

# Quebec Farmers' Advocate

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## Agriculture a big economic boost, says report



A new report from Agriculture Canada shows that the food industry contributed \$106.9 billion to the national economy in 2013 and is also responsible for one in eight jobs.

Where trade unions  
are most firmly  
organized, there are  
the rights of the people  
most respected.

—Samuel Gompers

## QFA's Farm Food Forums

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**Andrew McClelland**  
*Advocate Staff Reporter*

Agriculture and agri-food contributed a whopping \$106.9 billion to Canada's economy in 2013, says a recent report from Ag Canada. The food industry also creates one in eight jobs in Canada, and accounts for 6.7 per cent of the country's GDP.

The report, entitled "An Overview of the Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food System," was released by the government department in mid-April—and to great applause from Canada's farm community. For many, the overview provides proof that Ottawa should pay more attention to the sector, which is rarely mentioned in budget announcements and election campaigns.

The report highlights how important

farming and related industries make up a huge part of the GDP.

"The food retail and wholesale industry accounted for the largest share [of the GDP] (1.8 per cent), followed by the food, beverage and tobacco processing industry (1.7 per cent)," say Ag Canada researchers. "The agriculture and agri-food sector's GDP has increased annually since 2007, the exception being during the economic recession of 2009."

### Farms create jobs

Ag Canada points out that agriculture should not be thought of as an industry that exists only at the family farm level. The report explains that "agriculture and agri-food" is a complex sector of Canada's economy, containing multiple spin-off industries. "The Canadian agriculture and agri-food

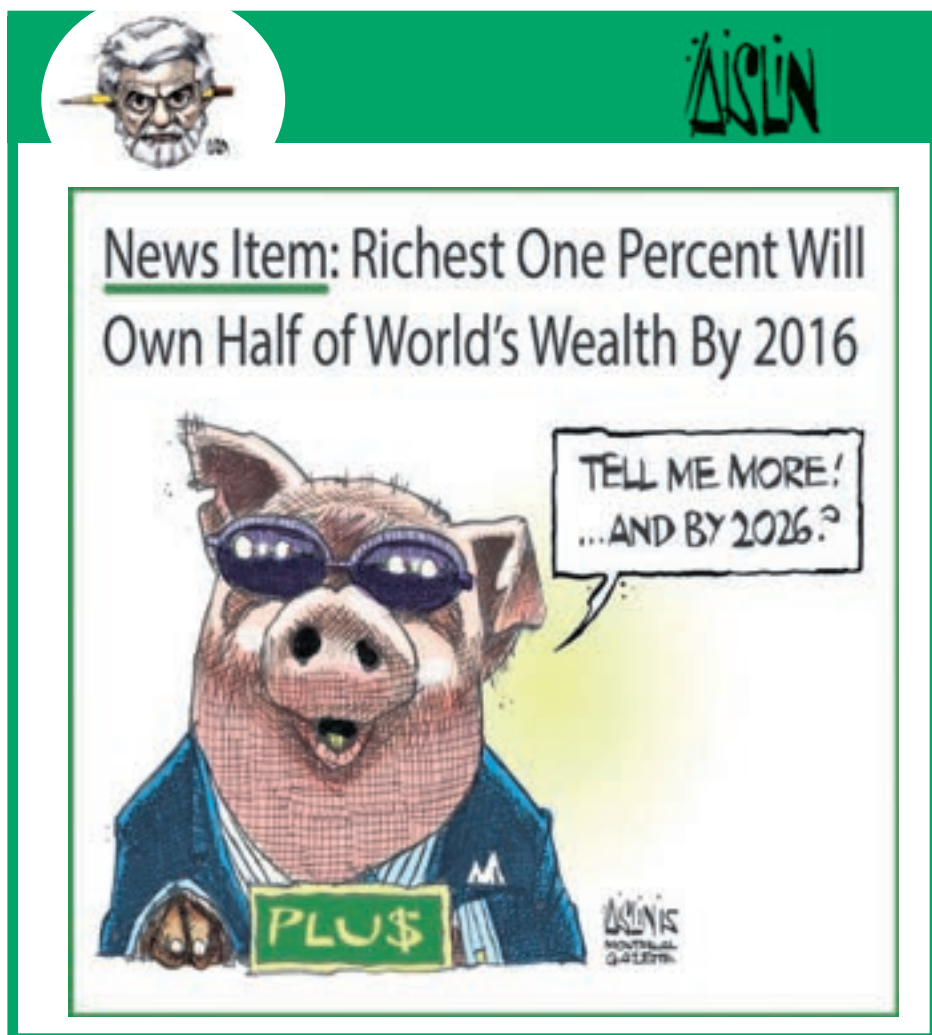
system (AAFS) is a complex and integrated supply chain that includes input and service suppliers, primary producers, food and beverage processors, food retailers and wholesalers, and foodservice providers," researchers write. "The activities along this supply chain generate significant economic benefits at both the national and provincial levels."

Unlike many industries that feature prominently in federal budgets, job opportunities are on the rise in agriculture and agri-food.

"Employment in most industries in the agriculture and agri-food sector continued on an upward trend," says Ag Canada. "In 2013, the AAFS provided one in eight jobs in Canada, employing over 2.2 million people."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2





## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The foodservice industry was the largest employer in the AAFS, accounting for 5.3 per cent of all Canadian jobs."

**The facts**

Canada was the world's fifth-largest exporter of agriculture and agri-food products after the EU, the U.S., Brazil, and China in 2013.

Canadian export sales grew by 5.5 per cent in 2013 to C\$46.0 billion, maintaining the country's 3.5 per cent share of the total value of world agriculture and agri-food exports.

It is estimated that approximately half of the value of primary agriculture production in Canada is exported, as either primary commodities or processed food and beverage products.

The US remains Canada's most important agriculture and agri-food export destination accounting for 50.8 per cent of total Canadian exports.

China accounted for 11.2 per cent of Canadian agriculture and agri-food exports and Japan, EU and Mexico accounted for 17.0 per cent combined.

**A third of food wasted**

However, the news is not all good. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada also

point out that while the country's agriculture grows, food wastage is on the rise. In fact, Canada wastes six billion kilograms of food each year—nearly a third of its total production.

About one-third of the global food supply is lost or wasted every year. Food is lost or wasted at all stages of the agri-food system and for many reasons ranging from pest and climate issues at the farm level, to infrastructure challenges in the distribution stage to consumer decisions at the household level.

However, the report notes that most of Canada's food wastage happens at the family dinner table, with consumers discarding expired or unwanted food.

"Six billion kilograms of food was lost or wasted at the household and retail levels, representing 29.4 per cent of the food supply in 2010, with household food loss and waste accounting for 20.3 per cent of this total and retail accounting for the other 9.1 per cent," the overview stated.

Ag Canada also reports that Canadians spent \$189.1 billion on food, beverages and tobacco products in 2013. This represented the second-largest household expenditure category, after shelter.

**Mission**

To defend the rights, provide information and advocate for the English-speaking agricultural community in Quebec.

**Vision**

The QFA's actions contribute to a sustainable future for both agriculture and the environment while providing a decent quality of life and financial return for the individuals and their families who have made agriculture and food production their chosen professions.

**Shared Values****Members of the QFA believe in:**

Maintaining family-owned and operated farms / Food sovereignty and self-determination by individuals and nations / Intergenerational involvement / Lifelong learning / Protection of the physical environment / Preserving land for agricultural production / Minimum government interference / Working alone and in partnership with others

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**Quebec Farmers' Association**

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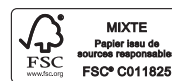
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## Budget Coverage

# CFA Highlights Agricultural Considerations in Budget 2015

**Jessica Goodfellow**

*CFA Director of communications*

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) was pleased to see investments in agricultural trade promotion, a continued commitment to improve labour access and market information, and a reduction in cost of Employment Insurance (EI) premiums for business owners reflected in the Federal Budget tabled recently.

"One of the most significant items for agriculture in this budget is the increase to the Lifetime Capital Gains, which CFA has been advocating for some time. Last year's budget saw a small increase in this area, but the funds allocated this year will have a more meaningful impact," said CFA President Ron Bonnett.

The Lifetime Capital Gains exemption is an important tool for helping farmers manage the tax burden associated with the transfer of farm assets. The CFA is pleased the increase to \$1 million is effective immediately, as it will assist farmers in their transfer of assets to the next generation by providing greater flexibility for both the retirees and new entrants.

While modest investments were made into various priority areas for Canadian agriculture - succession on farms, market development and building processing capacity - the CFA was disappointed to see that certain barriers to intergenerational transfers were not addressed and commitment for investment in crop varietal development research and climate change adaptation was not made.

## Key agricultural considerations concerning the 2015 Federal Budget include:

### Taxation

The two most significant announcements on this front are the increase of the Lifetime Capital Gains Exemption immediately to \$1 million, from \$800,000, which is estimated to save producer \$50 billion over the next 5 years in capital gains taxes. In addition, the small business tax rate was decreased from 11 per cent to 9 per cent. This is a significant decline in tax rates for small businesses, which should lend support to farm businesses as well. There are also additional investments made into small business financing.

In regards to the consultation on



Canadian Federation of Agriculture president, Ron Bonnett, holds court.

eligible capital property, which was announced in last year's budget and would result in additional tax burdens being imposed upon the sale of farm quota, the federal government has committed to continue this process and engage with relevant stakeholders. CFA and the national supply managed commodity organizations have raised concerns around the implications of this measure, as it relates to farm quota sales for farmers entering retirement. We look forward to continued engagement with Finance Canada on this front.

### Labour

Minor investments were announced to funding the centralization of labour market information and investigation

**"One of the most significant items for agriculture in this budget is the increase to the Lifetime Capital Gains, which CFA has been advocating for some time." — Ron Bonnett**

into barriers facing farmers in obtaining labour, addressing key challenges facing farmers.

The Government has also continued its commitment to reduce EI premium rates through a seven-year break-even EI premium rate setting mechanism, which would ensure any surplus resulting from employer and employee payments will be returned through lower

rates in the future. The Government has also extended the working while on claim program, reducing disincentives while working on EI. This ensures that seasonal workers claiming EI can benefit from part time jobs in the off season without being penalized through reduced total compensation.

### Trade

The expanded role in establishing international science-based standards outlined in the Budget is welcomed. Canadian agricultural trade faces numerous non-tariff barriers and standards across the globe that are not based on science. Examples of this include the recently completed CETA agreement with the EU and the topic of

GMOs. Non-science based standards are likely going to become a bigger issue with trade amongst developed countries as the agriculture sector deals with social license issues in these countries.

CFA's recently established Internal Trade Committee is opportune given the Government's announcement to establish an Internal Trade Promotion

office. The CFA's Committee will be an avenue to provide farmers viewpoints on this issue moving forward.

### Research

Starting in 2016-2017, \$10 million per year will be directed to the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) for collaborative projects between companies and academic researchers targeting natural resources, energy, advanced manufacturing, environment and agriculture. While any investment in collaborative agricultural research is welcomed, it remains unknown to what extent this money will be allocated to agricultural projects.

CFA's pre-budget submission touched on the following research priorities: increased funding and priority given to research in climate change adaption and risk management, and ecological goods and services. As these areas were not specifically outlined in the Budget, the CFA encourages the Government to consider the importance of these items and allocate the appropriate resources.

### Food Processing

The Government showed a commitment towards bolstering Canada's manufacturing industry. As the Canadian food processing industry is the largest manufacturing industry in Canada, producing \$92.9 billion in shipments and purchases nearly 40% of farm production, changes in this area are certainly pertinent to farmers. Accelerated capital cost allowance, first introduced in 2007 to encourage investment in machinery and equipment used in manufacturing and processing, would have expire at the end of 2015. The Government has extended this accelerated rate to any eligible assets acquired after 2015 and before 2026. This incentive will encourage Canadian food manufacturers to continue making long-term investments in machinery and equipment and help bolster productivity.

