This case was written by Stephanie Shaw, University of Windsor, Odette Business School, Windsor, Ontario, & Dr. Deborah McPhee, Brock University, Goodman School of Business, St. Catherines, Ontario. It is intended as a basis for student discussion, not to show either effective or ineffective administrative decision-making.

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MINERVA CASE STUDY

HARVESTING DISASTER AT RIVER ROCK FARM
A CASE OF MIGRANT FARM WORKERS

ABSTRACT

This case investigates the working conditions surrounding Pablo Lopez, a Mexican migrant laborer on a government sanctioned farm workers program. The worker, employed at a local British Columbia farm was injured after slipping into a potato-harvesting machine. This case discusses the working conditions migrant workers face, the importance of health and safety training and the tragic effects of misconduct. This case can be used in the curriculum in areas such as Occupational Health and Safety, Labour Relations and Risk Management.

INTRODUCTION

It was late afternoon on July 28th when Dalton Pierce sat at his desk reviewing a harvesting disaster that had occurred only weeks earlier. Pablo Lopez, a migrant farm worker had endured severe pain and ultimately permanent disability when his leg glided into a harvesting machine at River Rock Farm in British Columbia. As a result, WorkSafeBC, the workers’ compensation insurer and accident prevention agency in British Columbia had been notified.

Dalton was a senior case manager employed with WorkSafeBC. His current assignment was to investigate the tragic occurrence at River Rock Farm. He had spent much of the investigation thus far examining the conditions present at River Rock Farm, interviewing management at the facility and looking at previous cases to establish precedent. Dalton had vast experience in situations involving migrant farm workers, making him an appropriate person to determine what could have been done differently to protect Pablo Lopez at River Rock Farm.

RIVER ROCK FARM: 1960-2000

River Rock Farm had been a family owned and operated company since its establishment in 1960. Its founder, Bob Smith, had purchased a small home and large adjacent piece of land in the late 1950s with the dream of opening a potato harvesting plant. Before long, his dream was a reality and River Rock Farm became a staple in the British Columbia community.

As a family owned business, Bob and his wife Linda ensured that their only son Doug got involved in the business at an early age, with the hope that one day he would take over the family business and keep their legacy going. Doug helped before and after school, and in the summers he worked with his dad. When needed, he would help to supervise some of the workers, despite his younger age.

As time went on, Doug eventually went on to university to study business, so that he could help
out the family business even more. In 1984 Doug had completed his degree and returned to the farm. By 1985, Doug married his childhood sweetheart, Carol, and they moved to a home not far from the farm.

In the fall of 1995 Bob began experiencing health issues, which made it difficult to perform the manual labour that potato harvesting required. With Doug working on the farm and having a good handle on the business, Bob knew it was time to shift the company to a new generation. In early 1996, Bob handed his legacy down to Doug with the hope that he would continue where he had left off.

Doug and his wife Carol were elated to take over River Rock Farm. Doug had worked on the farm since childhood and he believed in the business. He was familiar with the business operations since he started managing the company finances nine years prior. In January 1996 River Rock Farm officially changed ownership over to Doug.

Doug and Carol maintained River Rock Farm’s core values and organizational culture. Bob wanted two things for the business: happy employees and a quality product – just like his dad had taught him. He had built the business on these two main attributes, and Doug and Carol both knew they remained the key to the continued success of the farm.

Having studied Human Resources at university, Carol naturally embraced a Human Resource role within the company. She ensured all employees received a solid orientation and onboarding process, development opportunities and adequate health and safety training. She wanted each employee to feel a sense of belonging in the company, from their steady Canadian workforce to the seasonal workers they hired from Mexico and Jamaica. She also handled organizing the Joint Health and Safety Committee to ensure safety programs were put into place, as the front-line employees could often see things management could not.

Doug and Carol were proud to maintain an excellent safety record. They also thought employees should know where the company stood in regards to safety. Therefore, they adopted a Safety Scoreboard (see Appendix A) for display in the lunch room, where it would be visible to all employees. River Rock Farm went month over month without a safety infraction, and were often praised by other farms in the area for their strong safety statistics.

Doug focused on business operations and had a strong dedication to quality. He expected it from himself, his employees and the business as a whole. The company’s mission stated “to only offer the best quality product, always.” He lived and breathed the mission daily. Under Doug and Carol’s leadership, the company continued to flourish.

