

# Quebec Farmers' Advocate

Vol. 35, No. 2 – February 2015



## WHAT'S INSIDE

QFA "Farm Food Forum" on Genomics...  
p. 3

QFA meets with delegation from Japan!  
p. 4

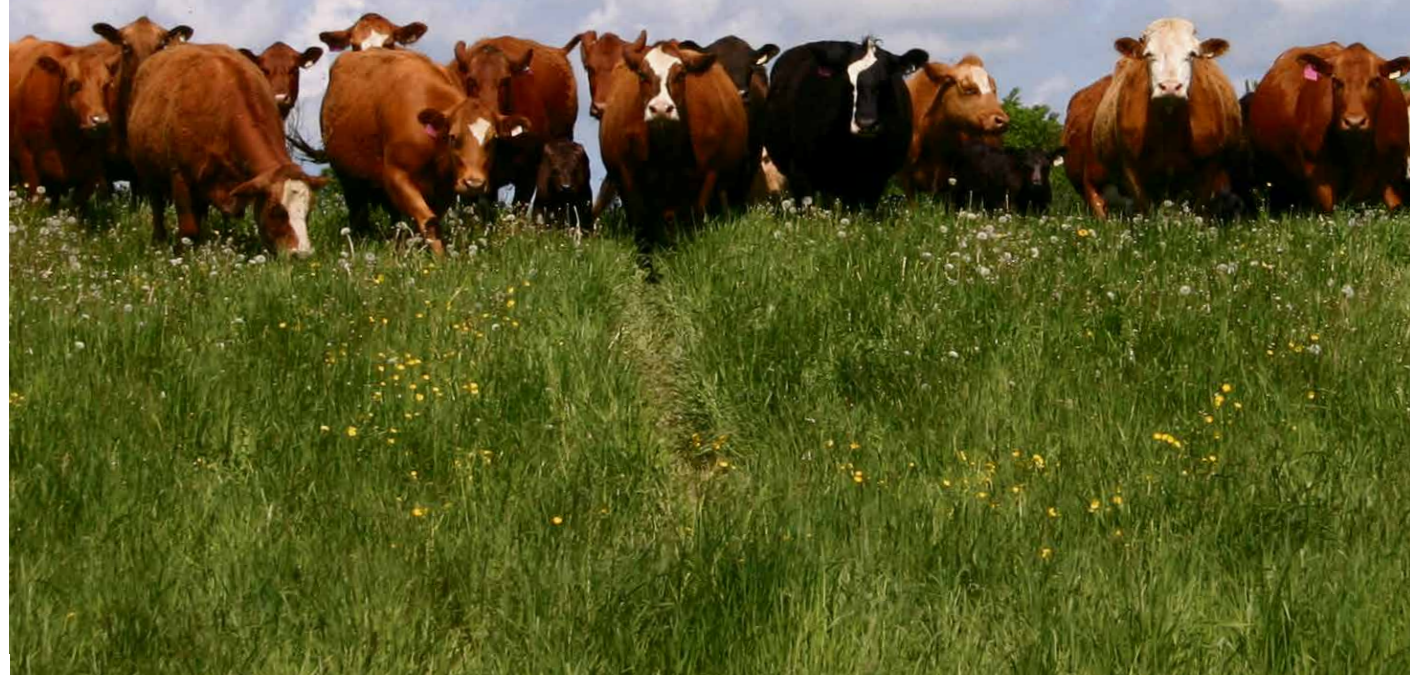
Get a discount on VIA Rail with the QFA  
p. 11

Helping rural-urban dialogue  
p. 15

Ag Safety Week is coming up  
p. 16

How do trees survive winter?  
p. 21

## BSE case never entered food systems



A single case of BSE has been newly discovered on an Alberta farm. Food inspectors have noted that no parts of the animal carcass have entered any human or animal food systems. Note: this is a file photo; the age and breed of the cow have not yet been made public.

**"Without a family, man,  
alone in the world,  
trembles with the cold."**

— Andre Maurois

## QFA's Farm Food Forums

Thursday, March 26

Genomics explained  
(and how it can work for you!)

See page 3 for details...

**Andrew McClelland**  
*Advocate Staff Reporter*

Just when things were looking up for Canadian beef producers, here comes some bad news: a case of Mad Cow Disease has been discovered on an Alberta farm.

On February 11, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) confirmed the presence of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in a beef cow from Alberta. The federal agency was quick to point out that no part of the animal's carcass entered the human food or animal feed systems.

Nonetheless, many questions need to be answered before Canadian beef producers can figure out how this single case will affect their business in the coming months—or years.

The case comes at a bad time. Canada was only months away from applying to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) to have Canada's status moved from "controlled BSE risk" to that of "negligible". Countries that have been labelled a "controlled risk" for BSE by the OIE are able to upgrade their status to "negligible risk" if the youngest of their domestic BSE cases was born over 11 years ago. The age of the Alberta cow is yet to be determined.

"If it is less than 11 years, it will push the clock back for us," said Dennis Laycraft, executive vice-president of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association. "We would have preferred never to have seen another case, but recognizing that these types of very isolated cases have occurred before, at this stage I'd call it disappointing and hopefully the last one we see."

### "Business as usual"?

While tissue from the infected animal was still in the lab being analyzed, the CFIA began gathering data and information about the animal's origin.

The cow was not born on the farm where it was found. On February 17, the CFIA confirmed that the cow was in fact born on another Alberta farm. Authorities were easily able to trace and identify the cow thanks to its ear tag and data stored in a database run by the non-profit Canadian Cattle Identification Agency.

"It was not indigenous to that farm so they will start doing the trace out," said federal Minister of Agriculture Gerry Ritz. "There is always concern there might be more and that is why we

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



## On the cover

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

have a very fulsome testing procedure. We don't change from our controlled risk status that we enjoy right now, so we don't see this interfering with any of our trade corridors at this point in time."

However, the international alarm caused by the term "BSE" caused one of those trade corridors to close within days of the CFIA's announcement. South Korea announced that it was banning imports from Canada on February 14. In 2014, South Korea imported 2,800 tonnes of beef from Canada in sales that racked up to \$26 million (USD).

Beef imports from Canada had been banned by South Korea before in 2011, also due to the outbreak of the mad cow disease. It resumed imports in March 2012.

### Plenty of monitoring

The details of how the case of BSE was uncovered shows that the Canadian beef industry is serious about the early detection of the disease.

A private veterinarian took samples from a downer cow on the Alberta farm. They were then tested in a provincial lab on February 7, where they were deemed "non-negative".

Alberta producers are paid a \$75-per-head incentive to test downer cows for

BSE. The province is obliged to test 10,000 head each year, and Canada is expected to test 30,000 head each year as part of its voluntary surveillance program with the OIE. In 2014, a national total of 27,000 cattle were tested.

On February 9, the same samples were tested in CFIA's federal lab in Lethbridge, and agency officials put the Alberta farm where the downer cow was found under quarantine. The samples were confirmed as positive for BSE on February 11, and the federal government informed trading partners the following day.

In all, the national monitoring system took samples, conducted an investigation, and reported to the international community in less than a week.

### Hard to trace

Canada has spent years improving its livestock traceability systems, largely due to the cases that caused the BSE outbreak of 2003. As it takes a significant amount of time—often years—for infected cattle to show any clinical signs of BSE, what causes the initial infection is always difficult to place.

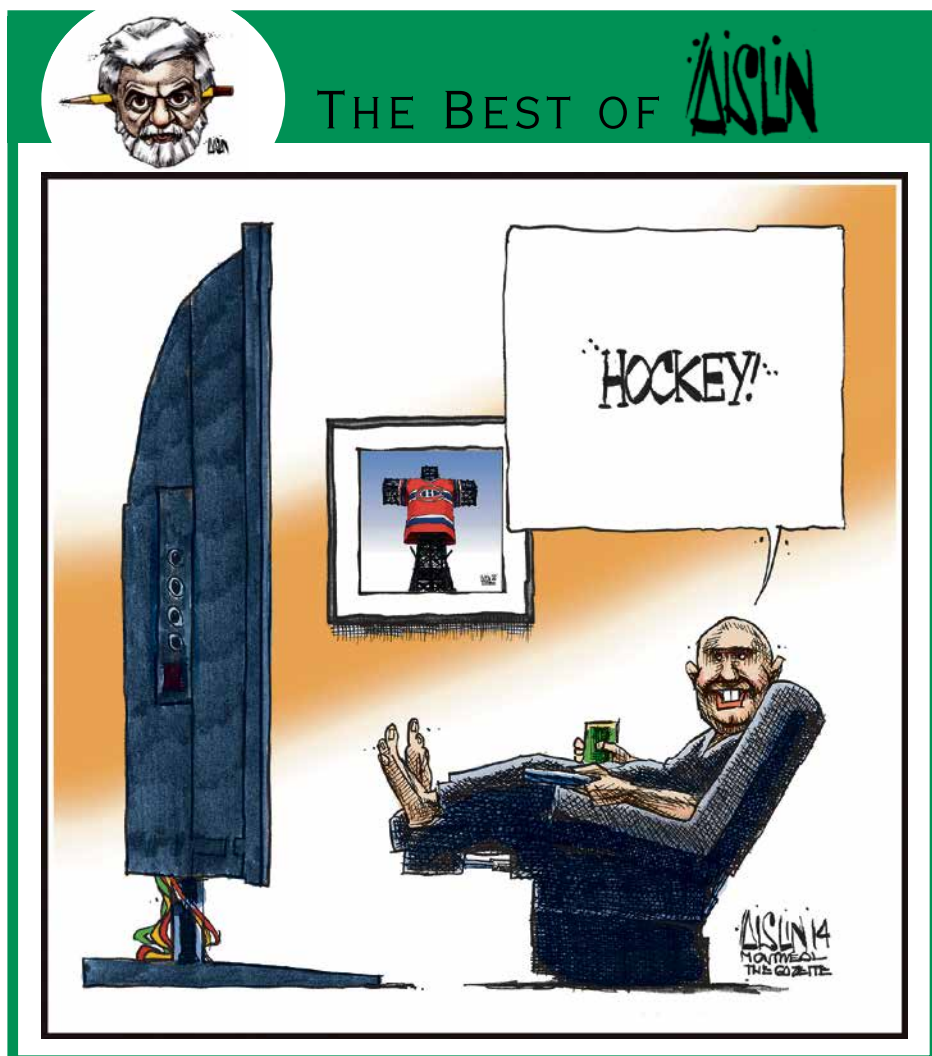
"In these isolated cases that they've found elsewhere in the world, normally they would attribute it to a little bit of isolated product, usually on the farm or ranch, that's just been sitting there



Minister of Agriculture Gerry Ritz has said that he does not think the single BSE case will interrupt trade. However, South Korean has banned imports on Canadian beef temporarily.

for a number of years," says Laycraft in speculating how the surprising case has come about.

"It could be at the back of the bin or an old bag. They assume it is something related to a very old bit of feed."



## Join your fellow farmers

January and February are the months when many QFA memberships are up for renewal.

If your membership has expired, please fill out our **application form on page 4 of this issue**.

(Many members are taking advantage of our offer of receiving a FREE QFA baseball cap when renewing for TWO consecutive years. Check the "2 Years" box when filling out your application form to get yours! )



# QFA Executive Director steps down

After 10 years in the job Ivan Hale has resigned as executive director of the Quebec Farmers' Association. In 2005, Hale was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, a neurodegenerative condition that has no known cause or cure.

"I feel fine most of the time", said Hale. "It's frustrating not to have the energy I once had and I find my concentration is less than it used to be. It's hard to say how much of the problems are related to the disease itself, or the heavy medications, or simply the aging process. So little is known about Parkinson's."

Hale turned 62 earlier this year. "One thing's for sure. Stress is not good for my condition. It contributes to the shaking and trembling, and it affects my speech. The medical specialist advised me to resign last year but I thought I could keep going another couple of years. I finally realized the time has come for me to step aside so that's what



QFA Executive Director Ivan Hale presiding over the festivities at the association's 2008 annual general meeting.

