overworked, reducing the risk of burnout.
* Access to skilled seasonal workers during peak periods (e.g., calving, shearing) keeps farm operations running efficiently, preventing loss of income due to labour shortages.
* There is an indication of future collaboration on Green List roles and residency pathways, indicating continuing political engagement in labour market reform.
* Ensuring consistent labour helps maintain rural community wellbeing and supports the continuation of farming as a viable lifestyle and career.
* Providing structured, legal pathways for seasonal employment is more ethical than relying on informal or temporary schemes. It gives workers greater job security, clarity, and protection.
* Returning skilled workers over multiple seasons reduces the need for repeated training, increasing cost-efficiency.
* The creation of two new visa types reflects a political shift toward more tailored immigration policies, responding to sector-specific labour demands.
* Kiwi workers are often not available or willing to work in remote rural areas. Seasonal visas help fill these gaps in the agricultural workforce.
* By creating dedicated visas, the government is addressing ethical concerns about relying on working holidaymakers who may not have proper labour protections or long-term certainty.
* The Global Workforce Seasonal Visa and Peak Seasonal Visa (PSV) provide more reliable and flexible options compared to the previously limited Working Holiday Visa, helping agribusinesses plan more accurately.
* The new PSV opens access to workers from a wider range of countries, removing unfair age and nationality restrictions previously associated with the Working Holiday Visa.
* Employers are still required to engage with the Ministry of Social Development and advertise locally before hiring overseas workers, reflecting a political commitment to prioritising New Zealand workers.
* The agricultural sector relies on seasonal labour. These visa changes support regional economic stability by ensuring the labour needed for production and processing is available.

**Discussion Answers**

1. What is the purpose of the two new seasonal work visas mentioned in the article?

The purpose of the Global Workforce Seasonal Visa and the Peak Seasonal Visa is to help New Zealand farmers and rural employers get skilled workers during the busiest times of the year, like shearing or calving. These visas make it easier for overseas workers to come back each year and help fill jobs that are hard to staff with local workers.

1. How do these new visas help New Zealand farms during their busiest times of the year?

The visas give farmers and agribusinesses access to experienced workers when they need them most. This helps ensure important tasks like milking, shearing, harvesting crops or processing meat happen on time, without delays or stress on the existing staff.

1. What might happen to farm productivity if there were not enough workers available during peak seasons?

If there are not enough workers, this could lead to crops not planted or harvested, more stress for the workers already on the farm, lower productivity and financial losses.

1. Why do you think some New Zealanders do not want to work in rural or seasonal jobs?

There are several reasons why New Zealanders may not want these jobs. These

include:

* They are often located in remote areas.
* The work can be physically hard.
* It is usually short-term or seasonal, so it is not always a stable income.
* Some people may not want to move away from cities or family.

1. How might having overseas workers affect small rural communities, both positively and negatively?

Positively:

* Help keep farms, agribusinesses running smoothly.
* Reduces stress
* Brings new cultures and skills to the area.
* Supports local businesses like shops and cafes.

Negatively:

* There may be housing shortages or pressure on local services.
* If not managed well, it could cause tension or misunderstandings between locals and migrants due to language and cultural differences.

1. How can bringing in overseas workers reduce stress for the workers already on the farm?

With more help on the farm, the current staff will not have to work extra-long hours or handle too many jobs by themselves. It helps prevent burnout, improves mental health, and keeps the workplace safer and more positive.

1. Why is it important that migrant workers have proper work visas instead of just coming on working holiday visas?

* Provides more job security to migrant workers.
* They are protected by New Zealand labour laws.
* Help employers plan better by knowing workers can return each season.
* Reduce the risk of workers being underpaid or mistreated.

1. How do these visas help "future-proof" the agriculture industry in New Zealand?

They give farmers and agribusinesses a reliable way to access skilled labour for years to come. That helps ensure:

* Farming operations continue smoothly.
* Food production remains strong.
* The industry can adapt to labour shortages, especially if local workers are unavailable.

1. What could happen to our food supply and exports if there are not enough workers to grow and process farm products?

There could be:

* Food shortages or delays in getting food to processing plants for market.
* Higher prices for consumers.
* Loss of export income, since New Zealand sells a lot of food overseas.
* Damage to New Zealand’s reputation as a reliable food producer.

1. Below are several statements related to seasonal work visa policies and their role in future -proofing the agricultural sector.  
   Match each statement to the correct future proofing influence it represents.

**Political Influences**

* The Government is listening to sector needs, showing a positive relationship between industry groups like Federated Farmers and policymakers.
* The creation of two new visa types reflects a political shift toward more tailored immigration policies, responding to sector-specific labour demands.
* Employers are still required to engage with Ministry of Social Development and advertise locally before hiring overseas workers, reflecting a political commitment to prioritising New Zealand workers.
* There is an indication of future collaboration on Green List roles and residency pathways, indicating continuing political engagement in labour market reform.