THE POTATO HARVESTING INDUSTRY
Every year, potatoes are planted in the spring and harvested in the fall. The planting season generally runs between April and May, and harvesting occurs between July and November. As a result, potato farmers require personnel to be hired with staggered start times between April and July, running through the fall.

Farmers utilize potato-planting machines, which are directed by high-tech laser sensors in order
to maintain straight rows. This allows seeds to be planted evenly. As a result, farmers can boost the yield and quality of the potato, and thereby maximize profits.

Over half of the potato crop is watered with sprinklers as opposed to simply relying on rainfall. Farmers must monitor test samples from growing potato plants and fertilize the crops when required. This requires hired personnel in order to maintain. Approximately two to six weeks after planting, potato plants start to rise from the ground.

Harvesting machines are forefront in the next step of the process. The harvester is pulled behind a tractor, and is designed to function without workers. It contains large rollers that separate stems, dirt and rock, soil and debris from the potatoes. It must do this without bruising the crop during the process. The harvester is pulled behind a tractor and is motorized by the power takeoff.

Employees then package and store the potatoes. The workforce must properly pack and grade the potatoes, marking them according to federal and provincial standards. This is a time consuming and laborious position, often difficult to staff.

**RIVER ROCK FARM: 2000-PRESENT**

In the early 2000s, the potato farming industry became more volatile. In certain seasons, fresh potatoes began fetching as much as 40% less than prior years. The industry became a game of ups and downs. However, the price of potatoes was negotiated prior to a potato seed being planted, and River Rock Farm was locked in contracts with select buyers, so they managed to survive, despite the volatile market conditions.

In 2009 Doug and Carol were at a crossroads. Their machinery was in need of upgrading which would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Additionally, they knew the market well, which was suggesting that it may be time to get out. So, they put the business up for sale, and when a prominent businessman swept in with a generous offer, they took it immediately.

River Rock Farm was hard for Doug and Carol to part with, but they knew it was the right decision. Discussions with Huan made them feel better, as he was an established business owner whom they believed would continue leading River Rock Farms to success. By March, River Rock Farm had officially been sold.

Huan was a wealthy foreign investor who saw River Rock Farm as a way to enter the agriculture market. He believed the company could be extremely profitable if they stopped wasting money on their personnel and other miscellaneous expenditures. He believed the company’s focus on happy employees and a quality product was misguided, and the main focus of any company should be on profitability first.

Huan planned to minimize employing full-time ongoing Canadian employees in exchange for more migrant workers who he could lay off as needed. The Canadian employees who had grown with River Rock Farm had expectations that Huan did not want to meet. These expectations included Joint Health and Safety Meetings and career development opportunities, which Huan had no interest in providing.
Through the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP), River Rock Farm was already registered to secure migrant farm workers from both Mexico and Jamaica. The hourly cost of employing migrant workers was minimal, as were the administrative fees. The farm would endure a minimal fee of $35 per worker for Social Development Canada to administer the program. All employees were hired on temporary visas, specifically for planting and harvesting seasons.

There were many benefits to the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program. Workers would receive work permits of up to 8 months, depending on farming requirements. Control maintained with River Rock Farm, as they were able to determine who could and who could not return for subsequent seasons. Furthermore, they were able to request specific workers for future seasons, and therefore had a steady and hardworking crew.

River Rock Farm had an annual lapse in work between June and July due to the time required between planting and harvesting the potatoes. However, employee work permits were tied to River Rock Farm and thus workers were unable to search for alternate work. Previous management would attempt to keep employees busy during off-periods, but Huan planned to send workers home when not required for financial savings.

**The Canadian Agricultural Sector**

The Canadian job market often finds itself unable to secure local personnel to fulfill agricultural labour requirements. The biggest struggle is generally experienced during planting and harvesting seasons. Temporary foreign workers may aid employers in meeting labour needs when permanent residents are unavailable for specific work.

Temporary Foreign Workers often have new skills or knowledge, which helps the Canadian economy grow. Varying positions often require an assortment of skill levels, allowing for a diversified group to enter Canada. This is through a program, called the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. For several years, River Rock Farm had been utilizing the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program, a branch of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program specifically designed to help farmers. This program was established in 1966 as a way of bringing Jamaican workers to Canada to help offset the shortage of apple pickers.

The Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program, as described by the Government of Canada must meet several specific criteria:

- Temporary foreign workers must be from Mexico or certain Caribbean countries
- Production must be included on the National Commodities List
- Activities must be related to on-farm primary agriculture
- Positions can be in lower or higher-skilled occupations

**Pablo Lopez**

Pablo Lopez, 39, was an eager and hardworking Mexican migrant worker who had been travelling back and forth from Mexico to Canada for six consecutive seasons on the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program. As the breadwinner of the family, he had a wife and two kids to support in his hometown of Xalapa.
Annually, Pablo would spend months in Canada performing manual labour on various farms. The money he acquired was sent back home to provide for his wife and daughters. His last working experience in Canada had been in Leamington, Ontario where he was dealing with produce, mainly tomatoes. While he enjoyed the position, Pablo had a technical background and could not help but think he was being underutilized simply picking tomatoes.

In 2015 Pablo was presented with an opportunity for work at a potato farming facility in British Columbia. Potato farming was a more complex task than simply picking tomatoes, and paid slightly higher. Pablo accepted the offer and was eager to begin work at River Rock Farm. Pablo was elated as he could finally put his skills to good use.

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

Pablo sat on the tarmac at Vancouver International Airport exasperated. He had been travelling for over 24 hours and had not slept much on the plane. When the seatbelt sign dimmed and the stewardess stated it was time to de-board, Pablo could not help but smile.

The trip Pablo had endured involved a four hour drive from Xalapa to Mexico City where he boarded his flight. The flight left from Mexico City to San Francisco. Unfortunately, due to unfavorable weather conditions, he had missed his connecting flight and had an 8-hour layover until they could board him onto another flight, traveling from San Francisco to Vancouver.

Pablo picked up his luggage and saw a short, thin looking man standing with a sign that read: **PABLO LOPEZ, River Rock Farm**. Pablo approached and introduced himself in broken English. The gentleman responded, “I am Chuck and I will be driving you to River Rock.” He asked Pablo to follow him to the designated vehicle, and they walked to the parking garage together.

When Pablo exited the elevator, straight ahead he noticed a large van imprinted with black block letters that read “River Rock Farm”. He approached the vehicle and opened the large swing door. The van contained three rows of three seats in the back, for a total vehicle capacity of eleven. The seats were torn but Pablo was not surprised having experienced migrant farm work previously.

Chuck tossed Pablo’s luggage into the trunk and indicated that Pablo should sit in the far left seat in the back row, as the other seatbelts were broken. Pablo obliged and the vehicle took off. The van was making a sputtering sound but it was still a smooth ride out of the parking garage. Pablo was aware it was a two-hour drive to the Farm. The van took back roads to the farm, and the road became bumpier. The driver also got unnervingly speedy, but Pablo was so tired he fell asleep for the rest of the drive.

An hour later, Pablo was awoken to the sound of Chuck unloading his luggage. He was part of the second batch of employees that River Rock Farm had requested, so when he arrived at the residence, there was a plethora of individuals already there. Chuck walked him to the front door with his luggage, and instructed him to be ready at 6 am tomorrow morning. He further explained that Pablo would need to see Human Resources in the morning for orientation, onboarding and health and safety training.
The Facilities

Pablo stepped in the doors of the old brick building, a place he would call home for the next several months. He looked around and saw exactly what was expected. It was minimally furnished, with a small bed, table and lamp on his quarter of the room. He noticed his sheets were stained in multiple areas, but thought to himself that with some soap and water he could remove them easily. While the room smelled like bleach, there was dust on his bedside table and the floors looked slightly muddy.

Attached to Pablo’s bedroom was a bathroom. He could see this was a communal room that he would be sharing with his three roommates and four other men occupying the adjoining bedroom. The bathroom was small, had copious amounts of mould in the shower and sink, and had a strong musky odor.

Outside of his bedroom, there was a common area with four large couches placed in a “U” shape around a small TV. One couch was blocking a door marked “emergency,” but Pablo could see there was no other place for this valued commodity. The room was filled with approximately 50 men and women. Pablo could also see that the number of people outweighed available seating, so he suspected most of his free time would be spent in his bedroom anyways.

