

Visa requirement for Mexicans and the Destruction of Mexican Agriculture

By [National Farmers Union \(Canada\)](#)

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VISA REQUIREMENT FOR MEXICANS A PERVERSE OUTCOME OF NAFTA

SASKATOON, Sask.—Canadians need to understand the context of today's announcement that Mexican citizens will require visas to visit Canada. We also need to understand the root cause of the rising number of Mexican refugees coming to Canada.

Food products—staples such as corn and beans—are flooding into Mexico. Since the 1995 implementation of NAFTA, US corn exports to Mexico have quadrupled. These products are flowing south at prices below Mexican farmers' cost of production, and below the cost of production in the US. Subsidies enable farmers to produce below cost. NAFTA dictates that Mexico must allow this food in. The NAFTA timetable required that on January 1, 2008, Mexico remove its final restrictions on the imports of staple food products—opening its border completely to imports of corn and beans.

Mexican farmers have been devastated by low prices for corn and other crops. Farm families have been forced off their land, and forced to relocate to large cities and border-town maquiladoras. NAFTA's body-blow to Mexico's farm sector has meant a rapid rise in the number of Mexicans who are landless, unemployed, poor, and desperate.

This growing number of desperately poor Mexican citizens has created social unrest and instability and, in some cases, a pool of people willing to work for the drug cartels. Expanding drug cartel violence, the attendant corruption of some police and justice officials, a growing sense of lawlessness, declining safety, and declining economic prospects have driven many Mexican families to flee their homes—some have come to Canada to try to obtain refugee status.

"A huge portion of Mexican citizens rely on farming to support their families. Our trade policies—ostensibly aimed at finding 'markets' for our grains and meat—have devastated market prices for those Mexican farmers. Bankrupted farmers have been forced from rural areas and into cities. Those cities are increasingly lawless and dangerous—poverty and desperation has fueled the rise of organized crime. Many Mexicans are now trying to escape. Some are coming here. We need to connect the dots. Many of the Mexicans coming to Canada are refugees from NAFTA," said NFU International Coordinator Martha Robbins.

Robbins added: "There is irony here. As we are forcing open Mexican borders to our products, we are closing our borders to a significant portion of the Mexican people. We are working to block the flow of people which is, to a significant extent, a result of our work to speed the flow of goods."

The NFU believes that the effects of NAFTA on farmers in Mexico are unjust and massively damaging. This latest move by the Canadian government to require visas is just the most recent immorality flowing from the so-called trade agreement. The NFU strongly opposes the policy requiring Mexican citizens to have a visa to visit our country.

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