I'm doing. I have had a tremendous learning experience working with and on behalf of Quebec's English-speaking agricultural and rural communities. It is time for my successor to have this same privilege."

Hale is not planning to retire just yet. He is looking forward to devoting more time to the family's farm in the Gatineau Hills (he's always wanted to have the status of being a 'full-time' farmer and not just a 'gentleman farmer') – and he

definitely wants to keep in touch with fellow producers. If you don't find him on the farm then drive to the Ottawa River, where you will more than likely find him puttering away on his 1979 sailboat going nowhere fast and thoroughly enjoying the ride.

The QFA board of directors is taking steps to fill the job of executive director. Details will be available in the next couple of months and will be reported in the *Advocate*.

Individuals interested in applying for the position are encouraged to send a letter and copy of their personal résumé, along with salary expectations, by regular mail to the QFA office. Mark on the envelope "Attention: ED Selection Committee".

**Quebec Farmers' Association**  
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Longueuil, QC J4H 4E7

## Genomics explained (and how it can work for you!)

"Genomics" is an exciting new field in genetics that can help farmers develop crops with better resistance to disease, pests, frost, drought, floods and breed higher-quality livestock

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**Thursday, February 26**

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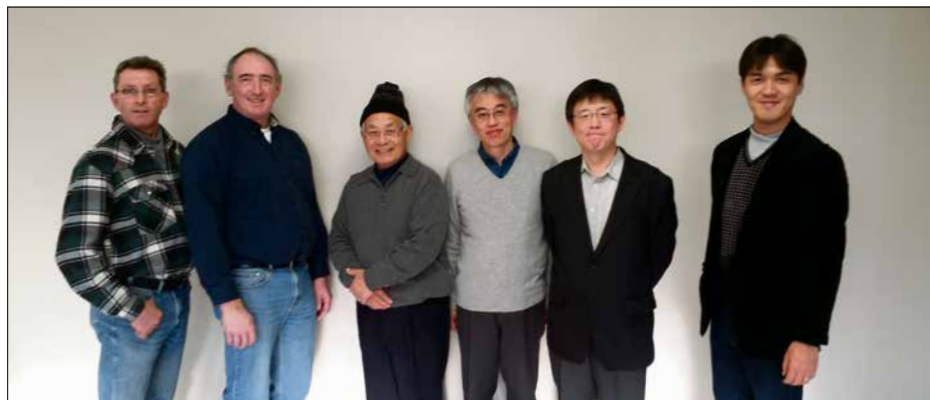


## QFA Editorial



**John McCart**  
QFA President

# QFA meets with delegation from Japan



QFA Board Member Roy Copeland (far left) and QFA President John McCart met with a delegation of agricultural industry representatives from Japan in January. The Japanese delegation visited the southern United States and Ontario before coming to Quebec.

At a recent event put on by the Salon industrie et machinerie agricole (SIMA) in St. Hyacinthe, members of the QFA Board of Directors met with four delegates from Japan. Roy Copeland, QFA board member for Lachute, and I had a one-hour meeting with three agri-economists from the Universities of Mie and Hokkaido, facilitated by their interpreter from Denver Colorado who is a farm business consultant.

This opportunity was organized by Mathieu Lipari and Heather Watson, program manager and director, respectively, for Farm Management Canada. The purpose of this exchange was to inform the delegates as to what producers in our area do when a farm transfer occurs, or what a farmer can do upon retirement. Two of the university economists are from Hokkaido, the north island of Japan, which has a climate similar to ours and a large dairy industry. However, unlike most Quebec operations, many of the

Japanese farms have four generations living together on them.

As Roy and I did not transfer our farms, we were able to explain what we have seen happen around us. Some farmers, such as myself, change their farming practices from dairy to beef or cash crops. The challenges of animal production are swapped in favour of types of production that allow the producer time to pursue other interests while remaining involved in farming. Of course, the other option open to producers looking to retire or

slow down is to transfer the farm to another generation, or, if that is not possible, to sell the business. Much of what we related to the delegates came from the two Farm Food Forum videoconferences the QFA held on farm transfers back in 2011.

Our Japanese counterparts were also interested in learning more about farm management clubs, such as soil clubs, beef management clubs, and the like. We explained that most of these clubs grew out of the need for farmers to obtain unbiased information and specialized

services due to changes in the way our provincial ministry of agriculture was working. Also, there was a need to have an agronomist working for the producer to fulfill the requirements of the provincial ministry of environment. These clubs are also a great management tool for producers—they help to keep our farms progressive and to identify strengths and weaknesses in our production methods. Roy is the president of the Argenteuil soil club where I serve as a director, so it was easy to explain what happens in a club from personal experience.

Speaking with these gentlemen was a wonderful opportunity. Even though our farms are many thousands of kilometres apart, we all shared the bond of agriculture. We only met for one hour, but we could have shared stories and experiences all day. The delegation started their tour in the southern U.S. and had visited southern Ontario only a few days before. They also visited some farms in the Ormstown area. Because of the special ties that the QFA has formed with Farm Management Canada, Roy Copeland and I were truly able to have a glimpse into farming practices in Japan.



## 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

## Board Members

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### Membership Includes

- a one year subscription to the Quebec Farmers' Advocate
- discounts on QFA sponsored events and services
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- voting privileges at the QFA Annual General Meeting

### Quebec Farmers' Association

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# Ornamental gardener reaps his success

## LANAUDIÈRE

**Audrey Desrochers**  
Regional correspondent

SAINT-FÉLIX-DE-VALOIS — A giant banana tree, a “bubble-gum” coloured plant, a begonia in the shape of a snail’s shell... these are just some of the curiosities you’ll find in the greenhouses of Normand Tellier. Winner of the prestigious Croissance prize of the Fédération interdisciplinaire de l’horticulture ornementale du Québec (FIHOQ), this Lanaudière native has gone off the beaten garden path in the hopes of bringing back the finesse in gardening.

“I’m always looking for extraordinary plants,” he proudly exclaimed. It’s all about presentation for this gardener who produces over 200 varieties of stunning plants. “Sometimes I put them in high heels to show them off!” Tellier joked as he walked towards little green plants spiralling out of big pots. “It is all about the look”

An innovating spirit has guided this passionate ornamental gardener throughout his career. Having graduated from the Institut de technologie agroalimentaire (ITA) in Saint-Hyacinthe in the late 1960s, Tellier was among the first students to graduate from the fruit and vegetable gardening program. He worked as a sales representative before growing greenhouse tomatoes for the Harnois greenhouse manufacturing company.



The passionate gardener produces and markets many varieties of exotic plants under the Déco Style banner.



Normand Tellier won the prestigious Croissance prize of the FIHOQ.

Tellier discovered ornamental gardening somewhat by accident in the 1970s. “It was autumn and tomato season had just ended. Serre Harnois’ board of directors decided to fill the seasonal gap by growing poinsettias.” Even though poinsettias are more widely planted today, Tellier says that back in the day they were considered high-end products. “Overnight they decided that we would be producing 22,000 plants. I asked them where we were supposed to sell them. They said it was my problem.” So each afternoon thereafter, Tellier would meet with florists to sell his Christmas-star poinsettias.

Thanks to this experience, Tellier would later build what would become La Jardinière du Nord, in Saint-Félix-de-Valois. “We were already seeking out products that others didn’t have,” he proudly exclaimed.

### Déco Style

At La Jardinière du Nord, Normand Tellier and his team grow exotic plants under the Déco Style banner. For the owner of the business, the concept is simple: change the traditional image of gardening and offer quality plants. “Plants are like the podium at the Olympics,” Tellier explained. “If you want to keep winning gold year after year, then you need to work hard and keep introducing new products.”

Tellier’s Déco Style plants, which come from 10 different countries, are distributed throughout Quebec, in eastern Ontario and in the Maritimes.

### Recognition by the FIHOQ

Normand Tellier’s devotion to ornamental gardening recently earned him the Croissance prize from the FIHOQ.

This tribute award, the highest distinction given by the federation, is only awarded sporadically to a well-known gardening personality for his/her achievements and involvement in the industry. “It is a bit like the tribute to Michel Louvain at ADISQ [Association québécoise de l’industrie du disque, du spectacle et de la vidéo],” he said jokingly. “Everyone knew about it except me, but they managed to keep it a surprise.”

Throughout his career, Normand Tellier has been involved with the FIHOQ, the Institut québécois du développement de l’horticulture ornementale and with a group of gardening centres known today as Jardineries Passion Jardins. He is also president of the Table filière. But Tellier says he is “a plant man” more than anything.

# Recognition motivates employees

**Émilie Caron and Linda Lavoie**  
Centre d’emploi agricole

Is your daily routine under rapid fire? Do the days and weeks go by too quickly? As an agricultural producer and employer, you must deal with all kinds of situations that arise, from farm management to human resources management, and you must juggle all this with your priorities.

In addition to this, you cannot forget your salaried workers. Always remember that you may have the nicest farm with the best equipment and the latest technology, but without your employees, it would be difficult to survive.

Today, attracting and keeping employees is a real challenge for any employer. Most often, when an employee leaves a

job, it’s not necessarily due to wages. It has been proven that 80 per cent of those who give their resignation cite lack of recognition as their reason for leaving.

Recognizing your employees’ work and worth is thus an essential tool to motivate them. You’ll even notice the impact of recognition on other areas of your business; you will see more dedicated, motivated and productive employees – it is a win-win solution for everyone. Recognition requires little investment and generates enormous returns.

So how do you make your employees feel recognized? It is all about saying or doing the right thing at the right time. Quite often, this translates into simple gestures.

Here are some practical ideas:

- Greet your employees each day, so they will feel they are truly part of the team.
- Ensure a clean and safe work environment for your employees. Provide them with properly functioning work tools and proper safety equipment.
- Offer your employees water bottles or frozen snacks during summer heat waves.
- Mention the work efforts and accomplishments of your employees during team meetings.
- Take the time to eat together with your employees; it is always a good time to talk to them over a meal.
- If your team puts in extra hours or does too much overtime, reward them by giving them extra lunch time

or offering them a free meal.

- Recognize your employees’ years of service by giving them a gift.
- Ask your workers to help you find solutions. They are indispensable resource people and often “experts in the field”.
- Share the success of your business with your employees.
- Get to know your employees to recognize their value. Be creative: Find out about their interests and what makes them happy. Give recognition a try! It’s simple, inexpensive, and guarantees quick results.

If you would like to get support to implement a recognition program or activities, or for any of your human resource management needs, contact your local Centre d’emploi agricole.



# Agritourism: think marketing

## MAURICIE

Pierre Saint-Yves

TROIS-RIVIÈRES — Agronomist and agritourism marketing specialist Emmanuelle Arès is very matter of fact: “Just because you have an attractive quality product doesn’t mean you already have a clientele.”

This was her message to those who attended the training workshop on agritourism marketing held in Trois-Rivières and offered by the Collectif régional en formation agricole de la Mauricie.

“Anyone can copy a product and customize its presentation,” Arès explained. “The producer can no longer say that he has the best product. He must analyze his clientele, understand what it’s looking for and not wait for it to come to him.”

The consultant also noted that many producers would rather not deal with marketing issues and their requisite management operations. However, these issues should really be producers’ top priority.

“Producers must know how to identify their strengths and weaknesses when it comes to promoting their products and services, and they must work to rectify some and build on others. For example, they must really [get to] know their clientele and understand what they’re looking for to be able to offer it to them.”



Agritourism businesses must focus more on marketing, says Emmanuelle Arès.

Which age category does my potential clientele belong to? How far are they geographically from me? What are their habits? What motivates them to spend money? Why would they rather go with competitors? These are just some of the questions that active agritourism producers must answer.

Producers must also keep up with consumer trends by considering, for example, consumers’ preference for health products or their desire to experience original activities in a safe environment. In this light, Arès believes that agritour-

ism routes that involve several businesses are of added value, as they help boost consumer confidence.