Time To Work

In what felt like the middle of the night, Pablo was awoken to alarms sounding in his residence. A woman’s voice could be heard from two speakers he had not noticed previously on the far walls of his bedroom. He listened closely, and through the groans of seven other men awakening, heard that it was time to wake up and get ready for work. She proceeded to state that all employees were required to be present on their respective lines within 30 minutes.

Pablo took a shower in the cold water that was provided. He was shivering as he used the last remains of the soap offered. He was one of the first to shower, and imagined the water would only get colder as more employees used the facilities.

Pablo then followed his coworkers to the River Rock Farm van. The shuttle would take the first batch of employees down the road to River Rock Farm. Pablo asked a coworker he was sitting beside where he could find Human Resources. The man just shrugged his shoulders and closed his eyes, trying to sleep.

When the bus stopped, Pablo got into the single-file line and proceeded towards the potato fields with the others. When his coworkers began dispersing to their assigned positions, Pablo looked around, unsure of how to proceed. He saw a tall man with “Timothy Klein, Line Lead” embroidered into his shirt. He asked Timothy where he could find Human Resources. Timothy pointed loosely towards an office located inside a large grey building about 100 yards away, and Pablo walked towards the office.

When Pablo got inside he saw a big sign that read “HR.” Pablo was not sure what HR was but walked through the doors anyways.
“HR”
Pablo walked in and was greeted by a young female named Alexis who smiled respectfully and asked how he was doing. While Pablo’s English was broken, he managed to introduce himself and asked how to proceed. Alexis appeared flustered and unsure of how to register a migrant worker. She asked Pablo to take a seat and she quickly made a call to the Controller for assistance. When he did not answer, Alexis picked up a new hire package and had no choice but to handle the matter alone.

Alexis handed Pablo an orientation booklet. The booklet was written in English with no diagrams or Spanish terms. Alexis then indicated he had missed orientation, as it had occurred the day prior. Nonetheless, she asked him to sign off on the orientation sheet. Due to the language barrier, Pablo was unsure what she was requesting, but he saw her mark a red “x” on the paper and handed him a pen. Alexis spent the next 90 seconds explaining key points and although he did not understand, Pablo nodded his head politely. Alexis could see that he was not understanding, and she asked Pablo to get the details from a roommate when he got back to his residence. It was Alexis’ second day on the job and she wanted to ensure she was not giving incorrect information to employees.

Pablo noticed the orientation sign off had many sections; Welcome, Living Conditions and Dormitory Rules, Work Expectations, Contract Orientation, Required Job Skills, Health and Safety Policy, Legal Rights and Duties, Injury Prevention, Manual Material Handling and Musculoskeletal Disorders.

There was also a red “x” next to River Rock Farm’s Excess Hours of Work Agreement. The agreement stated,

“I, the undersigned, understand that I will be scheduled to work varying hours of work per day and per work week, dependent on need. As such, by my signature below, I agree to work in excess of eight (8) hours per day, if and when scheduled. For the purpose of this agreement, a workweek shall mean the period of seven consecutive days selected by River Rock Farm for the purpose of scheduling work.”

Pablo signed on the dotted lines. Alexis next explained a Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) test would need to be administered. She put Pablo into a small empty room and handed him the 20-question quiz. She pressed play on a projector, which started a video on the wall.

The WHMIS video was in English only and lasted approximately 30 minutes. Pablo was not sure what the woman in the video was saying as she spoke quickly. However, he did not want to leave his quiz blank and therefore selected all B’s on the test.

When Alexis returned and saw his answer sheet, she shook her head in dismay. She then circled the correct answers on his answer sheet in red pen. She asked him to initial next to each of the incorrect answers to indicate she had reviewed them with him. However, she was behind on payroll which needed to be submitted by noon, and did not have time to go through each
incorrect answer in detail. Pablo obliged, and left the room more confused than ever.

WORKING AT RIVER ROCK FARM
Pablo walked back to the supervisor who had directed him to Human Resources. Pablo was instructed to join the potato grading line, where he was quick to grasp what was required of him. He understood the grades, Canada Number 1 and Canada Number 2, and would often help other employees who were unsure.