*The Canadian Federation of Agriculture is the country's largest general farm organization. Its members include provincial general farm organizations, national and inter-provincial commodity organizations - representing over 200,000 Canadian farmers and farm families through its members. Founded in 1935 to provide Canada's farmers with a single voice in Ottawa, the CFA works on behalf of Canada's farmers to ensure the continued development of a viable and vibrant agriculture and agri-food industry in Canada.*



## QFA Editorial



**Chris Judd**  
QFA Past-president

Should the door open out or in? This used to be a subject of great debate whenever a group of men got together. This was before the days when safety inspectors made yearly visits to many commercial establishments. The safety inspector always told the owner of the establishment that the exit door must open out! Of course, this was a sensible precaution. When a fire breaks out inside a crowded room, people tend to rush the door in a panic. It's a lot easier to open a door outwards than pull it in against a crowd of people.

Many years ago, my grandfather told a story. One winter night, it snowed a couple feet and a strong wind whipped up snow drifts several feet high. In the morning, when he went to leave the house to do the morning milking, a four-foot-high snowdrift was blocking the house doors! He couldn't get either of the doors open because they opened outwards. His only possible exit was to jump out the upstairs window into the

# How to break a screen door...

snowdrift and then shovel the doors open. This was before most people could afford a porch to shelter the entrance. From then on—until he could afford a porch—he always propped the outside door open when there was a storm on the way.

Our next-door neighbour, George, had a nice green screen door with closing spring hinges as an entrance to his kitchen. Just like most screen doors, it also opened outwards. George once had a male dog that used to stay out late at night every spring. One spring, George's dog was caught visiting another neighbour's about a mile away. That neighbour, who kept purebred collies, caught George's dog and neutered him before sending him home, safely disinfected with Creolin. When George's dog returned at breakfast time, it ran right in through George's screen door—which opened out, not in—busting the screen completely. He stayed behind George's stove for some time after that! George told everyone after that, that the door should have opened in.

For more than 50 years, in the first part of the 1900s, threshing mills toured farming communities each fall separating the grain from the straw. Threshing gangs composed of neighbouring farm-

ers and a few extra hands, usually retired farmers, followed the mill from farm to farm. The neighbouring farm women also worked together in each others' kitchens, preparing excellent meals for these hungry men. One day, nearing lunchtime while threshing at Bob's farm, Bob thought he should warn the women in the kitchen that the gang would be in soon. Bob was in such a rush that he took a short cut "over the belt" (which conveyed the power from the tractor to the threshing mill) instead of walking an extra 20 feet around behind the tractor. Bob's loose-fitting clothes caught on the belt lacing and in a second the belt tore off all his clothes, leaving Bob in only his socks, unhurt but very embarrassed.

Bob immediately ran for the house to get some clothes on. The shortest way was through the kitchen. He ran right in through the screen door—which opened out—busting the door and tumbling in a naked, embarrassed heap beside several previously unknown female helpers. Bob jumped to his feet, and before disappearing up the stairs was heard to say: "That #@%& door should open in!"

Years ago, many farmers didn't have—or could afford—fancy automatic door closers. There was one crude but foolproof door closer commonly used

in our community. The "plough point" door closer was cheap and trouble free. A rope was attached to the top of the "closed" side of the door, then fed a couple feet back to a pulley attached to the ceiling. The rope then went through the pulley and a plough point was tied to the opposite end of the rope from the door. When the door was pulled open, the plough point weight went up. When the door was released, the weight of the plough point going down pulled the door closed. No latch was needed, a clever dog could open the door, and no one had to worry if the door was latched!

My relatives live in the city. One cold morning in January, they noticed that the garage door and the front door of the house across the street were both wide open! After a phone call to them went unanswered, and several hours passed, my sister-in-law went over and shouted in the door only to get no response. She left a note, closed the door, and went back home. Later that night, the neighbour called to say thank you and explained that both he and his wife left early for work and the children must not have checked the door! Maybe the neighbour needs one of those "plough point" closers?

## New European livestock trailers arrive in Canada

### Hydraulic system used to lift livestock

By Drew De Bruyn, University of Guelph  
Agricultural Communications Student,  
for *Farms.com*

Italian functionality in the livestock trailer sector is now available in Canada.

The new style livestock trailers to be sold across North America by Ontario's Luckhart Transport provide a more comfortable ride for livestock, reducing unneeded stress. The trailers are also easier to load, unload and wash. They arrive as the transportation of livestock becomes increasingly scrutinized.

"The Europeans are light years ahead of us," says Doug Luckhart, owner of Sebringville, Ontario based Luckhart Transport. Luckhart will be the dealer for these trailers in Canada, USA and Mexico. "Our industry is changing; it is time to adopt their technology."

Loading and unloading livestock trailers is a lot of work, causing stress on the livestock and drivers. About three years ago Luckhart Transport started to retrofit trailers with a new decking system. Instead of

using a ramp to fill each deck, a hydraulic system is used to lift the entire deck, with animals in place.

They have been very popular. Manufacturing at Luckhart's takes six weeks and orders are filled until fall 2015.

Earlier this year, Luckhart Transport reached a deal with Pezzaioli, leading Italian trailer manufacturer, to become the North American dealer for its livestock trailers. Pezzaioli can produce trailers at a breakneck speed compared to Luckhart, as many as one and half new trailers a day. Pezzaioli solely focuses on trailer manufacturing, whereas Luckhart Transport retrofit trailers alongside their repair shop, 24/7 wash bay and custom livestock trucking operations.

The Italian trailers are equipped with the hydraulic decks too. But they go beyond the North American norm - they are also insulated, equipped with heated water system with drinkers for pigs and bowls for cattle, and misters and fans for the heat. For the drivers, the trailer roof lifts up allowing easy access, standing fully up.



Loading is made easier by the hydraulic drop floor.

The Italian trailers will be built to North American standards and the parts will be stocked by Luckhart Transport. The first trailer arrived at Luckhart at the end of November, 2014. A second trailer is on its way overseas now, with plans to sell 100 trailers in Canada, USA and Mexico in the next two years. The Pezzaioli trailers will cost about 10 per cent more than the Luckhart's renovated trailers.

Luckhart says the livestock trucking industry is an important step between farms and processors. Livestock transport is one of the most visible aspects of the industry to the consumer, and with this new European technology, the welfare of livestock will be improved.

# Best practices – to make local marketing a success!

## CAPITALE-NATIONALE

Johanne Martin  
Regional Correspondent

**Local marketing is practised by many farmers and processors and has its own rules for success. In this article, we review a few basic principles to keep in mind.**

QUÉBEC — “We all know more or less what we should be doing, but are we doing it?” asks Sarah Lepage, agrotourism and local marketing consultant for the Ministère de l’Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l’Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ), regarding sales strategies aimed at connecting farmers and consumers.

Farmers’ markets, kiosks on farms, fairs, events: According to some surveys, a customer’s motivation in making a purchase is partly related to their degree of interest in eating fresh produce. Every farmer should strive to stock their shelves with a broad variety and abundance of fresh produce.

“A smile is worth a thousand words,” exclaimed the agrotourism consul-



Answering customers' questions should be part of customer service

tant. “Reception means stepping out from behind the counter and meeting customers, taking the time to explain things and answer their questions. Promoting new products with recipe cards is also a good idea.”

“Show your passion – and treat your customers the way you’d want to be treated. No one enjoys waiting,” says Lepage. “Use gimmicks to minimize

the time it takes for customers to be served,” she suggested, adding that some good tips include addressing clients by name and catering to their dietary choices.

“Keep in mind that, most of the time, tasting leads to sales. Encouraging customers to discover new products can test the market or revive sales of a forgotten product,” she explained. While

displaying prices and the origin of food products is essential (otherwise some customers may simply not choose a product), customer experience is equally paramount. Food safety, interaction, discovery, exclusivity and animation are desired criteria.

### Know your customer base

“When you know your customer base, you can best meet its needs,” exclaimed Sarah Lepage. “However, you need to prepare yourself for this, which means talking to customers, asking them questions and listening to their answers. One good example is collecting information by using coupons for a draw.”

Short-channel customers want “an experience” and to shop using their five senses. The layout of your premises, whether it caters to impulsive or complementary shopping, can be a good way to increase sales. Teamwork, like listing or group marketing, also helps.

“Diversifying your marketing channels can be worthwhile, but sometimes you have to step out of your comfort zone,” concluded the consultant. “Communication, respect and patience are necessary, and always remember – in the end, we’re all consumers.”

# Turning to processing to overcome a crisis

## CHAUDIÈRE-APPALACHES

Maurice Gagnon  
Regional Correspondent

CAP-SAINT-IGNACE — In late 2002, the owners of Ferme de Ladurantaye, in Cap-Saint-Ignace, stopped producing pork and began producing Charolaise beef. At the time, beef prices were dropping due to mad cow disease. The De Ladurantayes decided to take advantage of low beef prices, converting their old hog house into a butcher shop and using it to process meats. They continue to reap the benefits today.

“We decided to go wholesale so we would no longer be dependent on the market,” says Christian de Ladurantaye, in the cutting room of his butcher shop. The business cuts its own meat and offers this service to 60 other farmers in

Est-du-Québec for beef as well as lamb, goat, bison, red deer, wapiti, horse, pig and boar. Their clientele consists mainly of farmers who sell wholesale to grocers, restaurants, hospitals and seniors’ residences. Almost all the animals are slaughtered at the Pouliot slaughterhouse in Saint-Henri-de-Lévis.

“We also do a lot of smoking,” Christian added. Motivated by competition, the owners decided last year to smoke 45 tonnes of bacon, pork and other meats for their own business, as well as for customers. The shop has expanded four times over the last 10 years, with the addition of cold rooms and processing areas.

### Reducing the herd

“Over the years, we’ve reduced our cattle herd,” said the farmer. Today, the business runs 80 head of pure breeding Charolaise, 30 of which are cows. “Seven or eight years ago, we had 350

head,” he added. Since 2008, Christian has been buying at least 75 beef carcasses per year for processing from four or five other farmers who use the same feeding regime. “It’s the feed that gives beef its flavour,” he exclaimed. Ferme de Ladurantaye mostly produces lean meat, the most sought after by consumers. After reducing the herd, the De Ladurantayes were left with surplus production of hay, which they now export to the United States as horse feed. “We sell 15,000 to 20,000 first cut bales of hay per year. The second cut is for our own herd,” he explained.

### Business is good

The business is doing well and Christian de Ladurantaye estimates that his butcher shop produces around 500 carcasses per year. “Since 2004, with the butcher shop, our sales have quintupled to \$900,000. If we weren’t making this much, we would have closed

shop,” he added. The shop receives 100 to 125 customers per week. Its products are also sold at three points of sale in Cap-Saint-Ignace, Montmagny and Saint-Pierre-de-la-Rivière-du-Sud. The shop itself sells Charolaise beef cuts, 20 varieties of sausage and a range of smoked meats and pâtés, all produced on the premises.

By reducing the herd to create more room for processed products, the De Ladurantayes are less vulnerable to any drop in beef prices. Christian de Ladurantaye also states with pride that the farm was renovated without funding, except for the purchase of certain machines.

The Ferme de Ladurantaye is a family farming business owned by parents André and Madeleine, and their two sons, Christian and Jean, who have four and three daughters, respectively. The farm has seven employees, nine in summer.



# Joining forces the best way to fight fire blight

## LAURENTIDES

Gaëlle Charpentier, agr.

Club agroenvironnemental Agro-Pomme  
| Tel.: 450 623-0889

Fire blight, also known as bacterial blight, is a contagious plant disease fatal to pear and apple trees. It affected Laurentian orchards in 2012, even more so in 2014, with devastating consequences. A single sick tree can contaminate one hectare of an orchard, regardless of variety. To combat any outbreaks this summer, the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ) visited all apple businesses and residences in the region, to show owners how to detect fire blight and prevent it from spreading.

### What are the signs?

Fire blight can cause leaves at the end of branches to wither, the result of orange exudate on the stem or the fruits. Cankers can also appear on the surface of the bark.



Orange exudate on the stem of a wilted leaf.

### What is the cause?

Fire blight is caused by *Erwinia amylovora*, a bacteria that lodges in cankers during the winter. In springtime, rain, insects, wind and/or scions spread the bacteria to flowers. As the weather gets warmer, the bacteria multiply. After rainfall of  $\geq 0.1$  mm or two-hour irrigation, the bacteria enter the pollen tube.