Business owners must also learn how to talk about themselves and get people talking about them; whether it is by using tools that are directly available to them, such as an attractive, easy-to-navigate website, social networks, and, of course, the media. “There is no secret. Success is achieved by employing a strategy that comprises efficient tools, measurement indicators, a validation frequency, specific goals and an analysis of the results.”

But is it already too late to devise such a strategy for the next season?

“Obviously not,” says Arès. “There is no magical solution. Just as long as you take the time to analyze all the aspects. You cannot just pull off a good strategy at the last minute. You need to devise an action plan with a schedule, the roles of those involved, sales forecasts and a marketing budget.”

“Most of all,” says Arès, “agritourism business owners must not see themselves as producers who sell, but rather as sellers who produce.”

# Future social workers interested in agriculture

## ABITIBI-TÉMISCAMINGUE

Émélie Rivard-Boudreau

VAL-D’OR — On November 6, four students at the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue (UQAT) organized an awareness day on local agriculture. At the “Assise sur mon assiette” event, nearly a dozen regional producers came together at the Rouyn-Noranda campus to meet the public and discuss their shared concerns.

The idea for the event came about during the Community Intervention II course for the B.A. in social work. The basic goal was to target important players in the community, set up a project to learn about local community development, and apply the theories learned during the course.

Mélanie Yelle and her three team-

mates cared about buying locally, and chose that as the theme for their community intervention. “We had two main objectives. First, to honour the work of producers and processors. Second, and this was central to our project, to provide an opportunity for the participants to work together to find solutions to their problems,” she explained.

Nearly a dozen producers met in the Atrium of UQAT, where they set up a booth like at an indoor public market. At the end of the day, in which two talks were also given, they were invited to a discussion moderated by the students about issues in the industry. Marketing, workload and divergences between product supply and consumer demand were among the subjects discussed. Dissatisfaction with their representation in the Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA) was a particularly sensitive topic. “We stayed away from that one, but it would be worth a separate

meeting. It was too emotional,” Mélanie Yelle explained.

Annie Boivin, co-owner of market farm Néoferme d’la Turlute, took part in the activity and appreciated the students’ approach as well as their motivation. “They put a lot of time and heart into it,” she said. Boivin noted that there was a real need for such events. “We don’t have many opportunities to talk with each other and discuss our projects,” she commented.

### What’s next?

“Assise sur mon assiette” was an undeniable success. Nearly 250 people attended on November 6, and over 50 signed up for a bee (corvée) at the Néoferme d’la Turlute. As for the four student social workers from UQAT, they hope other teams will continue the event they created. “It really touched us; we really learned,” concluded Mélanie Yelle.



Regional producers at “Assise sur mon assiette” event.

# Walking in the fields of Fromagerie La Station

## ESTRIE

Pierre-Yvon Bégin

COMPTON — Immersing yourself in the clover, marvelling at the sound of a herd of cows as they graze. Visiting a cheese producer can certainly include some pleasant surprises.

That's the experiment that was tried last summer by the owners of Fromagerie La Station in Compton. Visitors were invited to walk in the very fields that are the origin of the fine flavours and sweet aromas of their cheeses.

"We're amazed by our fields," marvels Carole Routhier, a shareholder together with her spouse, Pierre, and their three sons, Simon-Pierre, Vincent and Martin. She created their first cheeses in her kitchen in 1997, and it was she who came up with the idea for the field visits. She is still astonished by the public response.

"I liked it, and I think it will help change the way people see farmers," commented Pierre, who enjoyed sharing his passion for growing superior hay. Their production is organic, and Pierre works hard at making the best hay possible, since it's the food his herd eats. Next year he will expand his expertise by applying a new technique to reduce the amount of agitation the hay undergoes, so that more of flowers (with the protein they contain) remain attached.

"Everything is centered around the cheese," Carole explains. "That's why we work so hard on the quality of our



Pierre Bolduc and Carole Routhier with their son Simon-Pierre, who manages the Fromagerie. Not shown are Vincent and Martin. The Bolduc-Routhier couple are surprised but very proud to see their children's commitment to the adventure.

fodder, with so much attention to detail. We're each responsible for part of the business: Simon-Pierre for cheese production, Pierre for the fields and the sugar bush, Vincent for the herd, Martin for the equipment and distribution, and me for publicity and the store. But essentially, we're all making cheese."

"Plus, our cheese varies with the seasons," she continues. "It's not a standardized product. Cheese-makers are truly craftsmen, they have to be attentive and constantly adjust to different milks. The parameters are subtle. Our own favourites are the summer and autumn cheeses. The aromas are richer, the fats in them are different."

Fromagerie La Station produces four cheeses, including firm and washed rind semi-soft. Simon-Pierre says he's keeping the selection at four, partly to

respect the production capacity of their herd of 80 cows. He generally processes all the milk they produce, with surpluses going to the Producteurs de lait du Québec when the cheese cellars are overflowing.

"Some people complain about the quotas, but I'm happy to see that my surplus milk gets taken," notes Simon-Pierre. Over the past 10 years his cheeses have won multiple awards. This year, their Alfred le Fermier was declared best raw milk cheese and best organic cheese. Their Raclette de Compton also took first prize at the fine Canadian cheese competition.

"I don't have a miracle recipe," admits Simon-Pierre, "just a desire to make good things the way our parents taught us. They love just making good hay, good maple syrup. Sure it would be

great to make lots of different cheeses, but that's not my goal."

"What I prefer," he continues, "is that all my cheeses be excellent, truly representative of the Compton terroir. We want our cheeses to be intimately connected with our land, with Compton and the region. That's why they're unique products."

Speaking of unique cheese, from December 11 on visitors can obtain a very special production for the holiday season. Reserved for customers at the store, it's an opportunity for the cheese-makers to explore new flavours. They develop the cheese so that by a certain date it will simply explode with flavour. The latest special edition has been ripening for two years now. "This will be a cheese you'll want to have with a glass of scotch or port. Exquisite, fabulous," predicts Carole Routhier, who admits she's dying to taste it. "It's more of a concept than a cheese," adds Simon-Pierre. "It keeps changing. It's also just the pleasure of visiting the Fromagerie."

In his drive to refine every detail, Simon-Pierre and his assistant Lionel Prin are currently exploring a traditional method of making rennet. Used for coagulating the milk, rennet consists of enzymes extracted from the abomasum (4<sup>th</sup> stomach) of calves. After working on it for a year, they expect to have conclusive results in the next 6 months. "It's more work," Simon-Pierre admits, "but quality is in the details. It gives the cheese a special fineness. People won't know why, but they'll detect it."

# Marketing: Makes the business world go round

## SAGUENAY-LAC-SAINT-JEAN

Guillaume Roy

"By better understanding the commercialization process of a product, the more likely said product will reach its intended market," says Françoise Beaudet, a marketing educator and professional coach. It is for this reason that the Table agroalimentaire (Table Agro) of Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean held a training session on November 5, 2014. After conducting a survey of businesses, La Table Agro identified marketing

as one of the industry's biggest challenges. "Each business has huge challenges, regardless of its size," added Marie-Claude Gauthier, general director of the organization.

Representatives from 15 local agri-foods businesses went out of their way to attend this training session, including Olivier Bellemare of Chocolaterie des Pères Trappistes. "We just changed the marketing image of our products and want to increase their visibility in supermarkets outside Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean. This training will better acquaint us with distribution networks to increase our efficiency," Gauthier explained.

To successfully market a product, it is important to understand the mechanics of each step that lead up to the buyers. "Producers need to know the rules of the game," Françoise Beaudet exclaimed. "For example, they need to know that the retailer will take a 30 per cent cut on the sale price." A former category manager for Provigo Loblaws, Beaudet gives training sessions to distributors, retailers and producers. "Knowing the priorities of each player in the distribution network will help everyone work better together," she said.

Producers must also realize that their product is not completely unique. It must be positioned within a category. And

because there isn't a lot of available shelf space, buyers might "de-list" a product to make room for another. "This is why the producer must put the buyer's mind at ease with convincing arguments," Beaudet continued. "The producer must be well prepared."

The eight-hour training session is centred around the principles of the Guide de bonnes pratiques en commercialisation published by the Conseil de la transformation agroalimentaire et des produits de consommation (CTAC). This was the third time the training session had been offered for free to producers thanks to funding by the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité Sociale du Québec.



# Agroforestry serving field crops in riparian environments

## MONTÉRÉGIE

Caroline Barré

**NOTRE-DAME-DE-STANBRIDGE** — Developed since 2004 on croplands bordering watercourses in the Rivière aux Brochets watershed, the 35 km riparian agroforestry network was primarily intended to contribute to the improvement of water quality, soil preservation in agricultural areas, and the expansion of wildlife habitats. Today, the crops growing next to such stands are also benefiting.

"The reduction in invasive plants like milkweed, brome-grass, great burdock and goldenrod is a real benefit to field crop producers," explains geographer Charles Lussier. The native herbaceous plants that have replaced them under the trees (both deciduous and coniferous) have become habitats for insect predators that are beneficial to crops, including *Chlaenius pusillus* (a species of ground beetle) and ladybugs. Predators outnumber the pests at a ratio of 70 to 30. A 2013 census also noted the presence of 56 species of birds. As for small mammals, when the former Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement, de la Faune et des Parcs (MDDEFP) did an inventory at three sites in the network, the predominant species was found to be the white-footed mouse (67.9 per cent). Insectivores identified included the masked shrew and northern short-tailed shrew.



Joseph Moisan and Jean-Philippe Légaré, entomologists at MAPAQ's phytoprotection diagnostic laboratory (right), made field trips to the riparian agroforestry network to collect specimens of insects to identify. Geographer Charles Lussier (left) is delighted with their keen interest.

According to Lussier, riparian wind-breaks and forest corridors are technically fairly simple to create. But there is still much to be learned, especially regarding root systems, soil types, competition with neighbouring crops, and the presence of diseases, insects, birds and small mammals. Lack of knowledge led to mistakes that had to be corrected later. "When there's a drainage outlet, you don't put a tree next to it,"

stresses Lussier, who prefers leaving a distance of 10 metres from drainage systems. A row of trees had to be cut down after the presence of a drain was discovered. So it's important how a row of trees is positioned. To avoid interfering with agricultural activities, it should be planted along one side only of a watercourse or ditch, so that crop growth won't be limited by the shade from mature trees.

The project required funding of \$110,000, most of which came from the Ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources naturelles under the Programme de mise en valeur des ressources du milieu forestier – volet II, and from the CRÉ Montérégie Est. It was also supported by 20 other financial partners, with collaboration from 50 farm enterprises in the Rivière aux Brochets watershed.



Oak leaf that will be taken back to MAPAQ's phytoprotection diagnostic laboratory for identification. A record is kept of diseases, insects and other parasites on the various sites of the Missisquoi riparian agroforestry network.



Geographer Charles Lussier demonstrates the effectiveness of a self-propelled brush cutter among strips of trees under two metres in height, alongside the plastic mulch that surrounds the planting. Initially at least two passes per season are needed, but three are preferable. After a few years, depending on the maturity of the trees, the number of passes can be reduced until brush cutting is no longer necessary.



# Capitalize on your green gold to increase your profit

**René Roy**  
*Agroeconomist*

and **Julie Baillargeon**  
*Research Project and Technology  
Transfer Coordinator, Valacta*

Two years ago, Germain Ouellet was among participants who took part in Valacta's "Forage Challenge" training session. Focusing on forage management in the field as well as in the barn, the course convinced Germain that there was still room for improvement on Ferme Hoelet. After talking with producers from other regions, whom he met at activities organized by the Côte-du-Sud agricultural council group (GCA), he and his brother decided to set their own forage challenge.

### Quality first

Good quality forages have always been a priority for the Ouellet brothers. Indeed, the results of their forage analyses rank them among the best, year after year. Based on what they learned in the training session, Germain and Denis decided to limit crop rotation in their pastures to three years (nine cuts) and shorten the interval between the first and second cuts of hay to 32 days. A quick look at Table 1 confirms that these changes led to improvements in the quality of their harvest.