When Pablo returned to his residence at 9 pm that night, he asked his roommate, who was fluent in both English and Spanish to translate the orientation booklet. He obliged, and indicated to Pablo that he had not missed much in orientation the day previously. They had sat through an unorganized PowerPoint orientation, where the presenter spoke too quietly to hear, was mumbling and had people speaking over her. He also noted that most candidates did not speak or read English fluently, and had therefore copied their WHMIS answers from select Canadian employees, as there was no supervision in the orientation boardroom.

As Pablo’s roommate translated the orientation details found in booklet, he learned that under the SAWP, River Rock Farm was to enroll him in a provincial health plan and register him with WorkSafeBC. He also learned that because they were in British Columbia, partial deductions would be made from his wages for his housing, working visa, utilities and transportation. This was slightly different than what he had experienced in Ontario where accommodations were provided free. Nonetheless, as a migrant worker he was not in a position to negotiate.

Within a few weeks, Pablo was bored of potato grading. He would rotate between grading the produce and lifting the heavy bags of ready potatoes onto a moving conveyer. This added some variety, however, it was still repetitive and he felt underutilized. Pablo worked 6-7 days per week, on average 12 hours per day. Pablo was always tired but never complained about the hard work. He rarely received sufficient breaks, and had still not experienced health and safety training, specifically in regards to lifting. He wondered how he might better lift the heavy sacks, avoiding the awkward positioning he was currently experiencing, but figured this training would come eventually.

River Rock Farm was getting busy and there was a constant stream of migrant workers starting, so Pablo took it upon himself to train new recruits. His native tongue was Spanish, and he was therefore able to explain the process to new employees coming in from Mexico.

Pablo would tell his supervisors and management about his previous experience and technical background at every chance. He knew this would put him in a good position for promotion should an opportunity arise. Therefore, when a technical opening arose working on a potato harvester itself, Pablo jumped on the opportunity. Management liked Pablo for the good example he set for other employees, and therefore he was selected for the promotion.

Pablo could see the benefits of his new position. He would challenge himself, experience a small raise in wage, and get access to functioning toilets. The potato grading line was far out in the fields and it was rare for a supervisor to allow an employee to endure the 15-minute walk to the outhouse. However, the potato harvesters were housed near the front of the barn, in close
proximity to the washrooms. More than anything, Pablo was excited to show River Rock Farm the value he brought, and therefore would be guaranteed a position for the next season.

**Pablo Potato Harvesting**

Prior to working at River Rock farm, Pablo had never seen a potato harvester. However, within three days he was transitioned into his new role. He was confident in his abilities accrued during previous work in Mexico, and was excited to get started.

Pablo approached the potato harvester, a large red machine. Up front was a seating area for the machine operator. Towards the back Pablo could see the potato spinner and haulm topper. The machine looked relatively new, with the red paint still in perfect condition.

Pablo was paired up with another employee, Antonio. He was also assigned a supervisor, Paul, who briefly described how the potato harvester worked. He expressed how important working as a team was for this particular role. Paul had not received any formal training, but was familiar enough with the machine to provide very vague direction to subordinates. While the language barrier was proving an issue for Pablo, Antonio translated many of the supervisor’s statements accordingly.

Paul explained that Pablo and Antonio were to work together in order to grease components and change damaged bearings of the haulm rollers. Both employees got right to work, following the brief instructions. Antonio had been working with potato harvesters for some time, and was familiar with what to do. The team was making progress on this harvester quickly.

When they finished, Paul started up the harvester. Two of the back rollers were still not turning. Paul turned off the tractor and left the key in the ignition. As the machine went silent, his radio buzzed indicating he was required in the main office. River Rock Farm was short staffed, due to budget cuts assigned by Huan, so Paul was always running from site to site. The supervisor directed Antonio to continue greasing the bearings and identify any malfunctioning parts.

As Paul dashed off, he shouted, “Do not forget, before doing additional maintenance you may want to remove the ignition key.” The two men shook their head up and down. They both felt confident in their abilities and wanted to prove themselves. They knew from prior experience that it was up to the company itself whether they could come back in future years, and River Rock Farm seemed like decent place to work.