During flowering, pollenating insects transport the bacteria over long distances, contaminating other orchards.

### What can be done?

Precautions must be taken as soon as signs appear, with regular pruning under the site of the infection throughout the season. In winter, trees must

**Because fire blight is spread easily from one orchard to the next, cooperation is required by all – farmers and residents alike – to fight this disease.**

be inspected in order to remove any branches that have been missed, cut stubs left from the last year, and bacterial cankers. In the spring, it may be necessary to preventatively spray phytosanitary products at specific times, i.e., during the "mouse-ear hawkweed" phase or during flowering. To find out how and when to spray these products, contact MAPAQ at 450-971-5110, ext. 6556.

### Where else can I get help?

The Réseau Agriconseils Laurentides can refer you to an apple consultant in the region (450-472-0440, ext. 299). Financial assistance is also available for up to \$1,650 per year.

# A week of culinary discoveries in Lotbinière

## CHAUDIÈRE-APPALACHES

Johanne Martin

Regional Correspondent

LOTBINIÈRE — Is it possible to promote new relationships between producers, restaurateurs and consumers in winter? The answer is yes! This is exactly what the organizers of the first Semaine Goûtez Lotbinière – Taste of Lotbinière week did by offering a truly unique gourmet experience.

"We wanted to promote the region and bring more action to the area. So, during spring break, from March 1 to 7, local restaurateurs offered special menus showcasing Lotbinière farmers and producers," explained Karine Marcoux, an economic development officer at the Société d'aide au développement de la collectivité (SADC) in Lotbinière.



Lunch is served with local products from Domaine de l'Oie Toquée during Semaine Goûtez Lotbinière – Taste of Lotbinière Week.

In addition to promoting local specialties, organizers highlighted the importance of eating local among individuals and regional agrifood businesses while boosting local restaurants

and expanding their customer base. According to Marcoux, it was a success. "The feedback has been very positive," she said, specifying that five establishments participated in Semaine

Goûtez Lotbinière. Resto-Bar Le Cube (Sainte-Croix), Sainte-Emmélie Resto-Pub (Leclercville), the crêperie Du côté de chez Swann (Saint-Antoine-de-Tilly), Maison de Blanche and Zéphirin (Saint-Narcisse-de-Beaurivage) and Domaine de l'Oie Toquée (Saint-Agapit) all agreed to take on the challenge.

All businesses saw increased activity during the week-long event, and the elaborate menus received high praise from a mystery diner sent to sample the local culinary creations. "We also noticed that the event was shared and discussed quite a bit on social media. And the project created some new business partnerships, such as Croûte et Brioche bakery with the Sainte-Emmélie restaurant."

### Event extended and to be repeated

Finally, Marcoux reported that some establishments decided to prolong the event beyond the closing date. "Le Cube decided to extend Semaine Goûtez Lotbinière for one month. There is a very good chance the event will return next year. The restaurateurs also want to organize something this summer, but we will see..." concluded the economic development agent.



# Farmers and producers – visibility sells!

## BASSES-LAURENTIDES

Valérie Maynard  
Regional Correspondent

**Regardless of whether you are a farmer producing agrifood or in any other industry, research should be conducted first before deciding on a marketing or communications strategy.**

SAINT-EUSTACHE — How is your business doing? Where is the competition? How does your company do locally, regionally and provincially? “These questions may seem banal but they are crucial. Information is everything,” exclaimed Richard Lemyre, account manager at POC Communications.

Where are my strawberries being sold? How are they displayed, marketed and processed? Producers should ask themselves as many questions as they need in order to optimize communication and marketing return on investments.

The next step in information gathering is to define the offer – “Does my target clientele understand my product?” –



Richard Lemyre, account manager at POC Communications, discusses optimizing return on investments for communications and marketing.

and everything that follows: packaging, image, branding. “The brand is a promise, it’s the foundation. The words are what carry the message,” said Lemyre.

The next step is to determine your marketing and sales objectives – points of sale on strategic periods – by pinpointing your niche. Then, compile a list of marketing and communication tools, keeping in mind that there is no ‘bad’ media or communication



According to Benoît Laporte, president of Labe Marketing Internet Inc., certain steps must be taken to ensure good Internet visibility.

vehicles – only bad use of these tools. Finally, determine the budgetary breakdown of your marketing tools. Is your budget limited? Not a problem according to Lemyre, who says agricultural businesses should use their products as marketing tools and be willing to offer them, even for free. “If a person likes your product, then you’ve got yourself an ambassador. So farmers, get out there!”

Benoît Laporte, president of Labe Marketing Internet Inc., says the first thing to do to promote your product and expertise is to ensure that you have an efficient and effective web presence for your product, from planning your strategy to online sales. “In English, they say Fresh and Exclusive. Remember that people are pressed for time, so make sure your message is simple, clear and to the point,” he specified.

# A one-stop service for farm succession

## SAGUENAY– LAC-SAINT-JEAN

Guillaume Roy  
Regional Correspondent

**Farmers under 40 interested in launching projects in the MRC Maria-Chapdelaine now have access to a one-stop service from Agri-relève, an organization that facilitates the financial and technical assistance process for farm succession and promotes information sharing.**

ALBANEL — “We don’t want to hear about a young farmer knocking on the doors of a dozen different programs. By working together, we can integrate all protocols and respect the criteria for each, so that a young person hoping to start a business has access to this type of funding,” explained Dominique Tremblay, CEO of the Coop des deux rives, who helped devise the strategy.

With a one-stop service coordinat-

ed by the Ministère de l’Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l’Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ), young entrepreneurs can present their agricultural projects to 12 organizations simultaneously, giving them access to funding and services totalling over \$180,000. As part of this strategy, several partners upped their offer to meet the needs of young applicants, “as there is more demand than available funds,” Tremblay added.

According to Dominique Tremblay, the future is assured for this program but it needs an infusion of capital. This is why promoters of this strategy teamed up with Fonds d’investissement pour la relève agricole (FIRA), which can provide 15-year financing for land purchases.

Olivier Pomerleau, the first farmer to benefit from this service, has only positive things to say about the Agri-Relève strategy: “In addition to loans, I received \$25,000 in funding to start my business,” said the young farmer from Albanel, who will receive his first head of beef cattle within a month. “I was surprised by how effective the meetings were.” “The next generation of farmers



The Agri-relève strategy was launched February 12 as part of the agricultural plan for the MRC Maria-Chapdelaine.

is essential to the future of MRC Maria-Chapdelaine,” said Mario Fortin, substitute prefect and mayor of Normandin. “We have beautiful land and we need to ensure that the next generation can take care of it and develop agriculture,” he said.

The project, unique to Quebec, was created to support budding farmers with farm transfers, as well as to prevent land grabbing by making funding more available for succession. Primary

and secondary processing projects are also eligible for funding.

Agri-relève was made possible through the participation of Coop des deux-rives, Desjardins Entreprises; Financière agricole du Québec; the CLD, MRC and SADC of Maria-Chapdelaine; FIRA; Groupe multiconseil agricole; Centre régional des jeunes agriculteurs SLSJ; MAPAQ; SADC; the UPA’s accounting and taxation departments and the local UPA office.

# Encouraging local labour: A formula for success!

## HAUTES-LAURENTIDES

**Murielle Yockell**  
Regional Correspondent

**Remotely located in a region far from the big cities, Serres Frank Zyromski employs 80 local workers. To ensure their loyalty, the company has developed and implemented a win-win human resources formula.**

RIVIÈRE-ROUGE — “It has become common practice for horticultural or agricultural businesses to temporarily expand by hiring foreign workers during production or harvest time,” says Louise St-Arnaud, co-owner of and head of human resources at Serres Frank Zyromski. “These workers are usually very hard-working, very available, and once you work with them, you don’t want to let them go.” St-Arnaud does not see much of a difference between foreign and local labour.

Foreign labour is subject to Canadian and Quebec laws, and businesses that hire foreign workers must accommodate them and pay for their airfare. But for St-Arnaud, it’s more or less the same as hiring locally.

With an increase in staff over the years, St-Arnaud has always managed human resources herself: “I think that we’ve been more than able to handle this part of the business for over 25 years!” she exclaimed. In fact, some employees have been with her for over 10 years.



Nicolas Zyromski and Louise St-Arnaud, co-owners of Serres Frank Zyromski, are in charge of human resources. Not pictured here: Frank Zyromski.

Horticulture is a large, production-focused industry, where employees must follow a strict schedule and attain a certain performance level. St-Arnaud points out that, after 3,600 work hours, employees must attain a production performance of 100 per cent.

For a sector with a four-month working season, employee turnover rates are low.

### A win-win formula

“Listening is key to everything, and by exercising our best judgement, we create a win-win formula. Employee loyalty isn’t always about salary, but about ironing out small inconveniences,” St-Arnaud explained. “We have refined our expertise in our approach with our employees. We encourage their feedback, which is a very easy and inexpensive approach. In

our industry, we cannot offer enormous salaries but we offer good working conditions. That’s why our employees keep coming back.”

### A diversified approach

In order to standardize training, employee trainers team up with, support and guide new employees. Trainers meet with each worker individually after 300 hours and then every 600 hours to follow up on what works and what, if anything, needs improvement. Employees participate in every step of the production process, which prevents repetitive movements and redundancy.

The work agreement also contains a wage scale, an overtime premium and a weekend premium. “But we work very hard in order to avoid overtime, as we

believe very much in work/life balance,” she exclaimed.

“Our workplace health and safety committee is very active and we see to it that everything is safe. To prevent our employees from developing or worsening musculoskeletal illnesses, we’ve implemented a stretching program during working hours. Our employees also benefit from a sizeable gym with training equipment and other incentives to promote physical health. We also supply them with good quality shoes.”

There is also a spacious cafeteria, where three social functions are held every year, including the “End-of-cutting happy-hour party” with wine and cheese, preceded by either a day of leisurely activities or an educational day on workplace health and safety.

“The next challenge on the HR agenda is to find someone to take over the farm from my parents,” said Nicolas Zyromski, agronomist by profession and co-owner of Serres Frank Zyromski. Louise St-Arnaud, always thinking ahead, added that she has already begun to prepare for her succession.

*Serres Frank Zyromski was selected by the Centre d’emploi agricole agricole of the Fédération de l’UPA Outaouais-Laurentides to represent their region in the Ma ferme, mon monde (My farm, My World) contest organized by AGRICarrières, comité sectoriel de main-d’œuvre de la production agricole. This prize is awarded to agricultural businesses that stand out for their inventiveness in human resources management.*

## MANAGEMENT COLUMN

# Worried about your financial situation? It’s time to take control!

**Raymond Racicot, Susan Fleury and Johanne Laroche**  
Agronomist-management consultants

In spite of all your efforts, you’re struggling to pay your bills and they keep piling up. You screen phone calls and avoid going to certain suppliers. You wake up in the middle of the night and feel increasingly stressed and anxious. If this describes you, don’t worry

— you are not alone. Financial problems can usually be avoided or overcome, but first you need to identify the signs by answering the following questions: Have you recently paid interest on accounts payable for almost the entire year? Been refused a credit line increase or a new loan? Used new credit cards to pay for operating expenses? Borrowed money from family members or friends? Looked for a new bank

or lending institution? Received letters requesting payment?

If you answered YES to one or more of these questions, you may be experiencing financial difficulty, and it won’t go away on its own. Financial problems must be dealt with as quickly as possible, with assistance from a management professional who can help you find solutions and clarify your situation. Many people, when faced with this situ-

ation, wait a year or two before taking any action. Then they realize that their unpaid debts continued to accumulate, sometimes by more than \$25,000 or even \$75,000. All that money going to pay \$10,000 or \$15,000 in interest is unnecessary and a waste of resources.

We have noticed that farmers’ loved ones are often aware when they’re having financial difficulty, yet choose to remain silent or don’t get involved until it’s too late. It is important for family to intervene sooner and address this issue with sympathy and honesty.

Heeding and reacting to the warning signals of financial problems can prevent a situation from deteriorating. Vigilance is essential — and so is support from your loved ones and your agronomist-management consultant.