### Silage conservation

Silage conservation is another important consideration, because the cows will eat whatever you put in the feed bunk, regardless of what the analysis at harvest says about its quality. An efficient harvest operation means that each silage cut is completed within two days, with an acceptable moisture content and chop length. This promotes rapid fermentation, which in turn ensures better conservation throughout the season.

### Boost intake

Harvesting good quality forages is all well and good, but you still have to make sure your cows get the most out of it. The first step is to ensure high voluntary dry matter intake. You can do that by feeding large quantities, so that the feed bunk is never empty for long. The cows' appetite is another variable in the equation, which means it's important to give some consideration to cow comfort: sufficient stall dimensions, soft comfortable flooring,

a well-placed neck rail and a tie chain that allows for natural rising and lying motions, etc. Germain and Denis were well aware of these considerations and made sure to address them when they built their new cow barn in 2008. While there's nothing spectacular about the barn, it functions perfectly for both herd and workers.

### Adjust the rations

"When I told my feed advisor how much forage my cows were consuming, he said it wasn't possible!" Denis recounts. It's true that the software used to formulate rations is normally adjusted for average feed intake values. When forage consumption increases, it's important to take into account actual intake and adjust the parameterization of the tool accordingly, whenever possible.

The approach used on the Ouellets' farm is fairly simple: they choose the best combination of concentrates according to the forages that are fed; they then reduce the concentrates gradually, based on a forage intake level that is higher than the one established by the software and closer to the herd's estimated intake. The brothers then observe the cows at regular intervals to ensure that the results remain positive.

### Assess your progress

When the Ouellet brothers started out, their goal was neither to increase production per cow nor to arrive at the lowest possible cost for concentrates, but simply to increase the operation's margin. Capitalizing on the quality of their forages to improve their margin over feed cost seemed like a logical strategy.

Is production as high as anticipated? Are component levels as expected? Are concentrates fed at recommended rates? All things considered, is the farm showing the profit you anticipated?

The only way to answer these questions effectively is to monitor the margin over feed cost on a regular basis, an exercise that is carried out monthly at Ferme Hoelet.

Advice from an open-minded and experienced advisor will be extremely useful in finding the right answers to your questions.

When they decided to produce more milk from their forages, Denis and Germain gradually reduced the amount of concentrates they fed to their cows. They were thus expecting to see

**TABLE 1: FERME HOELET VS. THE PROVINCIAL AVERAGE**

	FERME HOELET	PROVINCE
Herd, 12-month average (cow) <sup>1</sup>	84	60
Milk per cow – Holstein breed (kg) <sup>1</sup>	11,400	9,170
Milk fat content – Holstein breed (%) <sup>1</sup>	3.95	3.98
Feeding cost (\$/hL) <sup>1,2</sup>	22.56	24.39
Milk fat per lactating cow <sup>2</sup> (kg/d)	1.34	1.18
Margin over feed cost <sup>2</sup> (\$/kg M.F.)	12.80	11.50
Average ADF content of haylage <sup>1,3</sup> (%)	30.4	33.5
Average crude protein content of haylage <sup>1,3</sup> (%)	20.6	16.6
Cost of hay production (average for 2011-2013) <sup>4</sup> (\$/t DM)	173	226
Average ADF content of corn silage <sup>1,3</sup> (%)	24.3	24.1
Average crude protein content of corn silage <sup>1,3</sup> (%)	8.0	8.3
Cost of corn silage production <sup>4</sup> (average for 2011-2013) (\$/t DM)	154	190

<sup>1</sup> Valacta, <sup>2</sup> La Coop, <sup>3</sup> Farm forage analyses, <sup>4</sup> Agritel

a slight decrease in production. That wasn't actually a problem, however, since there were a few empty stalls that could be filled if needed. But the results were much different than anticipated, with production per cow increasing by eight per cent last year and the margin per kilogram of milk fat increasing by \$0.50. Greater profit and less work: who could ask for more? The brothers now have proof that it is indeed possible to make their green gold work to their advantage.

### The challenge is met

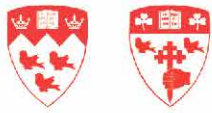
The herd now boasts an enviable production average in spite of a low feed cost, as shown in the results presented in Table 1. Denis and Germain have been wanting to share their experience, not to trumpet their success, but simply to show that the goal is indeed attainable. The recipe is straightforward: take measures to harvest good quality forages at a reasonable cost and persist in getting the cows to consume as much forage as possible.





# Macdonald

## Reports



# A systems approach – the key to successful adoption of new technologies

**Viacheslav I. Adamchuk**  
Associate Professor,  
Department of Bioresource Engineering,  
McGill University

It's interesting, but in our situation ...?" - is the most common response to the introduction of new and better production cycle technologies within farming communities anywhere in the world. And this attitude is quite appropriate, given the dynamics of the modern agricultural business. Under the influence of local economic, environmental and social factors, it is normal for most innovations to be criticized. Let's consider: 1) no-till soil management, 2) variable rate technology and 3) auto-guidance. In each case, there is a need for investment and training. What distinguishes each technology is the likelihood of a positive outcome and relationships to the other production system components..

### No-till soil management

The most obvious steps when implementing no-till soil management are to "retire" the primary tillage tool and acquire equipment for direct seeding. However, many technology adopters forget that no-till also requires crop rotation, including cover crops, as well as quality distribution of plant residues. The main goal of no-till is not so much energy saving, as restoration of natural topsoil structure. No-till increases production system "immunity" to unfavorable weather conditions (e.g., drought, flood, frost) and can reduce susceptibility to disease and excessive weeds. What is the cause of failed adoption? High water content and low temperature at sowing, the presence of compacted soil layers, excessive weeds or chronically lower crop yields are examples of problems that may be related to management practices and not necessarily linked to the no-till technology itself. In most instances, a systems approach allows the identification of key factors limiting crop growth and the determination of economically feasible solutions under constraints of a particular production system.



Viacheslav Adamchuk with a Veris MSP instrument developed to measure different soil properties on-the-go.

### Variable rate technology

The situation is more confusing with variable rate technology. Everyone understands that differentiated application of chemical fertilizers according to local needs is a valid idea. However, pragmatic agribusiness interpreters may be skeptical that their investments in the new technology are guaranteed to be profitable. Through system analysis, it appears that different constraints (e.g., inadequate rainfall, agrochemicals material quality, outdated machines, insufficient technology support, human error) hinder the desire to risk adopting new technologies and at the same time boost skepticism.

On the other hand, simply saving limited resources, reducing the effects of a variable climate, or yield increase with no extra input costs are the most obvious reasons to seek new ways to manage crops. If the analysis of a particular field leads to the conclusion that there is chronic yield inconsistency or simply low profit, there is a high probability that the optimization of the management of that particular field will yield a monetary reward. Such optimization does not

always involve information technologies. However, the use of these technologies is what makes the process less costly in the long term and more reproducible for different fields. It also should be noted that not every technology marketed as "precision agriculture" has an excellent reputation among its users. One should avoid equipment and services based on unreliable links between certain measurements and potential plant growth, typically sold as "black box" solutions. In many cases, such methods have been developed under specific environments and may need recalibration to match local conditions.

### Auto guidance

Auto-guidance systems are at a completely different level of adoption. Modern machines can automatically adjust their trajectory to within 2 cm of a desired path. Despite a relatively straight-forward adoption process, there are still questions pertaining to the cost-benefit ratio, system reliability associated with the availability and accessibility of differential correction signals, and agricultural machinery operation logistics.

The relationship between the manager and operator of agricultural technology is also affected through implementation of auto-guidance. Today, high quality work can be maintained even under conditions of poor visibility and is less affected by operator skills and fatigue. Add-on features of automatic section control, maneuvering at the end of each path, or master-slave vehicle operations extend farming efficiency.

Furthermore, the ability to maintain a strict geometrical relationship between field passes during different operations enables band placement of fertilizers or control of field traffic, which make it easier to adopt no-till and/or variable rate technology. An array of wireless data communication options makes it feasible to reorganize the entire production system and implement real-time quality control. In such a case, dedicated professionals can be employed to manage agronomic, technological, engineering and economic components of a specific agribusiness using a well-linked structure. A technology manager can supervise logistics related to field operations, a maintenance colleague can use the same information to prevent equipment from malfunctioning. A dedicated agronomist can use geospatial data flows to develop operational tasks, such as variable rate prescription maps and deliver these tasks to tractor controllers via air. An accountant can also rely on the same data communication to balance production costs and ensure proper payment distributions. These professionals can be located far apart from each other and from the field.

It is important to look at an agricultural crop production as a system and identify weaknesses requiring resolution rather than looking for a problem that any technology may or may not resolve. Within the large array of available technologies, there is a component ready for adoption by every production scenario. What is frequently missing is a systems approach.

For more information pertaining to activities by the Precision Agriculture and Sensor Systems (PASS) research team, visit <http://adamchukpa.mcgill.ca>.



# GET ON-BOARD WITH THE QFA

THERE'S A NEW BENEFIT COMING DOWN THE LINE FOR QFA MEMBERS.

ALL PAID-UP MEMBERS OF THE QFA CAN NOW RECEIVE A DISCOUNT OF

# 7.5% FOR TRAVEL ON VIA RAIL.

For details please contact the Quebec Farmers Association or consult our website at: [Quebecfarmers.org](http://Quebecfarmers.org). Some restrictions apply.

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.

**VIA**   
VIA Rail Canada

## "Too much paperwork," producers say

A survey conducted by the QFA reveals that farmers feel there is too much bureaucracy in the industry...

**Dougal Rattray**  
QFA Community Reporter

In an effort to better understand the English-speaking farming community of Quebec, the QFA conducted a series of questionnaire surveys throughout the 2014 summer farm fair season. The surveys took anything from 30 to 45 minutes per respondent to complete, and were conducted at the Ormstown, Ayer's Cliff and Shawville Fairs. What the transcripts show makes for interesting reading, and provides insight into the community thinking. Some of the replies are summarized below.

### Rules and red tape

First off, the QFA survey asked the question: "What are the top two challenges facing you as an agricultural producer?"

The most popular answer to this broad question was "Too much paper work and government bureaucracy" followed by "No money in it". Other answers included: "Environmental regulations restricting business decisions"; "Market instability/volatility"; "Lack of qualified agricultural advisory services"; "Lack of qualified farm labour"; "Farmers not

sticking together"; "Farm succession"; "Corporate land grabbing"; "Rising input costs and low prices"; "Unsustainable farming systems"; "Lack of start-up and business development money"; and "Lack of public understanding of farming and food".

Clearly, there is frustration with the quantity of paperwork and regulations that farmers have to contend with. Compounding this is a seeming lack of qualified personnel to assist with this burden. Unfortunately, it is perceived by some that there is not a living to be made in the industry. However, respondents were largely positive in their outlook for the future of agriculture in Quebec. When asked "On a scale of 1 to 10—where 1 is very optimistic and 10 is very pessimistic—how do you feel about the future of agriculture in Quebec?" two-thirds gave a positive response. Only one respondent gave a strongly negative response—proving that farmers are ever optimists.

Farmers instinctively care about the sustainability of their industry and see themselves through a long-term lens, much like the crops they grow and the conditions under which they do business. Reflecting this was the response to

the question, "What do you think could be done to improve your outlook on the future of agriculture in Quebec?"

"Improved public and school education" and "Improved agricultural policy to support younger farmers" were the two most popular responses to that question. Other ideas included "Stronger protection of supply management"; "More unified messaging from the farming industry"; "Better interest rates and smaller capital production units encouraged to diversify the marketplace"; "Prices to reflect true production costs"; "Stronger protection of agricultural land"; and "Less bureaucracy". Evidently, there is a plethora of ideas, each with merit, emanating from within the community to reinforce and strengthen farming as a profession. QFA programs and projects are working towards a number of these objectives.

