

1.

Some history

“FARMING AND THE NATION”

(White Paper February 1979):

“Production of soft fruits is expected to increase in response to higher demand if problems in harvesting can be overcome through an increase in pick-your-own systems or by the development of harvesting machinery for fruit for processing.”

“FARMING AND THE NATION”

(White Paper February 1979):

Farming also presents its own particular problems in the supervisory aspects of man management. These stem largely from the cyclical nature of food production which can involve, for example, a seasonal influx of temporary and often untrained workers. More generally, there is less scope for the settled routine or the kind of supervision commonly possible in factories and offices.”



2.

SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS SCHEME

The SAWS scheme is a British Government *youth movement and cultural exchange programme* run by the British Home Office, Immigration & Nationality Directorate. The SAWS scheme originates from the immediate post-war years when government sought to facilitate the movement of people from across Europe to work on the land, and in particular to gather harvests.



SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS SCHEME

Although the numbers of people participating in the scheme has increased over the years, the principles and features of the SAWS have largely remained the same since its inception.

SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS SCHEME

The SAWS is an additional source of labour to help farmers during their peak season. Under SAWS, the season is defined as a maximum of 6 months. Individuals (students) are allowed to participate in the scheme for a maximum of 6 months.

SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS SCHEME

As a youth orientated scheme it enables participants to learn something about the culture of the UK, the English language and allow time for recreational activities.

Participants are full-time students aged between 18 and 25, often attending agricultural colleges in their home countries. The majority of participants are from Eastern Europe and states of the former USSR.



SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS SCHEME

The primary motivation of those who join the scheme is to earn money in an area of work that is relevant to their studies. Many are prepared to work long hours to maximise their earnings while others use their spare time for recreational activity, such as sightseeing.

SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS SCHEME

The scheme uses Operators who recruit participants, allocate them to farms and ensure they receive the appropriate wages and conditions. Farmers and growers are required to provide suitable accommodation for the scheme participants. Operators are responsible for ensuring this requirement is met prior to allocating participants.

3.

HOW SAWS STUDENTS ARE HOSTED ON FARMS

All farms hosting students under the SAWS must be registered to one of the scheme Operators.

For example each participating farm registered with the operator HOPS (Harvesting Opportunity Permit Scheme) must:

HOW SAWS STUDENTS ARE HOSTED ON FARMS

Provide adequate on-farm accommodation and facilities.

- These can be provided in caravan accommodation (site must meet Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act, 1960 Section 5 Model Standards 1989 Holiday Caravan Sites) or converted farm buildings that meet current building regulations.**
- A kitchen that is equipped with appliances and utensils and a plentiful supply of hot and cold water.**

HOW SAWS STUDENTS ARE HOSTED ON FARMS

- Ablutions (toilets and showers) with plentiful supply of hot and cold water and at least 1 shower per 8 residents. Separate ladies and gents toilet and bathing facilities.
- Gas and electricity supply and appliances (accommodation and facilities) must be certified as safe by a registered engineer.

HOW SAWS STUDENTS ARE HOSTED ON FARMS

- **Have an up to date health and safety policy that includes the residential area of the holding. Adequate control systems must be demonstrated in terms of regular checks being made and recorded.**

HOW SAWS STUDENTS ARE HOSTED ON FARMS

- **Be able to offer approx 40 hours work to each student for the duration of his or her stay. The work students can undertake must be agricultural work on a farm or horticultural holding. This can include some pack-house work packing only the produce harvested on the holding. Students cannot work in a pack house that only packs bought-in produce.**

HOW SAWS STUDENTS ARE HOSTED ON FARMS

- **Farms must be able to demonstrate that the tasks and work undertaken by the students is seasonal. If it could be argued that a number of tasks through the year could create a full-time permanent post, then a full-time appointment should be made and seasonal labour should not be used.**

HOW SAWS STUDENTS ARE HOSTED ON FARMS

- **Students must be paid in line with the current Agricultural Wages Orders at all times.**

HOW SAWS STUDENTS ARE HOSTED ON FARMS

- **Be able to provide social care (welfare) for young overseas nationals resident on the farm. This to include some ‘cultural’ elements.**

HOW SAWS STUDENTS ARE HOSTED ON FARMS

- **Ensure the Employer Liability Insurance covers all seasonal workers.**

4.

SCHEME OPERATORS

Concordia (YSV) Limited

Friday Bridge International Carm Camp

HOPS GB

Tiptree International Farm Camp

R & JM Place Ltd

Leroch Farm

G's Marketing Limited



5.

“SECURE BORDERS, SAFE HAVEN”

(Secretary of State for the Home Department 2002):

“There is a clear need for short-term casual labour. Although this comprises only a small proportion of all employment in the UK, it is important in industries such as agriculture. We will look again at the operation of the long-standing Season Agricultural Workers’ Scheme (SAWS) to see how it might better meet the needs of the agricultural sector.”

“SECURE BORDERS, SAFE HAVEN”

(Secretary of State for the Home Department 2002):

“We will build on its principles to meet the demand for short-term casual labour in other sectors of the United Kingdom economy. As with the SAWS, we envisage quotas will be a key feature of any similar schemes that would be carefully targeted at specific sectors and closely managed. Entry would be for a short period of up to six months and applicants would not have the right to bring dependants with them.”



6.

REVIEW OF THE SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS SCHEME

October 2002

- **Redefine the purpose of SAWS as a scheme that provides a source of labour to farmers and growers to meet the demand for seasonal labour, and in which cultural activities are encouraged to reward and motivate SAWS participants as a matter of good practice.**

REVIEW OF THE SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS SCHEME

October 2002

- **Extend the period during which the scheme operates beyond the current months of May to November to allow participants to join a scheme at any time so as to meet the demand for seasonal workers throughout the year**

REVIEW OF THE SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS SCHEME

- **Retain an annual quota of places as a key feature of the scheme, to be determined on the basis of evidence from stakeholders, in particular by annual bids submitted by the Operators. Operators to determine their bids based on estimates from the farmers and growers they represent, and the extent to which farmers and growers have utilised their allocation over previous years.**

REVIEW OF THE SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS SCHEME

October 2002

- **Each year Operators to be required to submit three year forecasts of their expected demand for SAWS participants to enable longer term planning to take place.**

REVIEW OF THE SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS SCHEME

October 2002

- **Continue to restrict eligibility to the scheme to full-time students only and remove the upper age limit. Retain the requirement that dependants are not allowed to join participants on the scheme.**

REVIEW OF THE SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS SCHEME

October 2002

- **Allow SAWS participants to take part in the scheme more than once provided they abide by the rules concerning their immigration status and continue to meet the eligibility criteria of the scheme.**

REVIEW OF THE SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS SCHEME

October 2002

- **Continue to restrict the time that SAWS participants may work on the scheme to a maximum of six months with a minimum break of three months before being eligible to re-enter the scheme; retain the requirement that applications to join the SAWS must be made outside of the UK; extensions beyond six months are not allowed; and there is a requirement to leave the UK at the end of the period of employment.**



REVIEW OF THE SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS SCHEME

October 2002

- **These changes to take effect from January 2004.**