The barn, a source of comfort

# A comfy bed please!

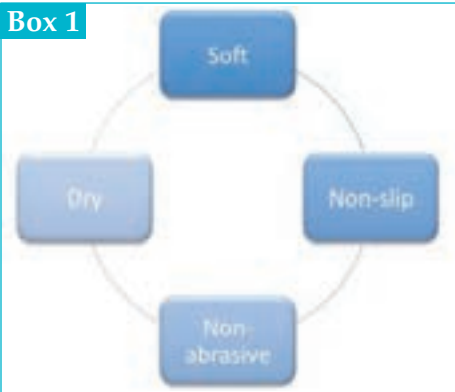
Steve Adam, Dairy Production Expert  
and Julie Baillargeon  
Research Project and Technology Transfer Coordinator

**A cow spends more than half of every day resting. If her bed isn't comfortable enough, she won't be getting adequate rest, and her performance will inevitably be affected.**

In fact, each additional hour of rest, above a minimum of 10 hours, represents an additional 1.7 kg of milk per cow per day in your bulk tank (Grant, 2007). So adequate sleep guarantees you a good milk payment! Furthermore, when cows are getting fewer than 9 hours or more than 15 hours of sleep per day, their risk of culling increases by 64 per cent (Bécotte, 2014). No matter how you do the math, it's well worth while evaluating how much rest your cows are getting in the barn.

### What does "a comfy bed" mean exactly?

Regardless of the type of housing, in order to ensure adequate rest, the resting surface must meet four criteria:



In natural surroundings or out on pasture, cows lie on ground that is covered in vegetation. This natural surface generally meets all of the requirements for ideal resting conditions and lying motions (see Box 1). Hence these are the characteristics we should be trying to replicate in our dairy barns.

There is an ever-expanding selection of mattresses available on the market. Each type has its advantages and disadvantages, in addition to differences in price and durability. Dairy farmers can also choose to forego the use of mattresses

and opt instead for deep-bedded free stalls, sand-bedded stalls, or an open area. With a sufficient layer of clean bedding, all these options afford adequate comfort.

### Is it soft enough?

While it is relatively simple to ensure that the lying surface is dry, non-slip and non-abrasive, it can be a little more complicated to evaluate softness. Until now, the knee test has been the long-recognized measure of softness. This method simply involves dropping to one's knees on the rest surface. Depending on pain tolerance, however, the results can vary significantly from one person to the next.

Valacta recently acquired a Clegg Impact Tester, a device equipped with an accelerometer that measures the absorption of the hammer's impact on the ground. The device displays a digital value between 0 and 100, from soft to hard, to indicate the relative softness of the surface.

Our preliminary testing compared different types of barn surfaces to the surface in a pasture. It was not surprising to find that a moist pasture surface with a good plant covering corresponds to a value of 0. In contrast, a bare concrete surface resulted in a value well over 100.

A variety of new mattresses and mats were also tested. The softest coverings gave values equivalent to the value obtained in the pasture, while the hardest rubber mats had values in the 35-40 range. Many of the mattresses had values between four and ten. We know however that many surfaces tend to harden over time, losing qualities that were deemed acceptable at the time of installation.

### Don't forget the bedding

In any event, whether your mattresses are more or less soft, new or worn, adding bedding is essential and compensates for the shortcomings of all mattress types. And as soft as a mattress may be, you will still need to add bedding to maintain cleanliness and reduce moisture and friction.



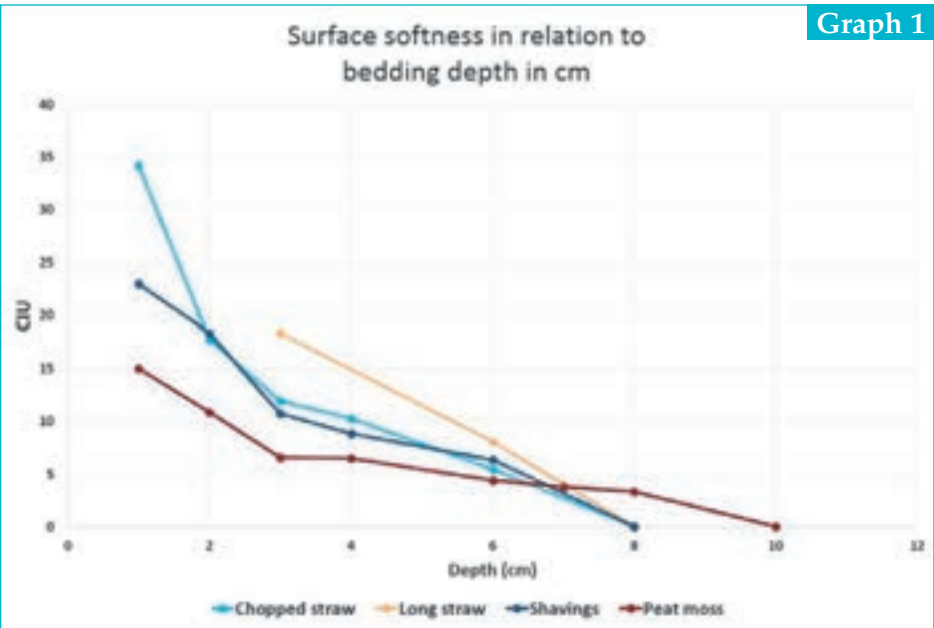
CLEMENT BLAIS

### How much bedding?

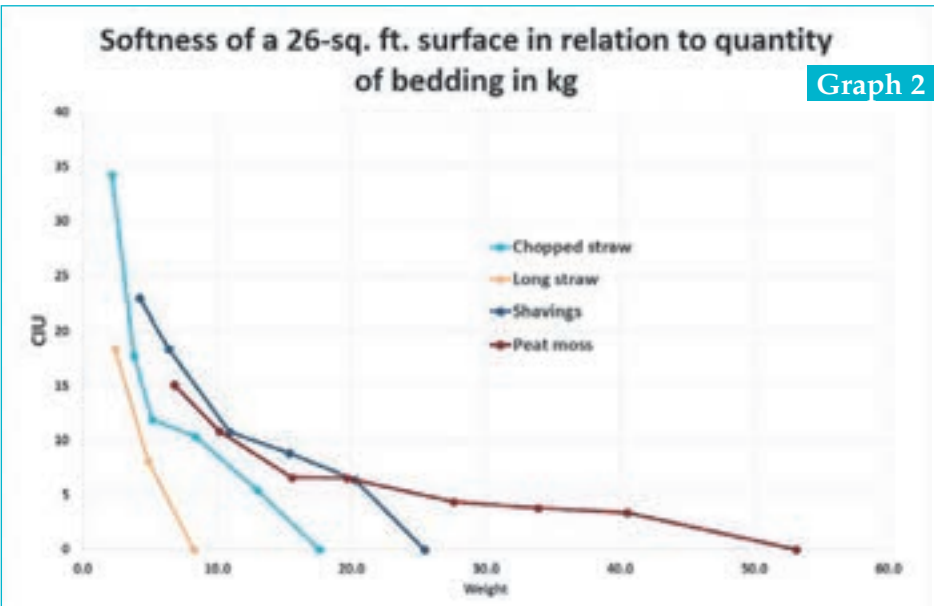
Bedding can be regarded as the equivalent of the plant cover in pastures. Using our Clegg Impact Tester, we conducted a few trials to determine how much bedding would be required to obtain a result comparable to the level of softness found in a pasture.

Long straw, chopped straw, shavings and peat moss were tested. The base surface was a concrete floor.

As shown in Graph 1, an 8-cm (3 in.) layer of straw or shavings gave a Clegg Impact Unit (CIU) of 0.



To determine what an 8-cm layer of bedding corresponds to in kg, we spread a uniform layer of bedding over a standard surface area (52 X 72 sq. ft.) Bedding weight varied from eight to 25 kg for straw and shavings respectively (Graph 2).



So a lack of softness can be remedied by adding bedding to the stall base. A minimum of four centimetres (1.5 in.) of bedding is required to obtain a CIU of eight to ten.

### A comfy bed please!

Whether your cows are housed in tie stalls or free stalls, it is possible to provide them with a soft, dry, comfortable, skid-proof lying surface. Take some time to assess the situation in your barn and look at ways to ensure your cows have a comfortable bed that affords them the luxury of lying down as often and for as long as they wish. Your cows will reward you in milk!



# Macdonald

## Reports



## Franklin Elementary School students become scientists for the day

**Caitlin MacDougall**  
Liaison Officer,  
Farm Management and Technology  
Program, Macdonald Campus

On March 17th, 21 students from Franklin Elementary School Grades 3 to 6 participated in a "Farm to School" day on Macdonald Campus. The school is located in Franklin Centre, QC.

Students and teachers were divided into two groups and worked on four different modules developed by seven Macdonald undergrads as part of a course. "Farm to School" has been running each semester since 2012.

While one group learned about genetics and the heredity of traits, the other group made their own bread, partly using insect flour. One exercise in the genetics module was to figure out which traits your cow would have by breaking a code, and then illustrating it. Some of the traits included long or short hair, horned or polled, dairy or beef, as well as the colour of the coat.

Students also made fresh cheese before going to the Raymond greenhouses to learn about different types of plants, soils and root growth, and used microscopes to examine different types of seeds. The students had lots of questions and genuinely enjoyed the chance to try their hand at being scientists.

Regarding the visit, grade 5/6 student Darrien Thompson wrote: "My favourite part about the day was when I got to draw the cow. We learned a lot about DNA and I really liked that. I also thought that making the bread and the cheese was fun. I don't think that I would work in agriculture but I like it a lot."

After completing all the modules, the students went to the Ceilidh where their bread was baked. Despite the fact that they used cricket flour, all the students were eager to try it, as well as the cheese they had made, or take some home to their parents.

### Tour of campus and dairy complex

Following lunch, FMT Liaison Officer Caitlin MacDougall toured the group around campus. In the greenhouses, students tasted freshly-picked cucumbers grown by FMT students. For

student Sabrina Dauphinais, this was her favourite part. "I really liked going to the greenhouse and seeing all the plants. I liked seeing the fish and how the fish and the plants work together. I liked seeing the roots and dirt."

As the group toured the buildings, they learned about the wide variety of programs on campus, and different career options in the agriculture and agri-food industries. They then headed over to the dairy complex for a quick visit to see the dairy cows and heifers and learn about milk production before departing. The Franklin Elementary students had fun identifying different breeds of cows and learning some of their names from their stall cards.

Cody Burton wrote about the visit: "I was looking forward to seeing the livestock. I really like cows and would like to work on a farm when I'm older. I also really liked the DNA part. My favourite part was learning about the genes and the plants."

"We went to Macdonald College and we went to the farm, there were more than 100 cows. The farm was my favorite part. I also thought it was really cool to make bread with insects," wrote another student, Cameron Allen.

### The Farm to School Program

The modules, designed by current undergraduate students, are created so that they align with Ministry of Education competencies for teaching science in elementary schools.

The workshops provide an opportunity for students to gain hands-on learning and to see agricultural and environmental sciences in a practical setting. It also opens students up to the possibility of studying in these domains which are not as well-known.

Currently, Mac students are preparing to hold their second year of day camps here in August. Last year one week each in English and French were offered. This summer, two separate weeks in English and two in French will be given. Presently, 106 elementary-aged children have registered for the week-long camps. About 35 additional places remain.

Campers will get to experience agriculture and food science by collecting eggs from hens, preparing soil and compost, and observing different



micro-organisms in the soil under the microscope. They will also search for tomato plant diseases in the field, handle laboratory instruments, and harvest vegetables.

For anyone who would like to sign

up for the Farm to School day camp, information is available at: [www.farmtoschoolmacdonald.com](http://www.farmtoschoolmacdonald.com).

Teachers who are interested in bringing their class to Mac during the school year should also visit the website.



# Quebec 4-H Innovative Ag Tour

**Lorelei Muller**  
Executive Director  
Quebec 4-H

Members from the Townships to the Pontiac joined Lachute 4-H for the Innovative Ag Tour 2015. From March 6 to 8, 40 people enjoyed visits to seven businesses in the Argenteuil region.