Pablo and Antonio worked together to change parts on the right side of the harvester. When they believed themselves to have fixed the issue, Antonio got into the harvester’s front seat and turned the key to start the tractor. He also triggered the hydraulics fueling the haulm rollers (see Appendix C). With the machine running, Antonio joined Pablo underneath the machine to see if the rollers were rotating.

Neither Pablo nor Antonio could get a good look, so Pablo scaled on top of the harvester to visually check the rollers. As he slowly put one foot in front of another, his right leg slipped and Pablo let out a shriek.
**Extricating Pablo**

The unguarded haulm rollers quickly pulled in Pablo’s leg. He could feel his leg getting crushed, and shouted out for assistance. Antonio jumped back into the front seat of the harvester and turned off the tractor. This stopped the rollers. He used a walkie-talkie to call for help.

Immediately, Paul ran back over to the harvester. Both the supervisor and Antonio attempted to free Pablo to no avail. Emergency services were called. Within 15 minutes, police and fire rescue arrived at River Rock Farm. They were guided by petrified screams exiting the harvester. Antonio ran over to the rescue workers and indicated Pablo had slipped on the potato-harvesting machine. He further explained, “his right leg has been drawn into the machine, trapping it up to the hip!”

The rescue workers immediately ensured the power had been cut and climbed onto the harvester. They soon realized they were unable to saw through the tough steel mechanisms of the machine. Instead, they would be required to partially disassemble the harvester. It took over an hour for Pablo to be freed. The Lieutenant spoke with Paul, inquiring as to the location of the guards meant to cover the haulm rollers. Paul pointed to a barn door, where the guards could be seen partially covered in grass clippings and dirt, having never been installed since the equipment was purchased over 13 months ago.

Pablo was consequently taken by air ambulance to Riverside Hospital for aid. Doctors crowded around Pablo, scrambling to act quickly to avoid an amputation situation. The lead doctor took several x-rays and exams to discover that Pablo had been fortunate in not enduring any broken bones. When he finished stitching Pablo’s leg, the doctor warned that the harm sustained by the muscle and tissue may lead to further complications and potentially permanent disability. Pablo prayed this would not be the case. He was held overnight for observation. The doctor indicated Pablo would require a follow up medical appointment, which he should call a local doctor to schedule.

As a result of this incident, WorkSafeBC was notified. The case manager immediately requested the worker orientation material and training booklets provided to Pablo by River Rock Farm. He also requested Pablo’s signed documentation indicating it was complete and that he passed the process. The inspector would need this information to ensure that the training was adequate, and if not, consequences would ensue.

**Fear of Medical Repatriation**

The next day, Pablo was transported back to River Rock Farm. As he approached the building, Antonio ran outside to help Pablo into his residence. Pablo was able to walk up the stairs, but could feel the damage sustained by his muscles. His leg felt weak and it was as though he was dragging it as he walked.

Management indicated that Pablo would be permitted to take time for recovery. However, within a few days he asked to resume work. Management obliged. The next morning, only 72 hours after the incident occurred, Pablo was back on River Rock Farm’s fields. The morning was more difficult than he anticipated, but Pablo kept silent about his constant almost unbearable pain in
fear of being sent back home to Mexico.

In prior years at Leamington farms, Pablo had seen multiple employees leave due to injuries sustained. He knew workers suffering health conditions that inhibit ongoing work routinely get repatriated to their home country. Pablo heard that Huan had developed a reputation for being very difficult for migrant workers to deal with. River Rock Farm had many accidents in recent years (see Appendix B), and his co-workers had indicated they had not seen any injured parties return. Pablo was the only financial support for his family, so he needed to tread carefully.

One week later, Pablo knew he still required a follow up medical appointment. He had mentioned it to his supervisor but nothing had been done. Pablo was grateful to have medical insurance, but was unsure how to access it or where to find his health card. Pablo spoke with his roommate about his concerns. Since he did not speak fluent English he wondered how he could call the hospital’s reception in order to schedule this appointment. He also was without a phone. Pablo decided that he should visit the doctor without advising River Rock Farm, for fear the reminder of his hindrances may lead to medical repatriation.

