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Cream of the crop

By Julie Slack
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

For six months every year, Dagoberto Cruz trades his family in Mexico for a new one in Canada.

No, it's not like it may seem — Cruz is one of thousands of migrant farm workers who spends his summers doing farm work in Canada.

In his case, he has been coming to Andrews' Scenic Acres, a popular pick-your-own farm on No. 10 Sideroad, for the last 16 years. Bert and Lauraine Andrews' 600-acre farm just east of Hwy. 25 in Milton, becomes his new home for half a year.

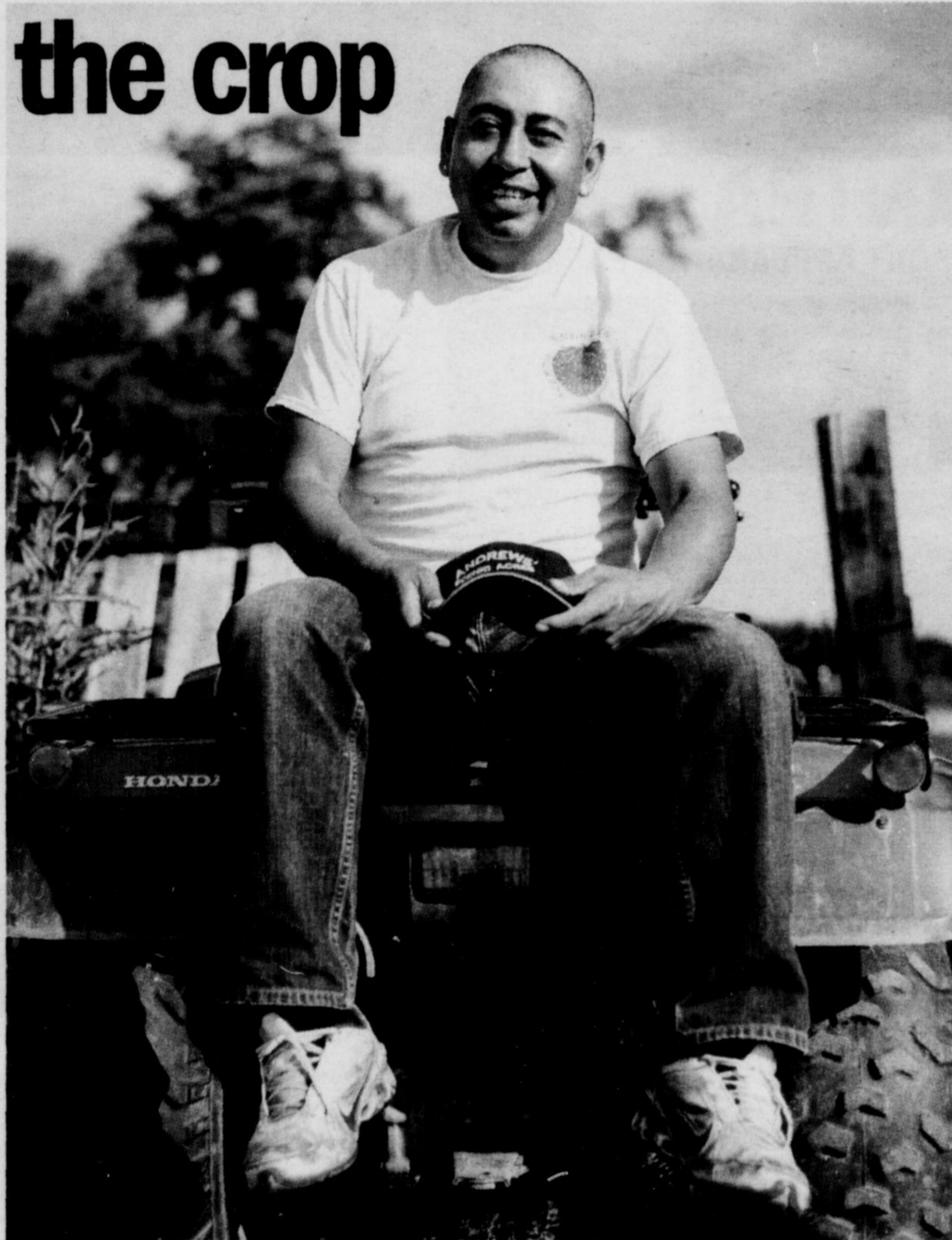
The Andrews, and the 14 co-workers, ages 26 to 55 years, he spends summers with, have become like a second family to him.

Cruz, 41, considers the seasonal agricultural work he does on the fruit and vegetable farm as far more than just a job — it's a stepping stone to a better life.

A native of Tenancingo, Mexico, Cruz is working on a seasonal contract through a Canadian supplemental labour program that is recognized as the best of its kind in the world.

Coordinated by Mississauga-based Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Service (FARMS), the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP) was established 49 years ago to respond to a critical shortage of available and suitable local Canadian agricultural workers.

Cruz, whose father was also a farmer, is one of approximately 16,000 seasonal agricultural workers from Mexico, Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad/Tobago and the East Caribbean who will work in Ontario's agrifood business through the program this year. **36**



Seasonal agricultural labourer Dagoberto Cruz sits on the back of an all-terrain vehicle that he enjoys riding at Andrews' Scenic Acres, where he lives and work for six months out of the year.
Justin Greaves / Canadian Champion (Follow on Twitter @halton_photog)

Federal election candidates hit the campaign trail

By Rachael Williams
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

With the federal election campaign starting six weeks earlier than expected, Milton candidates are ready to hit the ground running in hopes of stamping their ticket to Ottawa. It was Saturday, August 1 when Minister of Parliament (MP) Lisa Raitt got the press release from Prime Minister Stephen Harper's office saying he was going to Rideau Hall to submit a writ of general election. Vacationing in her hometown of Cape Breton at the time, Raitt packed her bags and was on the 5:30 a.m. flight back home the next day.

"I understand the move (to call the election). And I'm happy about it because I can stay closer to Milton and be home for the entire campaign," she told the *Champion*.

Slated to be the longest election campaign in recent history (79 days), Raitt, the Conservative incumbent, is being challenged by Azim Rizvee (Liberal party), Alex Anabusi (NDP), Chris Jewell (Libertarian Party) **18**

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