Saturday's first stop was Ferme Camporet, which last summer switched from tie stall to free stall with robotic milkers. Owners described long work hours needed in the first weeks to help the cattle acclimate. Though cows quickly adapted to robotic milkers, thanks to the incentive of toffee-flavoured feed, they took longer to get used to the freedom in the new barn. The efforts are proving worthwhile, an investment appreciated by young producers: "They save a lot of time with the new setup. They did a great job of planning for the future," said Matthew Burns, Quebec 4-H vice-president.

Participants delighted over taffy on snow provided at Tranquillity Agriculture, where owner Tim Clark outlined the transformation of sap into syrup. Members awed at enormous holding tanks and asked questions about the reverse osmosis machine. Clark demonstrated the organic practice for tapping trees, quipping, "Just do that 10,000 more times and you're ready to go for the season."

At Alpaga du Nord, a tour guide spoke about behaviours and qualities of the animals, use of llamas and sheepdogs as guards, and work with families in Peru to produce items for the boutique. Alpaca fibre is hypoallergenic, lighter than wool, and dries quickly. At McOuat Poultry, the importance of biosecurity was highlight-



4-H members from across the province listen attentively to a presentation at McOuat's Poultry.

ed as everyone donned plastic boots while filing into the building. After walking between rows of cages holding more than 10,000 chickens, John McOuat explained the quota system, life cycle of the birds, and use of lighting to affect behaviour. He also demonstrated the egg collection system and hand packaging.

Renowned for its genetics, Ferme Blondin was a much-anticipated stop for many aspiring dairy producers. Nicolas Lalande spoke of the farm's history and participation at many shows annually. Attendees marvelled at the fact that the show cows are washed daily, noting also the overall appearance of the barns. "High genetics barns are geared towards presentation, as a good chunk of income

comes from selling cows and embryos," commented Huntingdon's Andrea Soesbergen.

Sunday morning found the bus headed north to Harpur Farm. 4-H'ers learned about a year in the life of the red deer farm, including the challenges of working with these timid, semi-wild animals. Touring the corral and chutes system, they received an explanation of how antlers and velvet are harvested for shipment to China for use in medicinal products.

Arbres de Noel Hadley owner Richard Hadley detailed tasks from planting to cultivation. Hadley spoke of the difficulties presented by weather, insects, and disease, but glowed while describing his love of the outdoors and the pleasure

derived through becoming part of family traditions by welcoming customers to the farm to select their Christmas tree each year.

Gathered for lunch before heading home, Lachute 4-H President Matthew McOuat expressed his thanks to the participants and the volunteers who helped coordinate the event. Members reflected on the weekend.

"It was very diverse. It showed different aspects of agriculture and ways to make a living in your business," said Monica Parnell from Sawyerville 4-H. And perhaps Lachute 4-H'er Stacey Godin said it best: "I liked how every producer cared about not only the money, but their work."

## Is Canada's agri-food system ready for change?

**Craig Klemmer**  
Senior Agriculture Economist,  
Farm Credit Canada

The Canadian Agriculture Economics Society (CAES) recently hosted their annual agri-food policy conference in Ottawa. The conference, "Keeping Up With Consumers: Understanding The Policy Implication of a Changing Landscape", encouraged attendees to think about Canada's agri-food sector in a different light.

Professor Tanjim Hossain, a top Canadian researcher in the field of behaviour economics gave the opening keynote address. A relatively new and popu-

lar field, behavioral economics explores how human behaviour impacts economic decision-making. His argument centered around incentives for hiring workers or convincing buyers to make certain decisions. For example, non-monetary incentives such as a simple peer recognition system have been shown to alter the behaviour of workers and increase productivity and profit. It got me thinking about how some of these insights might improve labour productivity in primary agriculture and supporting industries; something critically needed as labour challenges continue to grow for Canadian agri-businesses and producers.

Other speakers discussed poten-

tial opportunities arising from the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) between Canada and the European Union. Michel Post and C.D. (Kees) de Gooijer from the Netherlands and Martin Rice from the Canadian Pork Council provided insights into EU markets. They focused on the gap between the European viewpoint of Canadian products and Canadian exporters approach to the different markets within Europe (for example, processed meats for German consumers versus ham for Italian consumers). This dynamic is important to raise the profile of Canadian exports in the EU markets.

Supply chain expert, Prof. Andrew

Fearne closed the conference with a challenge to conventional thinking regarding supply chain management. He asked why Canada was surprised by the "perfect storm" (i.e. large production coupled with a very severe winter) that caused a significant disruption in rail service last winter. He argued a successful supply chain must be designed to meet customer needs, even in challenging market conditions. Supply coordination is key to achieving this goal.

Canada has made major strides in opening up market access throughout the world. By looking at the agri-food sector in a new light, Canadian agri-businesses and producers could capitalize on the opportunities at hand.



## QFA Membership Recognition

**The QFA receives no core funding from the UPA. When English-speaking agricultural producers pay annual dues to the UPA, none of the money is transferred to the QFA to cover its operating expenses.**

Files show that there are around 1,500 English-speaking farmers paying their dues to the UPA. All are potential members of the QFA and ALL receive the Advocate. Only one quarter of potential members pay the fee that goes to support production of the Advocate and other services.

If you become a member, not only does your money go directly towards production of the newspaper, you are eligible to receive exclusive benefits such as: competitively priced health insurance; considerably reduced prices on Farm Credit Canada management software; discount cards for Carhart work wear; discounted QFA

translation services; a new 7½ per cent discount on Via Rail travel; and three free classified advertisements for the Advocate. Taking advantage of these benefits more than pays for the membership cost and so essentially, membership is free. To join, simply complete and return the membership application found inside the paper.

If you have recently paid for membership but have received another notice, please accept our sincere apologies and disregard the renewal notice. Occasionally, there are delays in processing. A membership package will be delivered in due course. The list of names below shows people who have joined or renewed in the last month.

## TOGETHER WE SUSTAIN QUEBEC'S ENGLISH-SPEAKING RURAL COMMUNITY

Douglas Anderson

Ron Angus

Danny Arthur

Wallace Barber

Gordon Boa

Donald Chisholm

CIAQ

Roy Copeland

Mike Culleton

Robert Dalton

Charlotte Davies

Linda Deacon

David and Rosemary Duffin

Daniel Duheme

Gregory Elliot

Thomas Estermann

Ralph and Marjorie Gallon

Richard Gamble

Harold Gillis

John Gomery

Donald Gruer

Carl Gustafson

Douglas and Joy Grant

Bob Griffin

Carl Gustafson

Michel and Alexis Hickey

Arthur Hobbs

Bernard Hodge

Darren Hodge

Richard Hornby

Patricia Keenan

Jamie Laidlaw

Lindsay Laughren

Edward Lemieux

Linda Leus

Wayne Lonsdale

Brain Maloney

Donald Mathewson

William and Ingrid McMahon

Dr. John McOuat

Calvin Morrow

Vincent Olmsted

Malcolm Orr

Garry and Charleen Overton

Herbert and Jean Parnell

Robert and Debbie Paterson

Douglas Perkins

Arthur and Sandra Rankin

Dave and Stephanie Reford

Keith Rennie

Frank and Janet Retty

Wesley Ruddock

David and Joan Rusentrom

Richard and Jean Ryan

Bruce and Ruth Schock

Andrew Simms

Robert and Donald Soles

Ron and Ruth Strutt

Gary and Linda Upton

Brian Wallace

Brent Watt

Henry and Sylvia Wilson

### Credit for UPA dues for farms with gross farm revenues of less than \$20,000

*A credit for UPA dues is in effect at the UPA and applies to some farm businesses. The object of this credit is to aid multiple-owner low-income farms. It reduces their fees for 2016 by an amount equivalent to a single UPA dues fee.*

**Find out more!  
This credit could  
be for you!**

#### To be eligible for the program applicants:

- ✓ Must be agricultural producer registered as double-dues paying farm for the current year (2015), (\$652);
- ✓ Must be in compliance with the regulation concerning dues, having paid all UPA dues, including the current year;
- ✓ Must show that gross farm revenues for the year 2014 were less than \$20,000;
- ✓ Must complete the appropriate forms and send them to the UPA before **October 31, 2015** (Note : The credit will be applied to the 2016 UPA dues).

If you meet all the criteria, you may be able to obtain a credit of \$331, which is equivalent to a single UPA dues fee. Please obtain the necessary form from your regional federation or from the UPA website ([www.upa.qc.ca/en/partners-ressources/services-for-producers](http://www.upa.qc.ca/en/partners-ressources/services-for-producers)) or by calling 450 679-0540, extension 8213.

*If your application satisfies the conditions, your file will be adjusted effective January 1, 2016, and the farm will automatically be considered as an individual producer.*

**UPA** POUVOIR NOURRIR  
POUVOIR GRANDIR  
L'Union des producteurs agricoles

170446





# India-Canada Treaty Critics Team Up to Fight

Latest investment deal puts foreign companies before democracy, says Council of Canadians.

Jeremy J. Nuttall

As governments in Canada and India herald their progress on a free trade agreement, promising to have it worked out by September, opponents from both countries are preparing to unite in their efforts to stop the deal.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper met with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Canada recently, vowing to sort out the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) this year.

The deal has been in the works since 2010, and proponents say it will open up trade between the nations while protecting companies in the respective countries.

But Brent Patterson of the Council of Canadians, an Ottawa-based public advocacy group, said such deals put corporations ahead of people by neutralizing the government's power to enforce things like pollution regulations through investor state provisions.

"The deals do infringe on the right of democratically elected governments to act in the public interest," Patterson said. "Sometimes we still have elected governments that don't act in the public interest by pursuing and signing and ratifying agreements like this."

Investor-state dispute provisions in such agreements are of particular concern, because they allow companies to take governments to secret arbitration for things like loss of future profits if, for example, a government passes a law that harms the companies' business interests.

Patterson said that could apply to things like banning certain pesticides and other pollution prevention measures, among other situations.

Similar concerns were expressed when Harper signed the controversial Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement with China last year.

## Cross-border opposition brewing

The Council of Canadians is now in talks with Focus on the Global South, an organization working to protect the rights of people in the Southern Hemisphere's developing nations with offices in Bangkok, New Delhi and Manila.

The aim is to get both organizations working together, possibly with others,

to try to prevent the CEPA between Canada and India from being finalized.

Canada and India have been in talks to sign an agreement for more than five years, but India's previous government had stalled the process after a few high profile lawsuits with foreign companies.

One lawsuit saw the government lose a court case against United Kingdom telecom company Vodafone over hundreds of millions the government alleged was unpaid in taxes.

**"The deals do infringe on the right of democratically elected governments to act in the public interest."**

— Brent Patterson

"It prompted a review of the impact of investor-state provisions and bilateral investment treaties and really put a hold on them," Patterson said. "There's a long list of egregious examples where investor-state has been used by corporations to challenge the public interest."

But Stewart Beck, president and CEO of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, said the agreement would provide a stable base and security for companies from Canada and India to expand business and create jobs in both countries.

A former Canadian high commissioner to India, Beck said that huge potential exists for trade and economic opportunity between the two countries in everything from lentils to jet engines.

Canada's current exports to India are about the same in value as they were to China 15 years ago, and since then exports to China have soared, he said.

"I expect the same sort of thing could happen in an Indian context," Beck said. "If we ever were to export energy, those numbers would ramp up quite dramatically."

Beck doesn't agree with Patterson's concerns that the deal puts business ahead of the public interest, and stressed that a strong economy is in the public's interest.

But Patterson said there are other issues to consider.

"Pollution of the air, water and land is going to be a concern to anyone anywhere in the world," he said.



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## Cookin' with the Advocate

### Fluffy Mashed Potatoes



#### Ingredients

4 lbs. potatoes (floury)  
2 cups whole milk  
½ cup butter  
½ tsp. salt, or to taste  
pepper  
nutmeg

Peel potatoes and cut into large chunks. Place in pot and just cover with water. Bring to the boil and simmer for five minutes. Drain off all but 2cm of water, cover and simmer an additional 15 minutes, or until very tender. Drain and place back on stove to dry, turning on a low heat if need be. Heat 2 cups whole milk and ½ cup butter until it melts. In the bowl of a KitchenAid or similar mixer, mash the potatoes briefly, adding salt, pepper and a little grated nutmeg. Pour in the hot milk and butter mixture, and beat until light and fluffy. If you have one, use a balloon mix whisk to make the potatoes really creamy.