Unmistakeably, based upon this exercise, there is still a place for the QFA in Canada's agricultural scene. When asked "Do you think the QFA should be involved in 'advocacy' on behalf of Quebec's English-speaking farmers and rural community?" the response was unanimously in favour of retaining the organization with 100 per cent saying "Yes". Echoing this, everyone answered that they read the *Advocate*, although there were mixed responses regarding



QFA Director of Operations Dougal Rattray (right) with Bruce Grapes at the Cookshire Fair.

the value of the *Advocate* to them as producers. All but two rated it a 5 or more, on a scale of 1 – 10, where 1 was low and 10, high.

It's important for the QFA to stay in touch with what farmers are thinking about regarding their industry, the future of farming, and how they feel about the Quebec Farmers' Association itself. We'll be repeating the survey process again in 2015!



## Are you a QFA member?

# Your neighbours are joining QFA...



**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 Carhartt work wear,

discounted QFA translation services, a 7½ per cent discount on VIA Rail travel and free classified ads in the *Advocate*. Taking advantage of these benefits more than pays for the membership cost and so essentially, membership is free. **A list of new and recently returning members appears below.** To join, simply complete

and return the membership application found on page 4 of this issue.

If you have recently paid for membership but have received another notice, please accept our sincere apologies and disregard the renewal notice. A membership package will be delivered in due course.

Kelly Allen  
Brad Andrews  
Howard Beaton  
Caroline Begg  
Peter and Kathi Bienz  
Archie Blankers  
David Booth  
Wilhelm Brand  
Dan Brown  
Donald Brown  
Norma Brown  
William Brus  
Reginald and Lynne Burrows  
Sheila Burton  
Gilbert and Sharron Campbell  
Gordon and Susan Chisholm  
George and Rozlyn Clark  
Harold and Carolyn Closs  
Brian Conner  
Robert and Helen Craig  
Ross Craig  
Alan Cullen  
Bev Davies  
Johnny Devries  
Brian Draper  
Raymond and Marilyn Dubois  
David and Rosemary Duffin

Michael Duncan  
Peter Ednie  
Jason Erskine  
Judith Farrow  
Robert Farr  
Ruth Finlayson  
James and Maureen Gallagher  
Lucas Gass  
James and Dawn Gaw  
David Gibson  
Jean Gilbert  
Lawrence and Peter Gleason  
Richard Goodfellow  
David Gowan  
Greg and Garry Graham  
Norman Graham  
Annie Grubb  
David Grubb  
Peter Hale  
Hugh Hammond  
Timothy Hancock  
Marilyn Harland  
Scott Harvey  
Irwin Hayes  
Karl Herzog  
Robert Higgins  
Bernard Hodge





Are you a QFA member?



Graham Hodge  
Winston Hodge  
Henry Horner  
Norman Hoskin  
Stewart Humphrey  
Barry Husk  
Carl Jackson  
Rufus Jamieson  
James Johnston  
Michael Joyce  
Timothy Keenan  
John Keet  
Lawrence Kelly  
Harvey and Carolyn Kelly  
Randy Kidder  
Graham Larocque  
Wesley and Heather Larocque  
Walter and Helen Last  
Jessie Leblanc-Ykema  
Jill Leroux  
John Lindsay  
Raymond and Carine Losito  
Mike MacDonald  
William Max  
Edith McCallum  
Glen and Elaine McCartney  
Hubert and Eleanore McClelland  
Raymond and Donna McConnell  
Bary McKenna  
Rodney and Cynthia McMillan

Ken McRae  
Gary Merrifield  
Dale and Mildred Miller  
Pavla Minazcikova  
Christoph and Berta Mueller  
Ben Nichols  
Stephen Olmsted  
Megan Patch  
Ross and Brent Peddie  
Allen and Carol Phillips  
Chris Rawlings  
George Recklies  
Michael Royea  
Norma Scullion  
Brent Simpson  
Ingeborg Srkal  
Earl and Judy Stanley  
James St-Cyr  
April Stewart  
William and Deborah Stewart  
Erwin Studer  
Carole and Allan Sutherland  
Normand Taylor  
Annemarie and Andy Tolhurst  
Bruce Weir  
Charles Wilson  
Oene and Trudy Ykema  
Gordon and Lorna Young  
Shane Young

**Together we sustain Quebec's  
English-speaking rural community.**





## Cookin' with the Advocate

### Welsh Rabbit



#### Ingredients

- 2 TBSP butter
- 2 TBSP flour
- 1 tsp. English or Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp. Worcester sauce
- 1/2 tsp. sea salt
- A couple of gratings of pepper
- 1/2 cup dark beer
- 1/2 cup cream
- 1 1/2 cups (6 oz.) grated cheddar
- 1 egg yolk, beaten (optional; however, you may omit the cream, add a bit more beer and then you will find the egg yolk is a good addition)
- 4 slices toasted bread, such as sourdough, rye or pumpernickel

Melt butter, mix in flour and cook the roux for one minute. Mix in mustard and Worcester sauce. Add beer and cream, stirring until thickens. Add cheese and stir until melted. Stir in egg yolk, if using. Pour over hot toasted bread. If you choose, you may place under the grill until top begins to bubble and brown. Serve at once.

## "Rabbit" even vegetarians can eat...

Cynthia Gunn, Advocate Food Writer

On a recent winter's day I ran into a fellow worker from 10 years past and she asked me: "Have you made your Welsh rarebit recently? I keep thinking about it." She's near ready to bring forth a baby, so food is of utmost importance to her right now. I scarcely liked to admit that it's been well-nigh 10 years since I had, but added that I would soon put that omission to rights.

The British have a long tradition of cheese making, and to this day make fabulous cheddar and many other wonderful hard cheeses. They also make flavourful beer; our side of the pond is catching on thanks to the burgeoning number of microbreweries. Good mustard can be found virtually everywhere. British bread, on the other hand, at least in my experience, is lacking substance. Somewhere in the back issues of the *Advocate* I explained how this deficiency in the British food market forced me to become a baker of bread for almost a year. These four ingredients—cheese, beer, mustard and bread—are the base of the simple dish known as Welsh rarebit, or Welsh rabbit. You may absolutely use Canadian cheddar cheese when making this recipe, but do yourself the favour of using aged and good quality cheese. Whatever you do, please do not stint on the bread. Buying or baking the best bread is always worth it.

I'm wondering as I usually do about the origin of such traditional fare. Utilizing basic ingredients that would store easily and be readily available, I imagine that it is a very old dish indeed. It turns out that the first written record of this dish was in 1725, according to John Ayto, author of *The Diner's Dictionary*. And what a strange name. It seems that "rarebit" is simply a modernized (i.e. first recorded in 1781) version of the original term "rabbit". Even the venerable Mrs. Beeton fell for this modernity of spelling I noticed in my 1912 version of *Everyday Cookery*. And while no rabbit or meat of any sort is now or ever was part of this recipe, it is suggested that it was called "rabbit" as a sort of tongue-in-cheek reference to the very fact that no meat was in the dish due, perhaps, to poverty. As for the Welsh bit, there were apparently many "rabbits", including "Scotch rabbit", but only the Welsh one has been popularized.

The sauce for this dish can be made in a matter of minutes and most older versions of this recipe suggest simply pouring the sauce over hot buttered toast. I favour the few that suggest you place it near the fire for a wee bit, or in today's cookery, grilling the sauce-covered toast. Note that some recipes do not call for flour, but simply call for the beer and/or milk to be heated and the cheese melted into the hot liquid. These then often have an egg or egg yolk beaten in to the sauce at the end. You can experiment with different proportions of ingredients and combinations until you find the flavour that has you daydreaming of your next Welsh rabbit.



### Farm Food Forums

Genomics explained (and how it can work for you)

**March 26, 2015**

See page 3 for details!



**Eric Jones**



**Hoof Trimmer**  
 Trained by: Hans Flueller  
  
**450 776-8475**  
 ericcj13@hotmail.com





**Mitchell Beer**  
President, Smarter Shift

Farmers Feed Cities.

This Land is Our Land. Back Off, Government.

They're both current, made-in-Canada slogans that capture the voice and the precariousness of rural living.

And they each point to a very different dialogue between two communities that are truly, deeply interdependent, but often know far less about each other's attitudes and behaviour, needs and nuances than they could.

### Where food comes from

As a city dweller, it's important to me to have some idea of where my food comes from. Judging by the growing popularity of farmers' markets and community-supported agriculture (CSA) in different Ottawa neighbourhoods, I don't think I'm alone. I've always thought that tracing the connection from farm to table is more pragmatic than laudable—when you depend on something, it's important to understand the chain of events, activities, and relationships that makes it possible.

So I'd been paying attention to the signs, bumper stickers, and posters that had begun cropping up as part of the "Farmers Feed Cities" campaign. But I've only recently learned their origin. It turns

out that Grain Farmers of Ontario (GFO) launched the slogan to connect with a wide variety of consumer audiences, from Ontario families to Bay Street bankers. What started as a tractor-led protest at the provincial legislature "became a consumer education brand as much as a badge of pride for Ontario farmers," writes Grain Farmers CEO Barry Senft.

"We redefined Farmers Feed Cities as an awareness campaign to reach Ontario consumers through events, media, merchandise, and road tours."

Ironically, and sadly, GFO is dropping the slogan after realizing that grain farmers themselves were getting lost in the wider message. The replacement campaign, Good in Every Grain, is meant to showcase "the good values farmers represent, the good work you do for the environment and your communities, and the good crops you grow," Senft writes.

"For the public, Good in Every Grain speaks to the good quality grain crops they have access to, the good end-uses grain makes possible, the good contribution to Ontario's economy, and of course the good rural community and farmers the public relies on every day."

### Bridging the gap

The essence of the grain farmers' strategy is dialogue—lots of dialogue, ranging as far and wide as possible. That was exactly the approach Food Secure

Canada took with its People's Food Policy, a three-year collaboration that involved more than 3,500 participants across Canada.

The policy "embodies a wave of concern, interest, and action by citizens who are increasingly questioning how our current food system is organized," states the final project report, *Resetting the Table*. "From connecting directly with food producers to reclaiming indigenous food systems to setting up food policy councils, people across Canada are taking actions daily that are transforming our food system from the ground up. These actions need to be translated into policy."

Elements of the policy include:

- Ensuring that food "is eaten as close as possible to where it is produced"
- Supporting food providers in a "widespread shift to ecological production in both urban and rural settings"
- Connecting access to food with a "strong federal poverty elimination and prevention program"
- Creating and funding a national children and food strategy
- Ensuring far wider public participation in decisions that affect the food system.

### Getting from Here to There

I plan to learn more about Food Secure Canada. But so far, it looks like an inter-

est in dialogue is a common thread between a community-based food policy and the search for practical climate change solutions that point toward deep decarbonization by mid-century.

In both areas, we face serious, complex problems that we're most likely to solve if we set out to solve them together. They both call for new, creative approaches that go beyond conventional wisdom—and well beyond conventional business relationships and supply chains.

They're areas where local action is making gains that national policy, so far, has not. It's bound to be hard work, but that just makes me think of this quote from Mark Vonnegut, writing about his father Kurt Jr.:

"The most radical, audacious thing to think is that there might be some point to working hard and thinking hard and reading hard and writing hard and trying to be of service."

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*.





## Farm Safety

# Simple practices make Nadeau Seeds a safety champion

**George Cameron Hill**  
Canadian Agricultural Safety Association

The Nadeau Farm has been in the family for over 75 years, and their current safety policies reflect their family focus. Making safe practices second-nature, they've become champions of safety in the agricultural industry.

Nadeau Farm was founded in Fannystelle, MB by Celestin Nadeau in 1938, and in 1966 his son Gilbert expanded the business with a seed cleaning facility. Today, the operation boasts a fully modernized and upgraded plant that can process 15 tonnes of cereals or soybeans per hour. The business is now operated by Brian Nadeau, his wife Rachelle, and their daughter Kara who represents the fourth generation of the family to work full-time at the farm. Janelle, Kara's sister, also pitches in during harvest.