Pablo’s regular shift was 6 a.m. - 6 p.m. and he had heard the local clinic was only open until 4 pm. Therefore, seeing a doctor without informing management at River Rock Farm would be near impossible. He also wondered how he would transport himself there, as he did not have a vehicle or phone to call a taxi. Additionally, after subtracting fees and living expenses, Pablo’s wage equaled $8.00 per hour. A taxi to the local clinic was approximately $30.00 each way, and Pablo found it difficult to justify spending an entire day’s pay for the taxi fare.

**BECOMING UNBEARABLE**

Pablo had spent weeks attempting to hide his pain and yet his condition was continuing to worsen. One early Wednesday morning, Pablo woke up in excruciating pain. He had a cold sweat and a high fever. His muscles were aching and he could no longer stand. Pablo spent the next four hours in his bed, sobbing and shaking, terrified of what was to come.

When morning came, Pablo’s roommate called down to his supervisor. He instructed Pablo to report the injury to River Rock Farm’s Health and Safety Officer immediately, and fill out the appropriate documentation. Finally, Pablo’s injury was catching up to him. He and River Rock Farm both knew Pablo was no longer able to perform the physical labour that potato harvesting required.

For the next two weeks Pablo was unable to get up out of bed. As Pablo was no longer able to perform his duties, River Rock Farm purchased him a one-way ticket back home to Mexico, but Pablo refused until a Canadian doctor tended to his injuries. River Rock Farm officially declared Pablo *Absent Without Leave* (AWOL). For Pablo, being declared AWOL meant he was immediately terminated from Canada’s Seasonal Agricultural Workers’ Program. This termination meant that he not only lost his SIN and health coverage, but he also instantly became ineligible for rehire within the program. Pablo was vulnerable; he would be returning to Mexico with a major disability, very little money and limited access to follow-up healthcare in his patriate city.
RELYING ON PRECEDENT

Dalton’s time on this case was coming to a close. He needed to have a decision made on River Rock Farm’s sentencing by 4 pm this afternoon. He skimmed through other cases one last time looking for precedent to which he could rely. Two similar situations involving potato-harvesting equipment from WorkSafeBC caught his eye:

“The September 2012: A worker suddenly stepped off the picker platform of a potato harvester and onto the ground. The worker was immediately run over by the harvester as it backed up. He died from his injuries. WorkSafeBC found that the workers who were using mobile equipment to harvest potatoes did not use clear procedures for communicating with one another. The employer was ordered to immediately develop these safe work procedures and train all its workers to use them.”  
- (Workers’ Compensation Board of B.C. (WorkSafeBC))

“October 2011: A worker was retrieving a potato from the moving conveyor of a potato harvester when the worker’s arm became entangled between a sprocket and the conveyor. The incident resulted in the amputation of the worker’s lower arm. WorkSafeBC investigated and concluded that the causes of the incident included a lack of safeguarding and inadequate training and supervision.”  
- (Workers’ Compensation Board of B.C. (WorkSafeBC))

Dalton then compared the previous situations to that experienced at River Rock Farm. He was aware that in previous cases, when employers were found to be violating health and safety standards, often their only penalty is being stripped from bringing in migrant workers for subsequent years.

Dalton had reviewed the company’s safety statistics year over year, which made him wonder, how had River Rock Farm fallen so far since Huan purchased the business? Moreover, does River Rock Farm currently have the resources, leadership and mindset to establish safer working conditions moving forward?

1. Explain the way in which SHE management is an integral part of business effectiveness and give at least two examples of where SHE management integration into daily operations made (or could have made) a difference.

2. Describe the critical role of the Senior Executive. Did his/her leadership/lack of leadership have an impact?

3. Discuss and reason why SHE management was (or was not) embedded as a core value in corporate culture. Was the value actually practiced or was it just on paper?

4. List several key elements in the SHE management approach used in the case study (or several that could have been used to achieve improvements).
5. Identify where business benefits (losses) occurred in the adoption (or rejection of) SHE management.

6. How did River Rock Farm fall so far since the chance in ownership? Does River Rock Farm currently have the resources, leadership and mindset to establish safer working conditions moving forward?
APPENDIX A

Safety Scoreboard, as implemented by Doug and Carol
Source: http://jobsafetyscoreboards.com/SB/Plant-Safety-Scoreboards.aspx

APPENDIX B

<table>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

Potato harvesting machine with haulm rollers
Source: https://agrifoto.nl/