Turn mashed potatoes into a buttered casserole dish and place in a 300° F oven for 10 minutes. Alternatively, you may make these ahead of time and refrigerate for a day or two. Bake, covered, at 300° F. for 30 – 40 minutes or until heated through. They should be served piping hot.

## The potatoes are not done

We're not quite done with potatoes. Last month I intimated that more needed to be said about this earthly gift and I believe there is no better time to revere the potato than spring, when tender new potatoes are but a mirage.

Being farmers, most of you are, no doubt, aware of some of the different variety of potatoes available, and even if not, you no doubt have knowledge of the effect of different soils and moisture and temperature on the outcome of plants and their edible bits. More than me: I tend to stay closer to the kitchen. But I'm going to take the chance that maybe all of you are not 100% up on your potato research and to this end, may I introduce Dr. Dunnett of Scotland.

Dr. Dunnett is considered one of the founders of modern potato breeding. In his book, "A Scottish Potato Breeder's Harvest", published in 2001, he drew together nearly fifty years of experience. This is a person that knows a thing or two about potatoes. And being from Caithness, a part of Scotland that my windblown ancestors also came from, I was even more intrigued by his summary of a lifelong passion that he shared with his wife.

As the title suggests, this eminent man has developed more than a handful of new potato varieties. And he doesn't just concern himself with yield and resistance to disease.

From the perspective of the kitchen, what I found most intriguing is the effect that growing conditions have on the cooking and eating qualities of potatoes. Where one potato variety might be a stellar performer in Southern England, for example, it might be tasteless and have different cooking qualities when grown in Scotland. Dr. Dunnett also speaks fondly of the old varieties, such as Pink Fir Apple, noting that "... nobody knows how it came to have such a distinctively waxy texture and distinctive flavour."

In 2009, "A Scottish Potato Breeder's Harvest, Part Two", was published, largely concerned with the need to double the world's food supply by 2050, the date set by most of the world's leading politicians. Dr. Dunnett puts forward the idea that massive yields of fresh potatoes could be grown in semi-desert areas and converted into chuno by modernising an ancient freeze/drying process discovered by hunter/gatherers about seven thousand years ago, and still used by traditional Andean farmers today.

For my own relatively tiny planting this year, I was planning on simply using the little sprouting potatoes in the basement and just accept what comes up. I almost wish that, once upon a time when I tried to smuggle some Pink Fir Apple into Canada from Scotland, I had carried through with my subterfuge. But I felt guilty upon arrival so declared the knobby little potatoes which were of course promptly removed from my sad clutches.

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**Leilak Anderson**  
 Certified Arborist  
 Advocate Arboriculture Columnist

Are you constructing a barn or doing renovations on your home? Are you doing some serious landscaping or building a new driveway? Considering how valuable trees are to homeowners (increasing property value, mitigating costs of heating/cooling, and statistically improving mental health), many people want to protect their trees.

But even if you don't care if you lose a tree or two during construction because you have a whole forest nearby, you should definitely be aware of the consequences of construction. Think of what happens if a person unknowingly harms a mature tree that is growing directly next to a new building site: the tree begins to slowly die, close to a asset, and becomes a significant liability for the landowner.

Trees are seriously affected by the impacts of man and machine during construction. Obvious physical damage to the trunk and crown of the tree can be caused by passing machines and materials. The "silent" killers happen when there is damage to the roots. A root system is NOT a mirror image of the above ground tree—it is one to three times greater, horizontally, than the height of the tree! Adding soil or increasing the grade, even just a few inches, effectively "smothers" and starves the special water-and-mineral-absorbing roots that are growing close to the surface.



Scaffolding and dumping of construction materials should be carefully planned so as not to damage or undermine the longevity of vegetation.

Root damage is also caused by heavy foot traffic or heavy machinery compacting the soil, limiting water penetration and decreasing the oxygen needed for root survival. Digging and trenching can damage or cut roots, making it difficult for the tree to stay upright in storms. And if you have to remove a few trees in a cluster, be aware that new exposure to the elements will affect the remaining trees, including sunscald and limb breakage from wind.

You can certainly protect your trees

and property by planning prior to construction. If you have a contractor, you can make sure all workers are aware of your plan for which trees go and which ones stay. Setting up sturdy perimeters around vulnerable trees is a great way to protect the root system: set a fence one foot from the trunk for every inch of the tree's diameter. You can consult an arborist for advice on which trees are best suited for certain locations, depending on the health and structural integrity of a tree, and its species, age, and size. Think ahead

and educate yourself so that you don't inadvertently damage a tree growing near your new project. Planning ahead can save you a big surprise headache!

*Leilak is five-time Quebec tree-climbing champion, and proudly represents Quebec in the international arborist scene, most recently in Tampa Bay, Florida. Leilak runs a tree-care company in the Outaouais and National Capital region. When he's not climbing trees, he's a volunteer firefighter. You can read more of his articles at [www.leilak.info](http://www.leilak.info)*



Consider trees in the vicinity of buildings and the impact of their surroundings on root stability.



During a construction project, significant root damage to a tree can be caused by heavy foot traffic or heavy machinery compacting the soil.



## Climate of change



**Mitchell Beer**  
President, Smarter Shift

# Small is (still) possible...

## Four takeaways from a visit to Vermont

Vermont has always been my favourite U.S. state, so I was thrilled a few weeks ago when a client asked me to attend a two-day energy conference in Burlington. The mostly rural state has a population of about 650,000, with the greater Burlington area, population 215,000, as its booming metropolis. So I shouldn't have been surprised to take away some lessons that fit in with my work for the Advocate.

### 1. It's About Making a Living, But Also Making a Life.

Vermonters have household and business budgets to meet, like anyone else, and their economy is powered by the energy sources—including Quebec hydropower imports—that were the focus of the conference.

But my first conversation, before I even left the cloakroom on the first morning, was with a participant who had grave

misgivings about the impacts of large-scale hydro development. He was an economist, he explained, but also an avid canoeist. When a place is small enough that people can have a sense of place, they'll often focus on making a life, as well as making a living.

### 2. Scale Matters.

Former U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower said: "Whenever I run into a problem I can't solve, I always make it bigger. I can never solve it by trying to make it smaller, but if I make it big enough I can begin to see the outlines of a solution."

It's one of my favourite quotes. But Vermont is living proof that the opposite is also true.

In energy, no single solution works for every community or every type of demand.

In Vermont, "cow digesters" are a thing, partly because 16 small devices are still big enough to make an appreciable difference in a rural setting. You might not see that kind of thinking from a power utility serving millions of customers in a sprawling metropolitan centre.

### 3. Small Places Need Big Friends, Too.

The cow digesters run at the local level, but they're owned and funded by Gaz Métro, Quebec's principal natural gas distributor. That's important, because small operations need capital, too.

After the conference, it was interesting to see Gaz Métro CEO Sophie Brochu single out the cow digesters as an example of local autonomy.

"We give our customers the choice," she said in a recent profile on the Corporate Knights website. Even though the digesters cost a bit more than grid electricity, "we don't have enough. Many people are perfectly fine paying a higher price in order to be able to light their houses with the cow of their neighbour. But this wouldn't work if we imposed it."

### 4. Policy Matters.

Burlington is a great example of a place where sustainable solutions are being built from the ground up. But the state government was a catalyst for that work, declaring that Vermont will produce 90 per cent of its energy from renewable

sources by 2050. In Canada, provincial governments—most notably Quebec, Ontario, and British Columbia—are stepping up with carbon and energy policies to counter a resounding silence from Ottawa. We're taking side bets on whether Stephen Harper will ever get the memo.

It's never wrong to pay attention when people begin building solutions out of a genuine sense of community. That means following Eisenhower's dictum in a slightly different way: If you can find a bigger solution at a smaller scale, it may point toward a grassroots option that can be adopted or adapted elsewhere.

*Mitchell Beer is President of Ottawa-based Smarter Shift (<http://smartershift.com>) and curator of The Energy Mix (<http://smartershift.com/energymix>), a thrice-weekly e-digest and online archive on energy, climate change, and the transition to a low-carbon future.*

*Beer traces his work as a renewable energy/energy efficiency communicator to October 1977, when he began a 3½-year assignment as a reporter, Parliamentary correspondent, and eventually assistant editor at Canadian Renewable Energy News.*

# Canada's first development plan of official language minority communities launches

The Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité (RDÉE Canada) and the Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC) are pleased to present the Framework for Canada's first Plan for Economic Development of Official Language Minority Communities (OLMCs). This plan was officially released on February 4, 2015, in Ottawa, in the presence of Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism) (Agriculture), the Honourable Maxime Bernier.

Small and medium businesses across Canada have the unprecedented opportunity to develop new business partnerships and to facilitate inter-provincial trade within Canada and beyond thanks to the first Canadian Plan for Economic Development of OLMCs.

Based on input from stakeholders across Canada and evidence assembled through rigorous research, this plan is designed to be a catalyst for businesses to reach new markets, opportunities and partnerships. Supported by the Network for Economic Action, a new Federal government and economic

stakeholder joint initiative, this plan will inspire action that will generate important opportunities for jobs, growth, and prosperity for all Canadians.

"Official language minority communities are integral to Canada's economic development because Canada's entrepreneurs are diverse and play a key role in every city and community across Canada," said Minister of State Bernier. "Our government continues to maintain the right environment for businesses to start, grow and expand their businesses."

"A cross-Canada consultation took place in February 2014 among heads of enterprises, entrepreneurs in the private sector and co-operatives, employers, administrators, managers of economic development organizations, representatives of community organizations and all levels of government," explained Denis Laframboise, Chair of RDÉE Canada's Board of Directors. "The review of data has allowed us to develop a plan that will ensure multisectoral effectiveness and the economic growth of the country, through, in part, the work carried-out in the OLMCs."

John Gancz, Chair of CEDEC, asserts that the economic vitality of Canada's official language minority communities is important to everyone and that the high rate of bilingualism among members of Canada's OLMCs is an immense asset. "Our hope for this plan is that it will engage stakeholders both within and beyond Canada's OLMCs, to create a synergy for new types of economic partnerships and stimulate new business opportunities that will strengthen our communities and benefit all Canadians," concluded Gancz.

The leader of economic development of francophone and Acadian communities in Canada, RDÉE Canada and its members, as well as CEDEC, a leader for community economic development and employability in Quebec, support small and medium businesses to stimulate their growth and help them seize emerging economic development opportunities.

For more information about the Canadian Economic Development Plan for Official Language Minority Communities, go to [www.inbusinessstogether.ca](http://www.inbusinessstogether.ca)





**Marcel Groleau**  
UPA President

# Land grabbing tantamount to hijacking the ability to feed the population

Three years after the publication of the first study by the Institut de recherche en économie contemporaine (IRÉC) on the phenomena of land grabbing and the “financialization” of farmland, the Commission de l’agriculture, des pêcheries, de l’énergie et des ressources naturelles (CAPERN) has just started to look into the subject.

This initiative has begun just in time. At the last UPA Annual General Congress in December, the union demonstrated that the phenomenon of land grabbing is definitely present and increasing in Quebec. Tens of thousands of hectares of farmland are now in the hands of companies like PANGEA, Investerre inc., Partenaires agricoles S.E.C and Agriterre. Since 2009-2010, the 15 most active companies have succeeded in acquiring 27,000 hectares, for a total investment of some \$121.7 million. By itself, PANGEA (co-owned by Charles Sirois and Serge Fortin) has invested \$26.3 million to obtain 4131 hectares during this period; the equivalent of 40 family farms. At this rate, it would require only 700 investors, each

buying 4000 hectares, to replace all of the 28,000 farms in Quebec. And we know that PANGEA’s appetite, along with the others, does not stop there. In the Lac-Saint-Jean region, with its purchase of 2209 hectares in 2013-2014, PANGEA acquired over 50 per cent of farms put on the market. This dominant position enables it to dictate market conditions for farmland in the region. The same thing is happening in the Kamouraska region, where PANGEA has announced its intention to buy 2000 hectares.