Generations of children growing up on the farm made safety a priority to the Nadeaus. Brian remembers his father making an effort to reduce the risks by putting shields over dangerous moving parts on their equipment. Launching a formal safety program just made these traditions official. "We started this program a few years ago," says Kara. "With Nadeau Seeds being a family operation, we value family and relationships with everyone." Kara herself is the safety coordinator, among other roles on the busy farm. She leads monthly safety meetings, and has collaborated with a safety company to create an official safety manual that details the policies for different equipment and procedures.

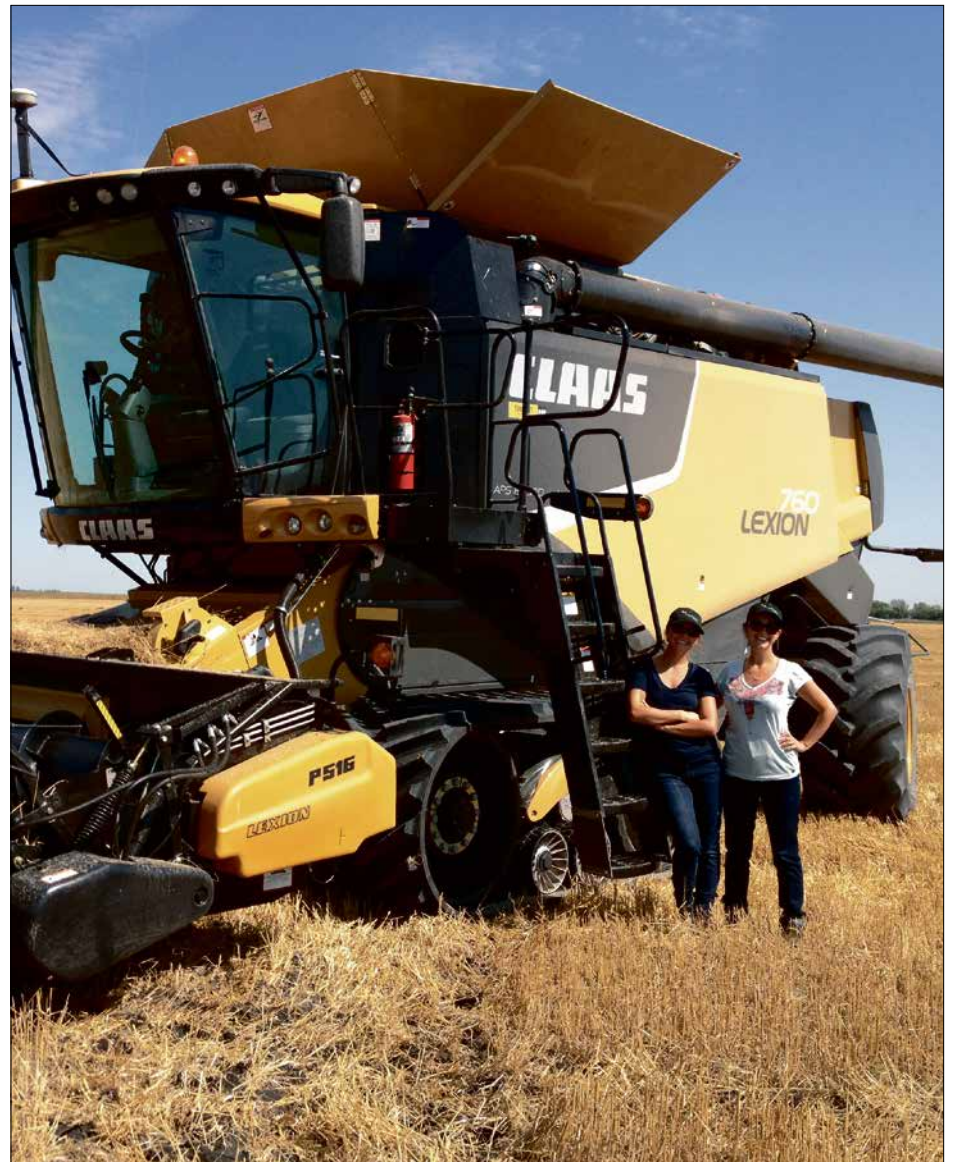
Brian believes having Kara at the helm has greatly contributed to the success of their program. "The employees bought in more, big time," Brian emphasizes. "Everybody wants safety."

Kara echoes these sentiments. "When we told them we were going to do this to benefit everyone, they were really on board with it," she says, adding "it also is an investment on our part."

Monthly meetings have become a venue for changing employees' orientation to safety. "We keep on bringing it up that even though we're in the midst of our busiest season, we cannot forget safety," says Kara. "If it takes five minutes longer, it's ok." Paying employees by the hour to attend meetings where they're encouraged to move more slowly may not seem cost effective, Brian admits. But he also knows accidents are costly and it's his role to develop a culture where safe behaviour is important. "A lot of people don't take responsibility," Brian says, "but having a safety program makes everyone responsible."

Kara believes the key to safety is communication. "We have to be realistic here," she says. "Incidents occur and sometimes people want to talk about it afterwards." But talking about potential risks after an incident has occurred is too late. Instead, open communication with employees lets managers act proactively. "If they're dealing with equipment day-to-day, they are the best ones to say whether we need to change something or not," Kara admits.

Kara says many of the best changes centred on making safe work practices more convenient. They've purchased winter jackets with built-in safety vests, and earplugs are located in the cabs of noisy equipment. These are a few of the simple changes have made to ensure safe practices are second-nature. After all, the simplest things can make the biggest differences. "We promote lots of eye-to-eye contact," Kara says. "If someone's working behind you, you know about it." They've also installed first aid kits, fire extinguishers and automated external defibrillators (AEDs).



Kara (left) and Janelle Nadeau (right) represent the fourth generation of farmers in the Nadeau family. With so many generations of children growing up around farm equipment, practicing safety quickly became a family tradition on this farm.

David Hansen is the CEO of Canterra Seeds, one of Nadeau Farms' seed partners, and a strong supporter of agricultural safety. David says working for a company that takes safety very seriously means he doesn't often discover partners who surpass his own expectations, but Nadeau Seeds does

this easily. "Nadeau Seeds have formalized a health and safety strategy in recent years that is comprehensive and thorough for a company its size," said David. "They have shown real leadership in this area and I continue to be impressed with their attitude and commitment to safety."



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# Traceability under consideration in Canada

Julie Mercier

Permanent identification and traceability from farm to slaughter has been a fixture in Quebec for several years. The rest of Canada, however, is still considering what a traceability system should look like.

Federal regulations currently required that all Canadian cattle and sheep be identified through the use of radio-frequency identification (RFID) tags prior to leaving the farm of origin. Owners must also provide notification of death, and submit approved tag numbers to the Canadian Cattle Identification Agency (CCIA) within 30 days. The CCIA was created and is managed by the industry to establish the national animal identification program, and to manage the database. Site identification has not yet been completed, and is not yet harmonized between provinces, according to Quebec Farmers' Association Treasurer and CCIA board member Gib Drury.

The current system has several flaws, some of which have been noted by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), including the fact that species sensitive to the same diseases are not all subject to traceability, and that the transport declaration delay does not allow for an efficient response in the case of outbreaks.

"One of the performance objectives in case of disease is to be able to conduct a traceability inquiry in both directions

in 48 hours, which is the incubation period for foot and mouth disease—the worst-case scenario," explains Éric Aubin, national animal traceability program manager at the CFIA. The lack of information on animal movement within Canada is another major lack in the current system, according to Aubin. "There are pretty major gaps, and there's a ways to go in other provinces," adds Agri-Traçabilité Québec Executive Director and Canadian traceability committee member Marie-Christine Talbot.

## On the table

Last October, Ottawa announced \$7.5 million in funding in order to implement and manage the national livestock traceability information program. The CFIA also wants to tighten regulations for cattle, sheep, goats and deer. The scenarios under consideration are complex, varying from one species to the next.

There are three possible options for cattle. The first is based on the declaration of movement by lot, based on the industry's proposed Cattle Implementation Plan (CIP) [see box]. The other two scenarios assessed by the CFIA are based on electronic identification tag: the second option would have individual tags read at intake, while the third option is a combination of the first two options. An epidemiological study by the CFIA found that this third option would be the most efficient to retrace livestock in case of an outbreak of foot and mouth disease or bovine spongiform encephalopathy.



A national traceability program was originally to have been implemented in 2015. But according to Gib Drury, CCIA board member and treasurer for the Quebec Farmers' Association, 2016 seems more realistic, given the time for upcoming industry consultations.

## Misunderstanding

For the time being, the industry and the government have not been able to agree on the best traceability system. The CCIA supports the first option. "The CIP is an interim plan. If the federal is willing to pay, we're willing to go ahead with complete traceability," Drury says. "This is the Cadillac option, which in Quebec costs a fortune, approximately \$100,000 per auction for the readers and the software," he estimates.

Various producers' organizations and auction houses are concerned by the costs of the other two scenarios under consideration by the government, which would transfer significant cost to the industry, with little or no return, according to these organizations. The Livestock Markets Association of Canada (LMAC) supports the principle of traceability, under the condition that it not slow down trade. The LMAC is asking that

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada create a program to cover 90 per cent of the cost of traceability infrastructure. The federal government had implemented the \$20-million, triennial (2011 – 2014) Livestock Auction Traceability Initiative to provide financial support to animal handling structures in order to encourage traceability. However, the program is no longer accepting applications.

## To be continued

No decision has yet been made regarding the best option for national traceability. Federal government consultations are ongoing. Following a first round in November and December 2013, the industry should be consulted again in January and February 2015. The national traceability program was originally to have been implemented in 2015. Given the upcoming consultations, however, 2016 seems more realistic, Drury predicts.

# Electricity rates: an excessive increase

Étienne Dupuis

According to the Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA), the price increase for electricity announced by Hydro-Québec for 2015-2016 is a "rate shock" to the agricultural community. In fact, this was the message it conveyed to the Régie de l'énergie du Québec [Quebec Energy Board] last December. "The majority of producers will face an increase of 4.9 per cent on their electricity bills," declared the UPA's 1st vice-president, Pierre Lemieux. "This is excessive in relation to the capacity of the agricultural sector to adapt." According to Lemieux, the rate increases by the publicly-owned corporation are aimed at encouraging a reduction in energy consumption. However, the UPA maintains that the

biological processes inherent to agricultural production limit the ability of farmers to adapt quickly.

"Prices in our production sectors are often negotiated and determined a year in advance through marketing agreements," Lemieux emphasized. "Now, we must manage the Hydro-Québec rate hikes almost week by week. This is an impossible situation." The UPA vice-president would like to see electricity rates determined earlier, in order to be able to include them in negotiations regarding the price of agricultural products.

## Rate shock

According to the UPA, the electricity rate increases imposed upon agricultural businesses over the past few years represent a veritable rate shock. "As

farmers, we must compete with the rest of the world," Lemieux asserted. He hopes that methods can be found to set preferential rates for agricultural businesses.

On a separate front, the UPA has received numerous complaints from farmers regarding the reliability of the electrical transmission network in the outlying regions. The publicly-owned corporation does not compile statistics on interrupted service at the provincial level. "Is the situation worse in the rural regions compared to urban areas?" Lemieux asked. "Are some regions more affected than others?" He would like Hydro-Québec to be able to answer this type question, in order to obtain a clearer picture of the reliability of the network.

LTCN 2015-01-14







**Marcel Groleau**  
UPA President

# Our farmland: a heritage that must be protected!

In declaring 2015 the International Year of Soils, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has sent a strong and unequivocal message that underlines the importance of protecting farmland and of maintaining the health of soils. Indeed, this is a year to increase awareness around the world that the agricultural territories of this planet constitute a rare and non-renewable resource, which is increasingly coveted and which must be protected at all costs.