**Social Influences**

* With seasonal workers available, existing farm teams are less likely to be overworked, reducing the risk of burnout.
* Ensuring consistent labour helps maintain rural community wellbeing and supports the continuation of farming as a viable lifestyle and career.
* Kiwi workers are often not available or willing to work in remote rural areas. Seasonal visas help fill these gaps in the agricultural workforce.

**Ethical Influences**

* Ethical concerns are acknowledged by requiring employers to try and hire local workers first, upholding fairness in employment practices.
* By creating dedicated visas, the government is addressing ethical concerns about relying on working holidaymakers who may not have proper labour protections or long-term certainty.
* The new PSV opens access to workers from a wider range of countries, removing unfair age and nationality restrictions previously associated with the Working Holiday Visa.
* Providing structured, legal pathways for seasonal employment is more ethical than relying on informal or temporary schemes. It gives workers greater job security, clarity, and protection.

**Economic Influences**

* Access to skilled seasonal workers during peak periods (e.g., calving, shearing) keeps farm operations running efficiently, preventing loss of income due to labour shortages.
* Returning skilled workers over multiple seasons reduces the need for repeated training, increasing cost-efficiency.
* The Global Workforce Seasonal Visa and Peak Seasonal Visa (PSV) provide more reliable and flexible options compared to the previously limited Working Holiday Visa, helping agribusinesses plan more accurately.
* The agricultural sector relies on seasonal labour. These visa changes support regional economic stability by ensuring the labour needed for production and processing is available.

**Future Proofing Influence Questions**

1. Labour is a significant social influence for many agriculture businesses. For an agribusiness you are familiar with (e.g. contracting) explain the impacts on businesses

* without these visas?
* with these visas?

1. Explain how these impacts are short term or long term on the agribusiness?
2. What are the consequences of these impacts outside an agribusiness?
3. Using these consequences, explain how each consequence might affect the viability of the agribusiness?

**Future Proofing Influence Answers.**

1. Labour is a significant social influence for many agriculture businesses. For an agribusiness you are familiar with (e.g. contracting), explain the impacts on businesses:

**Without these visas?**

* Contracting businesses could struggle to find enough skilled workers during peak seasons (e.g. seedbed preparation, planting, and harvesting). This can lead to delays, which may impact crop yield and quality, reduce productivity, and result in lower returns. Missed deadlines can lead to unhappy clients and the potential loss of future business.
* If existing workers are required to take on extra hours to complete the work, this increases the risk of burnout, fatigue, accidents, and reduced morale.
* A shortage of workers means fewer jobs can be completed on time, leading to lost income and lower customer satisfaction.
* Contractors who are unable to meet client expectations may lose future work opportunities or clients to competitors.

**With these visas?**

* A reliable supply of seasonal workers helps fill critical labour gaps during peak times, ensuring operations run smoothly, efficiently, and on time.
* The Global Workforce Seasonal Visa allows proven workers to return for multiple seasons, reducing the need for repeated recruitment and training. This gives contractors more confidence in scheduling work, knowing they will have access to skilled staff when needed.
* A more balanced workload helps prevent burnout, reduces the risk of accidents, and contributes to better staff retention and improved workplace morale.

1. Explain how these impacts are short-term or long-term on the agribusiness?

**Short-term impacts:**

* Provides immediate relief from labour shortages during busy periods.
* Enables faster and more efficient job completion, leading to increased customer satisfaction and revenue.
* Reduces pressure on full-time staff during peak seasons, lowering the risk of burnout, accidents and loss of skilled staff.

**Long-term impacts:**

* Helps establish a reliable pool of returning seasonal workers, reducing recruitment and training costs over time.
* Enhances the business’s reputation through consistent and dependable service.
* Increases the company’s resilience and adaptability to changing market conditions and seasonal demands.
* Supports the sustainability of rural employment and contributes to overall community wellbeing.

1. What are the consequences of these impacts outside an agribusiness?

* Without seasonal workers, rural communities may suffer from economic slowdown due to reduced agricultural output.
* If contractors cannot meet demand, delays in planting or harvesting can impact other local businesses such as farmers, growers, processors, exporters, and supermarkets.
* Ongoing labour shortages may prompt political debate and pressure for immigration policy reform.
* Ethical issues may arise if visa rules are not protective of migrant workers’ rights.

1. Using these consequences, explain how each consequence might affect the viability of the agribusiness?

* If contractors fail to meet timelines, they may lose the trust of their clients. As a result, clients could choose to work with other contractors, leading to a reduction in demand for their services. This loss of income can place the business under financial pressure, limiting its ability to invest, innovate, or adapt, ultimately putting its long-term viability at risk.
* Uncertainty around visa policies makes it difficult for contractors to plan for the future. Without confidence in their ability to secure skilled seasonal labour, they may hesitate to invest in equipment, expand services, or grow their workforce, which can hinder business growth and sustainability.
* If contractors are perceived as exploiting workers or failing to follow ethical employment practices, it can result in reputational damage. A damaged reputation can lead to loss of clients, reduced referrals, and difficulty attracting both workers and business partners, directly affecting the sustainability and public trust of the agribusiness.