The financialization of farmland is a phenomenon of land speculation. Investment funds buy the land because its value is rising and the financial yield on the investment is profit. However, this process does not bring capital to agriculture. On the contrary, the investment funds buy the agricultural capital assets and then siphon off the profits previously reinvested in to agriculture.

Investment funds do not develop entrepreneurship; they kill it. When PANGEA arrives on the scene, it installs a single operator on its farmland, but gradually pushes out all the surround-

ing farmers, who see no possibility for expansion. This demands stronger scrutiny. In 10 or 20 years from now, who will buy PANGEA’s assets? Perhaps a larger investment fund operating out of Montreal, but with its headquarters in Hong Kong?

Farmland is a limited and rare resource. It is also essential for life. In 1978, the Quebec government passed legislation to protect farms from real estate speculation, first by adopting the ‘Act respecting the preservation of agricultural land and agricultural activities’, then with the ‘Act respecting the acquisition of agricultural land by non-residents’. Measures to protect farmland are both acceptable and essential. For the government to intervene now would be in alignment with measures taken by previous governments over the past 40 years.

For all of these reasons, the UPA has reiterated its concerns before the CAPERN. The Quebec government must prepare a detailed picture of the situation very soon and introduce a monitoring mechanism of farmland transactions. The information is available and it would

be easy to monitor the evolution of land transactions in the agricultural zone. Temporary measures are also required, such as limiting to 100 hectares, for a period of three years, the land area that any person or legal entity can purchase in a single year for purposes other than intergenerational transfers. This would give time to conduct a complete analysis and come up with comprehensive solutions with regard to land grabbing and access to land for aspiring farmers.

The UPA’s proposal is simple and will permit farmers to continue their expansion, while making it less attractive for financiers to buy farmland. It would also give time to find solutions for young farmers facing the problems of access to farmland and financing. Premier Philippe Couillard mandated Pierre Paradis, at his nomination as Agriculture Minister, to find solutions to this phenomenon and to ensure that young farmers have satisfactory access to farmland. Land grabbing is tantamount to hijacking the ability to feed the population.

LTCN 2015-03-18

## The Quebec budget – agriculture hit hard

**Yvon Laprade**

The provincial government’s budget chopper has taken a large swath from Agriculture. Indeed, of all the ministries, MAPAQ was the hardest hit in the 2015-2016 budget tabled by Quebec’s Finance Minister, Carlos Leita. The credits allocated to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food for 2015-2016 will total \$889.4 million, a reduction of 14.5 per cent compared to the previous year, when it reached \$1.04 billion. The Financière agricole du Québec (FADQ, the Commission de protection du territoire agricole du Québec (CPTAQ) and the Régie des marchés agricoles et alimentaires (RMAAQ) will all have to do with less money for the upcoming fiscal year. But it is the FADQ that will take the deepest cuts, with its budget falling from \$598 million to \$447.3 million, a reduction of almost 25 per cent. The RMAAQ budget will drop to \$3.9 million and the CPTAQ will see a \$200,000 reduction in its budget of just over \$4 million.

### The minister’s reaction

“We believe that the FADQ remains well-capitalized and will be able to deal with all eventualities, as required,” declared the Finance Minister in an interview with the French farm weekly, *La Terre de chez*

nous. “However, this is the only element I see that may have a negative impact on agriculture,” he added. “Government support [for agriculture] remains strong and its commitment is unwavering.”

### Regions affected

Nor are the regions spared under this budget, labeled as a “balanced budget” by Minister Leita. Municipal Affairs received a seven per cent amputation, while the Forestry Ministry was cut by five per cent. “It is not what we expected; quite the contrary,” declared the president of the Fédération québécoise des municipalités (FQM), Richard Lahoux. “We were hoping for a strong signal, a clear signal,” he added, “but this budget does not address the principal issues.”

“This is a budget from the boss!” ironically asserted the president of the CSN, Jacques Létourneau. There is a positive element, nevertheless: a sum of \$542 million has been allocated to forestry development in the Leita budget. This money will be divided as follows: \$225 million for woodlot improvements and \$317 million for forestry management and planning.

### Reaction from the Parti québécois

The PQ MNA and opposition finance critic, Nicolas

Marceau, accompanied by his colleague, Alain Therrien, declared that the measures announced by the Liberal government will “weaken the regions.” “It is all part of the dismantling of the regions,” he deplored. “They abolished the Rural Policy and also eliminated the CLDs [Centres locaux de développement],” complained MNA Therrien.

### UPA’s reaction

Asked to comment on the Leita budget, the chief economist for the Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA), Charles-Félix Ross, said he was “disappointed” to observe to what extent the government “seems willing to ignore agriculture and the economic contribution of this sector.” “We see a maritime strategy [\$1.5 billion] and support for large companies, but nothing significant for agriculture,” he commented. “The credits for the Financière agricole were cut substantially, with the presumption that the agricultural sector is in good shape and that less support will be necessary from the various programs. However, they are playing a dangerous game,” he added. “Our financial flexibility has been reduced and we are concerned about the consequences if the sector runs into difficulties.”

LTCN 2015-04-01



**Marcel Groleau**  
Upa President

## TPP: Prime Minister Harper must resist

Negotiations toward the conclusion of the future Trans-Pacific Partnership [TPP] agreement could be coming to an end soon. The chief negotiators of the 12 countries concerned, which together form a market of 792 million people and generate a combined GDP of \$28 trillion, have met together for an equivalent of two weeks since the beginning of the year.

The participating countries are hoping for the conclusion of an agreement within a relatively short period. Japan and the United States, two of the most important countries in these negotiations, are continuing their bilateral talks and an Obama-Abe (Japan's prime minister) summit is planned before the end of April. A US-Japan agreement would undoubtedly have a major impact on the TPP negotiations. Japan, like Canada, is a country with sensitive agricultural

products and its position will influence that of Canada.

Another essential element in the negotiations is the ability of Obama to obtain a Trade Promotion Authority (known as a Fast-Track), an important condition for the American ratification of an eventual TPP. A request for this may be sent to Congress as early as next month. This Fast-Track would put limitations on US Congress accepting or refusing the project as a whole. This means, there would be no debate, article by article, and no amendments. It is expected that the adoption of the Fast-Track could happen by the end of May. This would, in turn, give a clear indication of United States' intent regarding further TPP negotiations in 2015.

It is also possible that a ministerial meeting, preceded by a meeting of the chief negotiators, could be held during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit on May 23-24. Difficult decisions could be made there and recent

remarks by Prime Minister Stephen Harper are not reassuring with regard to preserving the integrity of supply management. During a recent speech to the Association of Rural Municipalities in Saskatchewan, the Prime Minister said, in effect: "We are facing some difficult decisions. We have some sectors where we can foresee major advantages for Canada, while for others, there will be challenges. Therefore, we will be participating in these very important negotiations and will do our best to protect Canadian interests."

I believe that, in interpreting Mr. Harper's words, there appears to be a shifting of position. This is quite unacceptable. The Prime Minister has declared many times that supply management is not negotiable. Even though, in principle, everything is on the table in this type of negotiation, all of the countries have some untouchables. Canada should not be shy in presenting its own sensitive products.

Quebec's Premier must also intervene to encourage his provincial counterparts to maintain pressure on Mr. Harper and his negotiating team. Quebec and Ontario would be the most affected if the federal government backs off on supply management. The situation is critical. The messages must be clear from all supply management partners, from the provinces and from Mr. Harper. Supply management is a determining factor for the stability of the Canadian agricultural sector. While 2015 is shaping up to be one of the world's worst crises for the dairy sector, Canada and its taxpayers will be spared, thanks to supply management. We have been able to maintain, everywhere in the country, efficient dairy and poultry farms of all sizes, as well as a dynamic and profitable food processing sector. There is much more at stake here than a system, Mr. Harper. There is also the future of agriculture in Canada and its regions. This is not a time to start shifting positions.

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The Quebec Farmers Association's ongoing partnership with CEDEC is expanding to include Small Business Support initiatives. CEDEC is pleased to extend this benefit to QFA members. CEDEC is a volunteer-driven organization committed to building forward-looking, prosperous and confident communities across Quebec through sharing expertise and knowledge. CEDEC is a leading partner and driving force for community economic development and employability.





# Animal welfare: more than good animal husbandry

Julie Mercier

Animal welfare is no longer only a matter of using good farming practices; it has also become a challenging issue for communications. More than ever, farmers must be transparent in what they are doing.

Over the past few years, the notion of animal welfare has become increasingly important for several reasons, according to Dominick Pageau, an agricultural economist with La Financière agricole du Québec (FADQ). During her presentation at a recent farm management symposium organized by the Centre de référence en agriculture et agroalimentaire du Québec (CRAAQ) she pointed out that the average consumer has very little contact with the farming community, but has become more and more sensitized to animal welfare. On the other hand, this phenomenon can be seen as a business opportunity for large agrifood companies, as well as individual farmers, who wish to differentiate themselves within the market. "Talking about it amongst ourselves is no longer enough – we must publicize our responsible approach with regard to farm animal welfare," Ms. Pageau declared.



Animal welfare will have an effect on production techniques.

Canada has opted for a system of self-regulation. The National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) has developed codes of practice for almost all farm livestock species. Dairy Farmers of Canada's proAction initiative and the Animal Care Assessment (ACA) for swine production are further examples.

## Group housing

With regard to animal welfare, the notion of group housing has generated a "domino effect," according to Sebastien Turcotte, of the Centre de développement du porc du Québec (CDPQ). In February 2012, the McDonald's chain gave notice that it would require its

pork suppliers to house their sows in group pens. Other restaurant chains quickly followed suit. In 2013, the Retail Council of Canada announced its requirement for conversion to group housing by 2022. Furthermore, the most recent version of the Code of Practice for the Health and Handling of Swine, published in 2014, stipulates that "for installations newly-constructed, renovated or brought into operation after July 1, 2014, all gilts and bred sows must be kept in groups." Existing installations have until 2024 to make the transition. In a CDPQ study, it was estimated that the cost of conversion will be between \$300 and \$600 per sow. "The new standards

for animal welfare will cost our producers a lot of money, but will also permit them to remain competitive and retain their markets," Turcotte explained. For their part, Quebec's milk-fed veal producers have chosen to eliminate individual cages by 2018.

## Dairy

Dairy farmers must also conform to new standards concerning minimum space for cows, pain control during dehorning and the use of bedding. In spite of the high cost of bedding, it is nevertheless a profitable investment, according to Steve Adam, an agrologist with Valacta. Research has shown that each extra kilogram of straw used permits a cow to rest lying down for an additional 12 minutes. If a cow rests just one hour more than ten hours per day, this translates into an extra 1.7 kg of milk per cow per day. "This is huge!" Adam emphasized. "Animal welfare probably has the most benefit for farm businesses in dairy production," he concluded. In his opinion, 'exercise' will be the subject of the next round of animal welfare concerns.

LTCN 2015-03-11

# A year of vigilance for large game farmers

Julie Mercier

The past year has been particularly stressful financially for the Fédération des éleveurs de grands gibiers du Québec (FEGGQ) [Quebec Federation of Large Game Farmers]. Because of a nine-month delay in receiving its government support payment from the province's Agriculture Ministry (MAPAQ), the organization had to abandon several projects. At its 11th annual general meeting, held in Drummondville on February 21, it was time to take stock of the year's activities. The federation is formed of several individual associations, representing producers of bison, wapiti, red deer and wild boar. "In this period of uncertainty and austerity, we must all work together over the coming years in order to develop commonly and structured projects," declared the organization's president, Nathalie Kerbrat, in her opening remarks.