Agricultural soils are the foundation of food production. Without fertile, high-quality soils, there would simply not be any food. As the world's population continues to rise, it has been estimated that in order to meet demand, food production must be increased by about 60 per cent by 2050. Consequently, it is essential to make sure that these soils are preserved in a healthy state for agricultural production.

This reality is even more worrisome in

the fact that we know that the most fertile soils of the world are being destroyed by urbanization, problems of erosion, unsustainable agricultural practices, etc. Furthermore, experts have indicated that it can take up to 1000 years to generate one centimetre of new soil. The situation has become so critical that, according to the United Nations, the present rate of soil degradation threatens our capacity to meet the needs of future generations. Thus, in this context, the protection and preservation of healthy soils must become a vital world-wide concern of public interest.

In Quebec, the necessity to preserve our agricultural zone is of particular importance, because the situation is just as precarious here. In spite of the province's vast territory, only two per cent of our soils are arable.

Of course, since 1978, we have been able to count on our Act respecting the preservation of agricultural land and agricultural activities [known in French as the LPTAAQ] to curb urban sprawl, to maintain a balance between the protection of the agricultural zone and sus-

tainable community development and to preserve this essential resource for future generations. Indeed, over the years, this law has become one of the pillars of Quebec legislation for the protection of agriculture. Also, many years of discussion between the agricultural, municipal and environmental communities has led to some consensus in acknowledging, for example, the permanent character of the agricultural zone, the priority of farming activities in this zone and the necessity to reconcile the objectives of the protection of the agricultural zone with the need for harmonious co-existence with various other activities.

There will always be some who believe that this law is a hindrance to the development of Quebec's regions and who will advocate for its revision and/or its relaxation, by transferring more power to the Regional County Municipalities (RCM) – powers now held by the Commission de protection du territoire agricole du Québec (CPTAQ). More than ever, this law has its place, especially since it now stipulates that the Commission must take into consideration the context of

distinctive regional characteristics when making its decisions.

The LPTAAQ is a law of public policy: it deals with a subject of general public interest and requires a comprehensive overview. This mandate has been given to the CPTAQ to administer as such. Consequently, we must ensure that the Commission has the necessary resources to properly exercise its role, since our farmland is still coveted by many and the pressures they exert are continually being felt. Phenomena like land grabbing, the financialization of farmland, urban sprawl, the construction of new infrastructures, etc. are all menaces that threaten our agricultural heritage. We must remain vigilant.

The International Year of Soils represents an excellent opportunity to promote our farmland; to sensitize civil society and its decision-makers of the importance of this resource and its strategic value, not only for a sustainable agriculture, but also for the future of the planet. Arable soil is as precious as air and water. Soil represents life.

LTCN 2015-01-14

## Important files on UPA's radar for 2015

**Marcel Groleau**  
UPA President

The year 2014 was one of transition, with a change of government and the arrival of a new agriculture minister. The consolidation of public finances became the priority of this new government. The agricultural sector, along with others, contributed to the achievement of this objective through substantial budget cuts to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ) and to the Financière agricole du Québec (FADQ). Fortunately, the impact of these cuts was minimized by higher market prices. However, the Robillard Commission, which proposed the elimination of the Farm Income Stabilization Insurance (or ASRA) program and a 50 per cent reduction of the FADQ budget, caused great concern to many agricultural producers and stakeholders. Ministers Pierre Paradis and Martin Coiteux intervened rapidly, as they should have, to reassure producers and their creditors. Nevertheless, many are still worried.

For the union, the number-one prior-

ity is now to maintain the annual FADQ budget at its present level of \$600 million. The UPA/FADQ/MAPAQ working group submitted its report to Minister Paradis in December and one of its recommendations was to maintain this budget. Also, the work of the committee has led to the identification of other production and development investment possibilities to benefit the outlying regions, small-sized farms and organic farming. If we are to prepare a plan for the next 15 to 20 years and to profit from the major economic benefits that our sector can generate for Quebec's economy, the signal must be given now. 2015 will be a determining year in this regard.

The amount of money required for the Farm Property Tax Credit Program has been increasing each year. Quebec, contrary to Ontario and most of the other jurisdictions in North America, has chosen to use a tax refund rather than a distinct tax rate or an evaluation method specific to the agricultural sector. All of these aspects must be taken into consideration when analyzing this program. Indeed, the UPA will use every opportunity to empha-

size this, since the preservation of our competitiveness is at stake.

With regard to the protection of the agricultural territory and agricultural activities, the "green zone" is also being threatened by the phenomena of land grabbing and the financialization of farmland. Over the past five years, the farmland area purchased by private investors has reached 75,000 hectares. Members of the Commission de l'agriculture, des pêcheries, de l'énergie et des ressources naturelles (CAPERN) have decided to review this question, which has reached alarming proportions in certain regions of the province. If we want our farmland to remain the property of farmers and accessible to successive generations, we must act now. The union, strengthened by a consensus reached at its General Congress, will make the necessary representations in this regard.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement will also be on the union's radar. The 12 countries that are negotiating this future free-trade treaty are continuing their discussions. Canada must not repeat the scenario of the Comprehensive

Economic and Trade Agreement negotiated with the European Union regarding supply management. The control of imports, an essential element of supply management, cannot suffer any further weakening. In addition, dairy and cheese producers are still waiting for the compensation measures promised to offset the losses that this agreement will bring them.

Other subjects will also require the UPA's intervention. A bill is being drafted to modify the Civil Code, giving new status to domestic and farm animals. The concerns of citizens for animal welfare are legitimate, but the shocking messages transmitted by certain militant organizations do not reflect the realities on our farms and that must be pointed out.

Indeed, there will be no lack of work or challenges in 2015. Furthermore, every year reserves some additional surprises for us, since markets are unpredictable and the weather can also deal unexpected complications. Nevertheless, we must remain optimistic and confident. Of course, this will not reduce the workload, but it will make life more pleasant.

LTCN 2015-01-21



# Status quo for maple syrup prices

Pierre-Yvon Bégin

Maple syrup producers will not see an increase for their spring 2015 harvest—the third consecutive year without a price increase. The Fédération des producteurs acéricoles du Québec and the Conseil de l'industrie de l'érable have opted to maintain the status quo in their upcoming maple syrup marketing agreement.

The new agreement covers the 2015 and 2016 marketing years. However, the maple syrup base price only includes the 2015 harvest; 2016 prices will be negotiated over the coming year. Prices will remain at 2013 and 2014 levels, that is,

\$2.92 for grades AA, A and B.

"We are pleased that the agreement has been signed, despite the lack of adjustment for inflation," said federation president Serge Beaulieu, justifying the static prices based on the current climate, with a strategic reserve that has reached 70 million pounds, and US producers increasing production.

Asked about the federation's primary goal of increasing buyer loyalty, Beaulieu indicated that discussions in the second year of the agreement would focus on that objective.

"There remains a lack of trust among buyers," the president admits. "There

are innovative projects, and we're ready to move forward."

Only organic maple syrup producers will see a price increase, of 2.5 cents per pound, with premiums increasing from \$0.15 / lb to \$0.175 / lb.

The new agreement also includes a penalty of \$0.15 / lb in 2015, and \$0.05 / lb in 2016 for galvanized steel barrels. The fines will be used to boost the \$0.02 / lb premium for stainless steel barrels.

The new agreement will also move between zero per cent and six per cent light transmission into category D rather than grading it as substandard.

As well, the grading appeals period

will be extended from 10 to 15 days for producers who are not present at their analysis. Finally, syrup produced with the use of formaldehyde, which goes against the Règlement des producteurs acéricoles, will henceforth be destroyed at the non-compliant producer's charge.

The new agreement must be approved by the Régie des marchés agricoles et alimentaires du Québec before it is applicable.

Note that maple water, which has been marketed experimentally for two years, will be subject to a separate marketing agreement. The federation is currently awaiting a response from buyers.

# Impressive growth for organic milk

Martin Ménard

LÉVIS—Ontario requires 500,000 litres of organic milk per week from Quebec producers—a good problem to have, since Quebec supply cannot meet the demand. "The current demand is such that we've added three extra days of production per month until March. Some producers will be producing 110 per cent of their quota. And we're planning to continue to offer these additional production days over a longer period [of one year]," Producteurs de lait du Québec (PLQ) Director of Milk Management Claude Grenon said. The announcement was music to the ears of the numerous producers wanting to

but because of the chain's clientele. "Costco sales suggest that the average family can afford to buy organic. Are we finally seeing the advent of the mass market for organic products?"

Grenon recognizes the popular enthusiasm for organic milk. "You are all forbidden from stopping production!" he joked. "And no farm transfers are allowed if it doesn't stay organic!" One producer asked, half-seriously, whether it would be possible to simply increase quotas for organic producers.

All kidding aside, the demand is such that requests from Ontario must sometimes be turned down due to insufficient supply.

**There are 109 producers in Quebec who supply nearly 40 per cent of organic milk in Canada. In 2003, Quebec farms produced 16 million litres; this year, production volumes are expected to reach 40 million litres!**

find out the number of extra production days in advance in order to decide "if it's worth it to buy an extra cow or not."

## Costco thirsty for organic milk

The popularity of organic milk is making a lot of people happy, including those who came to Lévis for the Syndicat des producteurs de lait biologique du Québec annual general meeting on January 16, 2015. The fact that a grocery giant like Costco is selling more and more organic milk has been a definite encouragement for producers, not only for the volumes these sales represent,

## Importing organic milk from the United States

Occasional shortages do pose a threat. "Lack of available product means that some processors could ask for permission to import organic milk from the United States to supply Ontario and Quebec plants," Grenon pointed out. "While this is unlikely, it goes against our joint plan, which we don't want."

The message is clear: there aren't enough organic milk producers. Valacta will be offering a practical two-day training session next March on shifting from conventional to organic production in



Organic milk sales are growing to such an extent that Quebec production is insufficient.

eight steps ("Du conventionnel au bio en huit étapes").

## Increase in premiums?

There are a number of arguments to support the conversion to organic production, including increasing processor premiums. Grenon told producers

that processors seemed "receptive" to the arguments in favour of increasing premiums. "It didn't seem to be an annoyance, as long as volumes increase. And it's a decision that could be made quickly." Note that from September 2013 to October 2014, premiums increased on average to \$18.67 per hectolitre.



## News Highlights

# The FNA proposes a \$1.7-billion fertilizer plant

Martin Ménard

SAINT-HYACINTHE — Farmers of North America (FNA) intends to invest nearly \$2 billion in infrastructure in the coming years. The organization's main project is the construction of a Saskatchewan plant that would produce 1.2 million tonnes of urea and 425,000 tonnes of liquid nitrogen per year. In addition, as early as spring 2015, the organization intends to establish five to seven distribution centres in western Canada, and two eastern terminals, including one in Quebec.

Bob Friesen, vice-president of government affairs and FNA spokesperson, confirmed that the first FNA facilities in Quebec could be operational in 2015. "We selected a site in Quebec with the storage capacities required, which we could have rented for the 2015 season. But the major players in Quebec caught wind of it and took control of the site. They don't want the FNA to compete in Quebec. It's a battle. But slowly but surely, we're moving east," Friesen said, speaking at the Saint-Hyacinthe Salon de l'agriculture on January 14, 2015.

### Reducing the price of fertilizer

FNA representatives explained the advantages of their organization, which "removes the middleman in producers' supply chain." The projected plant was obviously discussed as well; the facility,

the FNA claims, "should produce fertilizer at the lowest cost in North America." The plant would benefit from the latest technologies, and from a cheaper gas supply than in the United States.

When asked by *La Terre de chez nous* to specify projected fertilizer prices—five per cent, 10 per cent, 20 per cent cheaper than market prices?—the FNA remained unclear. "We don't want to be too transparent about our prices, since our competitors would lower theirs and kill our project. What I can say is that we will sell fertilizer to producers at a competitive price, and provide returns in keeping with production costs," Friesen said.