The four groups that form the federation could be considered as competitors in Quebec's marketplace. However, they must deal with fierce competition from products arriving from Western Canada and other countries. Quebec producers can rely on traceability, from farm to slaughter in order to differentiate themselves from their competitors, according to the 1st vice-president of the Union des producteurs agri-

coles (UPA), Pierre Lemieux. Agri-Traçabilité Québec (ATQ) is now looking for an abattoir that would be willing to extend the traceability through to the consumer. Economic uncertainty and austerity kept the federation vigilant in 2014. After nine months of doubt concerning the government's financial aid payment under the PAFRAPD program [Programme d'appui financier aux regroupements et aux associations de producteurs désignés], the federation finally received its cheque from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ) on December 31, last. This funding ends on March 31.

## For 2015

As for resolutions at the meeting, the red deer producers association proposed to remove the two-year limit on the mandate of the federation's president, as set out in the bylaws. However, this proposal was rejected by the majority. The assembly did support the idea of a farm start-up savings plan, an idea originating from the Fédération de la relève agricole du Québec (FRAQ). Delegates attending the meeting also took the opportunity to adopt the organization's 2015 action plan. The plan proposes, among other things, to increase marketing efforts to encourage consumers to buy large game farm products. The federation

has prepared a new selection of recipes, as well as a recipe pad with detachable sheets. With regard to animal health and welfare, the federation is planning a project to evaluate proper livestock housing, since some producers have recently been fined by wildlife officers who judged their housing to be inadequate. This situation has brought to light some unclear wording in the regulation concerning the farming of wild game animals. Also, during the upcoming year, the federation plans to study the possibility of creating a coordinating body, following a request from the UPA, which finances the federation.

The consulting firm Forest Lavoie Conseil is presently doing an analysis of the situation regarding abattoirs and the potential to develop the marketing of large game farm products in Quebec. Producers are encouraged to participate in a short survey. During the upcoming year, the federation hopes to develop an action plan for 2015-2019, as required in the PAFRAPD program. Money for this type of planning is available through the Programme de soutien aux stratégies sectorielles de développement. Although the federation's request for funding has been refused twice, it has submitted a third proposal and is now waiting for an answer.

LTCN 2015-04-03



# BioBon guilty of illegally using the controlled terminology “bio”

**Martin Ménard**

Quebec organic producers who must pay for their organic certification have been waiting for years for cheaters to be caught for illegally using the term “biologique” [“organic” in English].

Now, it has finally happened. Recently, in a Sherbrooke courtroom, the company BioBon of Coaticook, a food processor of veggie pasta was found guilty and must pay a fine of \$5052 for two offenses. The first is with regard to article 63, which prohibits the use of the term “biologique” in the promotion of uncertified products. The second violation concerns article 64, which forbids the sale of products announced as organic without proper certification. In fact, the enterprise clearly used the term “bio” in its company name, while producing no organic products. In addition

to paying the fine, the business must correct the situation of non-conformity. So instead of changing its name, it decided to obtain certification, which it did as of February 27, 2015.

## CARTV is pleased

“Certainly, we are pleased,” commented Anne-Marie Granger Godbout, the director of the Conseil des appellations réservées et des termes valorisants (CARTV) [Reserved Designations and Added-value Claims Council]. “It is important to demonstrate that the law has teeth. It is also important to show farmers that we are working to preserve the credibility of organic production,” she declared. The CARTV has promised more action this spring. Other cases with much bigger fines are being prepared.

LTCN 2015-03-25



BioBon of Coaticook pleaded guilty and must pay a fine of \$5050 for having illegally used the controlled term “biologique”

# Quebec-grown edamame soon on your plate

**Martine Giguère**

The consumption of edamame continues to rise around the world. In the United States, demand is increasing at a rate of eight per cent per year and domestic production cannot meet the demand. Presently, the edamame that we eat locally comes mainly from Asia. This legume food is essentially an immature green soybean, rich in high-quality protein.

In Quebec, farmers are also showing interest. In fact, the Fédération québécoise des producteurs de fruits et légumes de transformation (FQPFLT) has asked the Régie des marchés agricoles et alimentaires du Québec (RMAAQ) to include edamame production in its joint plan. On March 3, the Régie held hearings on the federation's request and made an immediate decision. “We are very pleased that it made its ruling “from the bench”. This gives us the scope to work on the development of new production. It also demonstrates that a joint plan has a lever effect on developing new opportunities for Quebec,” explained Judith Lupien, the FQPFLT director-general.

The Federation plans on conducting plot trials on several farms over the course of this summer. The first phase will be to determine the highest performing and best adapted varieties for Quebec conditions. “We will also have to face the challenge of sourcing sufficient seed,



Edamame production has recently been added to the FQPFLT joint plan.

in addition to identifying the tastiest varieties” Lupien added.

The field trials will also aid in adjusting the cultural practices to the Quebec context and, more specifically, to determine the best seeding rates adapted to mechanical harvesting. “We want to produce enough volume to be able to do some testing in the processing plant” she added. The FQPFLT is conducting this project in collaboration with Bonduelle. For this industrial company, it is important to do trials on mechanical harvesting and on product storage – both in the pod and bean forms. “It is positive news to have a leader like Bonduelle involved in the project; particularly in facilitating access to larger seed producers and stimulating interest in working with us,” Lupien declared.

Numerous stakeholders are enthusiastic about the development of edamame production in Quebec. Besides Bonduelle, the FQPFLT is working in partnership with the Association québécoise de la distribution de fruits et légumes, as well as other producers. Several farms are already growing edamame, including Les productions BDA in Saint-Valérien-de-Milton. If everything goes well and the results of this summer's trials are positive, the FQPFLT foresees expanded commercial production in 2016.

LTCN 2015-04-01



## Farm Safety

# Keeping tractor attachments secure

## Canadian Agricultural Safety Association

It was a November day just like any other November day in rural Manitoba. The sun was shining, the sky was full of southern-bound Canadian geese, the air was crisp and there was work to be done. However, for one Manitoba man, this day was his last. A 36-year-old Hutterite man was killed when a bucket of a front-end loader detached, crushing and killing him. He had been working on a fence with another worker when the tragedy struck.

Not all incidents that involve the unintentional release of an attachment result in injuries or fatalities but can instead cost dollars in equipment damage. An incident occurred on a rural Manitoba road last fall when a farmer driving a bale-spear-equipped tractor suddenly lost the attachment, resulting in a near roll-over. The farmer was able to maintain control of the tractor; however the bale spear attachment punctured a tire causing thousands of dollars of damage.

Unfortunately, these incidents are not uncommon.

Buckets and other attachments are an essential piece of equipment on many farms. A quick coupling system is a great way to save time and energy, enabling operators to quickly change from one loader attachment to another, but they can become unintentionally released.

Unintentional release of the attachment can sometimes be caused by the failure of the automatic locking pins after coupling or the failure of the operator to manually engage the locking pins. This exposes workers to possible injury if gravity isn't enough to maintain the attachment position. Quick moves by the front-end-loader, driving at any speed, a bump in the road or even gradual movement could all cause the equipment to detach and fall, resulting in damage to equipment or injuries to a bystander.

So, what can we do to prevent these attachments from unintentional release? First and arguably the most important is know the equipment. Understanding the equipment's capabilities and limitations before operating is essential to good safety. Other good safety practices are:

- Make sure that all quick coupling systems are free from debris and haz-

ards like mud or manure. Remove and replace any damaged or excessively worn parts.

- Ensure that the attachment is compatible. Much like a square peg in a round hole: it may work for some time, but then suddenly swing open, releasing the bucket or other attachment.
- Make sure that locking pins are present and in good condition. Some older coupling systems don't have the recommended safety locking pins. If appropriate, obtain and install retrofits recommended by the manufacturer, including locking pins and other devices that need to be manually installed.
- Make sure that all locking mechanisms are engaged.
- Finally visually inspect the coupling system to verify that the attachment is secure, all locks are fully engaged and the centre of the attachment matches up to the coupler.

It's important to verify that the attachment is connected properly every time the attachment is changed.

All machinery is different and needs to be individually assessed. The above is general guidance and not meant to replace a discussion about specific pieces of equipment. Please refer to your manual or contact your manufacturer for more details regarding the safety of your machine.

One of the easiest and most effective controls that can be exercised around machinery is creating a policy for workers, children and bystanders around machinery. Ensure that workers, children and bystanders are clear of the work. Establishing a no-go zone around the bucket or other attachment will ensure no one is crushed.

An old safety rule, but one that saves lives over and over again, is the one of no riders. A bucket or other attachment is not designed to carry passengers, no matter how slow the machinery is travelling or how safe the operator and passenger feel it is. It isn't safe. There have been many deaths attributed to runovers and crushes because of extra riders.

Remember to discuss the safety procedures with any worker who will be operating the machine or working near the machine. Sharing the safety knowledge and proper procedure is a proactive way to manage the risk.

Verifying the attachment is correctly coupled, ensuring that machinery is free of hazards, keep-

ing bystanders, workers and children away from working machines might cost time and even some money; but will lead to a better, safer and more productive farming operation. For more information about how you can increase the safety on your operation, contact the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association at [info@casa-acsa.ca](mailto:info@casa-acsa.ca).



COURTESY OF CASA

An incident occurred on a rural Manitoba road last fall when a farmer driving a bale-spear-equipped tractor suddenly lost the attachment, resulting in a near roll-over.

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### BIRTH

It is with much joy that we wish to announce the birth of Garnet William McClelland who was born at home on Easter Sunday, April 5, at 6:15am—weighing in at a healthy 7.6 pounds. Parents Avery Larose and (Advocate Managing Editor) Andrew McClelland are overjoyed with their healthy baby boy. Their first-born, Trevellyn, has taken on the responsibilities of being a big brother splendidly!



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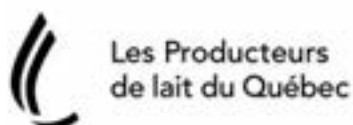
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Les Producteurs  
de lait du Québec

### ATTENTION: Change to the SCVQ

Beginning with the June 20 to 28, 2013 period of offers, quota transactions will be done through the producer Extranet site or through an IVR system (interactive voice response). Please refer to the letter sent to you in this regard. Instructions on how to place quota transactions may be found on the producer Extranet site or from your region.

### Centralized Quota Sales System APRIL 2015

Centralized Quota Sales System

Fixed Price - \$25,000.00

	Number	Quantity in kg b.f./day
Total offers to sell	53	597.0
Offers to sell participating in the distribution	53	597.0
Successful offers to sell participating in the distribution	53	597.0
Net quantity bought by the reserve		1.6
Total offers to buy	2,181	11,742.9
Offers to buy participating in the distribution	2,181	595.4
Successful offers to buy participating in the distribution	2,181	595.4

Purchase and Sale offers by Stratum

SALES			PURCHASES		
Number	Quantity in kg b.f./day	Cumulation	Price offered \$/kg b.f./day	Number	Quantity in kg b.f./day
53	597.0	597.0	< 25,000.00	2,181	11,742.9
			25,000.00 ceiling price		11,742.9

The fixed price for April 2015 is the ceiling price for this month. A quota quantity of 597.0 b.f./day was offered for sale at the fixed price. Of this quantity, an amount of 1.7 b.f./day was allotted to producers benefiting from the Start-up Assistance Program and producers holding less than 12 kg, in accordance with the quota regulation.

1st step distribution by iteration = 0.1 kg BF/day • 2nd step distribution by prorata = 3.28% • Portion of quantities satisfied = 5.07%

177035



Free advice!

A doctor and a lawyer are talking at a party. Their conversation is constantly interrupted by people describing their ailments and asking the doctor for free medical advice. After an hour of this, the exasperated doctor asks the lawyer, “What do you do to stop people from asking you for legal advice when you’re out of the office?”



“I give it to them,” replies the lawyer. “And then I send them a bill.” The doctor is shocked, but agrees to give it a try. The next day, still feeling slightly guilty, the doctor prepares the bills. When he goes to place them in his mailbox, he finds a bill from the lawyer.

Sixth sense

A man approached a very beautiful woman in a large supermarket and said, “I’ve lost my wife here in the supermarket. Can you talk to me for a couple of minutes?”

“Why do you want to talk to me?” she asked puzzled. The man looked around nervously and then whispered, “Because every time I talk to a beautiful woman, my wife appears out of nowhere.”

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