### Missing information

FNA representatives attempted to convince producers not only to join the 10,000 FNA member producers, but also to purchase a \$1,000 share in the plant.

Yet the answers to some questions remained relatively vague, all the more so when the explanations were subsequently translated into French. Following the conference, two producers commented to *La Terre de chez nous* that "the project could be interesting, but it's difficult to make an investment decision based on incomplete information."

Friesen did apologize for the English-only slides. He reiterated his commitment to working with Quebec pro-



PHOTO: MARTIN MÉNARD

Bob Friesen presented the FNA's project, notably a \$1.7 billion plant for which the organization has recently acquired a building lot in Saskatchewan.

ducers, assuring them that information would be translated. However, as one producer whispered to *La Terre de chez nous*, "if he can show us good fertilizer prices, he won't have to apologize!"

### Delivery challenges?

Producers also noted previous delivery problems at the FNA. The organization maintains that these issues have

been addressed, which is confirmed by Edward Bakker, a producer from the western Montérégie region. "I get my delivery two or three days after they get my cheque." The prices are worth the buy-in cost of \$2,500 over three years, according to this field-crop producer. "Some herbicides are 30 per cent cheaper, and even for machine parts, the prices are worth it."

# Canadian beef continues to stand out

Hubert Brochard  
Special Collaborator

Outside the country, as well as at home, Canadian beef distinguishes itself in the marketplace. Although the volumes sold in Canada have dropped, consumers are buying more expensive cuts. Also, new markets are opening, particularly for other parts of the carcass. This was the message conveyed by Martin Lemoyne, the North American marketing director for Beef Canada Inc. — an organization that promotes Canadian beef around the world — while speaking at the 2014 Regional Beef Day on December 6 in Montérégie-Ouest.

Some 40 producers were present at the event, organized by the Syndicat des producteurs de bovins de la Montérégie-Ouest and the regional directorate of the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ).

Canada is rated higher for its beef than Australia and the United States, according to Lemoyne. "First of all, because our beef production has not destroyed the magnificent landscapes where bison and wild deer once grazed," he explained. "Also, Canadian beef producers have a reputation of taking good care of their animals and their farmland." This has an effect on Canadian consumers, who are now more educated and who want to know more about who produces their beef and the measures used to ensure quality. "In fact, what you do on your farms forms the basis of our promotional campaign," Lemoyne added.

### Quality that is identifiable and traceable

Other quality parameters also favour Canadian beef. "Our grading system is the most rigorous in North America. For example, we do not accept any yel-

low fat and we have a criterion for meat firmness, contrary to the United States," explained Lemoyne. "Two other factors also give us an advantage: our livestock identification system (unique in North America), particularly with regard to traceability, as well as our food safety standards that place us in the lead among developed countries."

### Promoting our distinguishing characteristics

Canada exports more and more of its beef, according to Lemoyne, a former marketing director for Agropur and head of supply procurement and marketing for Provigo, Maxi and Loblaws. Exports continue to be shipped to the United States, which presently buys 72 per cent of our beef, even though we import almost three-quarters of the beef consumed here from that same country. This is a curious paradox, due in part to

the difference in available meat cuts and also to the dates of our barbecue season. "Quebec has become what you might call the loin and flank capital," remarked Lemoyne, who himself is a big promoter of new meat cuts.

Mexico imports nine per cent of our beef and reserves the high-end section of its grocery shelves for it. "Asia, particularly China, is also a promising market, both for the classic beef cuts and for their own local traditional cuts. In fact, at the Salon international de l'alimentation (SIAL) in Paris, I was asked if I could deliver 26 containers of omasum [beef stomach] in a single order!"

Farmers participating at this event were able to meet with the representatives of about a dozen companies from various sectors of the agricultural industry: livestock feeding and animal health, livestock marketing, farm management advisors, etc.





**Leilak Anderson**  
Certified Arborist  
Advocate Arboriculture Columnist

Two-hundred-and-fifty million years ago, no tree existed that could have withstood temperatures below freezing. Either the tree's "plumbing" would have frozen, or the leaves would have got frostbite.

So how did they do it? Trees accidentally prepared themselves for cold weather by adapting to drought conditions well before they started to spread beyond tropical climates. When trees work hard to get water from soil, sometimes their "pipes" suck in tiny pockets of air from surrounding tissue. This is bad, because for a tree to move water from its roots to its leaves, it relies on "capillary action" to force the water upward against gravity—basically, the air bubbles would cut into the chain of water molecules, and would shut off the taps. To fix this, trees evolved with skinnier pipes, which develop fewer bubble-blockage problems. (It's also interesting to note that "capillary action" has a maximum height it can transport water against the pull of gravity: about 430



feet. This is why we don't get trees taller than that!)

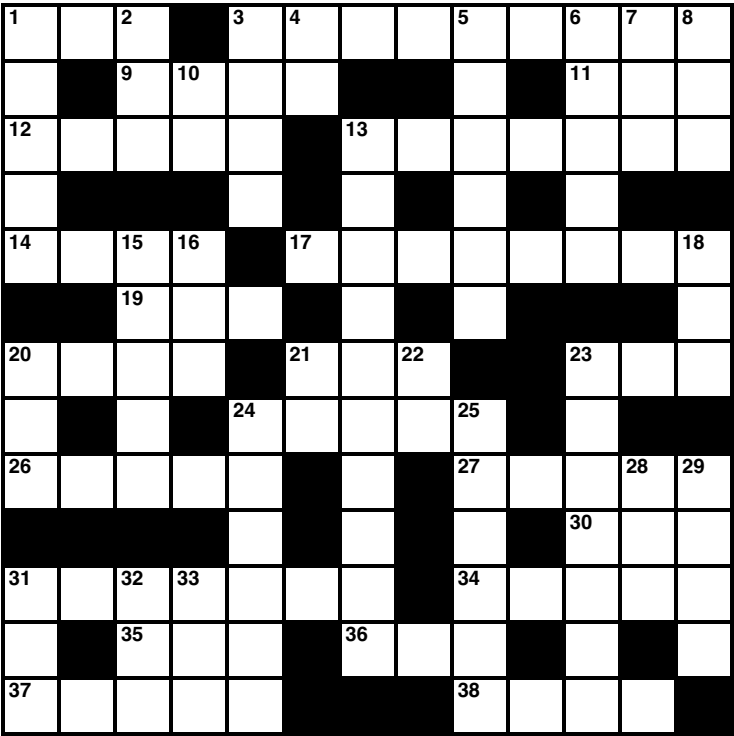
When trees started to spread to cold climates, they were already prepared for frozen pipes—keeping in mind that the ice itself doesn't cause much harm. Actually, if you've ever walked by a tree and heard crackling or a gunshot sound, that's the tree's pipes bursting. But a tree has thousands of these little pipes, so a few busted pipes doesn't do a lot of damage. What is harmful is when bubbles of gas that normally dissolve in liquid water end up forming in the ice. When the ice melts, the air bubbles remain, causing that same interruption of water movement.

But there's still the problem of leaf frostbite. Think of how lettuce wilts and dies when it's frozen: when the water in the living cells of a leaf freezes, it forms sharp-edged ice crystals that puncture the cells. Trees had to learn to manufacture a biological version of anti-freeze, filling living leaf cells with a concentrated sugary sap. Evergreens like spruce trees strictly use this technique, which is why they keep their needles year round. Deciduous trees like maples use a less concentrated formula, combined with the practice of losing leaves in the coldest months. As far as scientists know, the production of sugary sap is a tree's only adaptation specifically for cold climates,

which is why you've got to go north to tap for maple syrup!

Leilak Anderson recently represented Quebec in an international tree-climbing competition in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he received a silver medal in the belayed speed climb, forth in the aerial rescue, and was the top Canadian overall. Leilak runs a tree-care company Wakefield in the Outaouais region. When he's not climbing trees, he's a volunteer firefighter. Learn more at [www.leilak.info](http://www.leilak.info)

**QFA Crossword** by Myles Mellor



**ACROSS**

- 1 Canada trading platform
- 3 Prepare for the colder months, when storing equipment etc.
- 9 Sweet cherry
- 11 Fox's lair
- 12 Boundaries
- 13 Makes ready for slaughter
- 14 Bartlett for example
- 17 Every year
- 19 Veggie in a pod
- 20 Apple seeds
- 21 Place for planting
- 23 Blue stuff
- 24 Cancel
- 26 It may be found in an elevator
- 27 Farming lands
- 30 Experienced expert
- 31 It's cultivated for its seeds
- 34 Hay portions
- 35 It's mainly nitrogen
- 36 "I didn't know that!"
- 37 Gives birth to a young sheep
- 38 bowl

**DOWN**

- 1 Freeze (2 words)
- 2 It's hatchable
- 3 Bee's cousin
- 4 Well-liked
- 5 Period for an animal of heightened sexual activity
- 6 Perfect
- 7 School of Buddhism
- 8 Naval rank: abbr.
- 10 Wide shoe fitting
- 13 Type of potato
- 15 Honeycrisp or Idared
- 16 Legal item
- 18 Yes!
- 20 Animal foot
- 21 Long time ago
- 22 Of the, in Quebec
- 23 More produce in store than demanded
- 24 Cattle
- 25 wire
- 28 Bard's "before"
- 29 Nothing special (2 words)
- 31 Sun in Spanish
- 32 Sweet potato
- 33 Baby annoyance

UPA - COTISATIONS  
PROGRAMME  
COTISATION ANNUELLE  
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For **Preston & Terry Cull** at the farm on **923 Spence Road, Douglas, Ontario**. Off Highway 60 between Renfrew and Douglas onto Spence Road, OR off Cobden/ Eganville Highway onto Spence Road. **Saturday March 7, 2015 at 1:00 p.m.** Viewing on sale day, after 11:00 a.m. 5 Black Angus and 75 Charolais, whites/tans & reds, X-bred first or second calf heifers bred to large frame Charolais or Red Angus bulls, some with calves at foot. These heifers are all close, due anytime, March/April. Double vaccinated Bovi-Shield GOLD 5, ScourGuard, Ultrabac 7/Somubac, Ivomec, and vet checked. This is a golden opportunity to invest in the future with large frame first and second calf heifers in their working clothes. **Viewing anytime - please call ahead.** Terms: Cash or Cheque with I.D. Lunch available. For more info call: Auctioneer: **Preston Cull** @ 613-649-2378 - check [www.prestoncull.com](http://www.prestoncull.com) for pictures.

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mation or to apply please contact [mrossy52@gmail.com](mailto:mrossy52@gmail.com)

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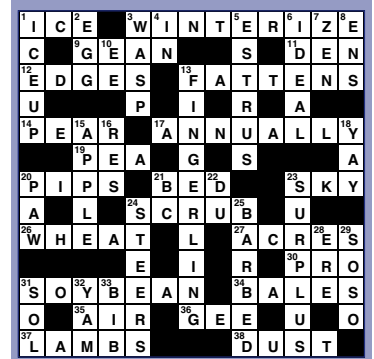
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#### CROSSWORD SOLUTION



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**Farm Food Forum!**

**Thursday, March 26th**

Genomics explained (and how it can work for you!)

See page 3 for more details



#### 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 FEBRUARY 2015

##### Centralized Quota Sales System

Fixed Price \$25,000.00

	Number	Quantity in kg b.f./day
Total offers to sell	37	404.2
Offers to sell participating in the distribution	37	404.2
Successful offers to sell participating in the distribution	37	404.2
Net quantity sold by the reserve		0.3
Total offers to buy	2,275	12,311.8
Offers to buy participating in the distribution	2,275	404.5
Successful offers to buy participating in the distribution	2,275	404.5

##### 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
37	404.2	404.2	< 25,000.00	2,275	12,311.8
			25,000.00 ceiling price		12,311.8

The fixed price for February 2015 is the ceiling price for this month. A quota quantity of 404.2 b.f./day was offered for sale at the fixed price. Of this quantity, an amount of 2.4 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 = 1,45% • Portion of quantities satisfied = 3,29%



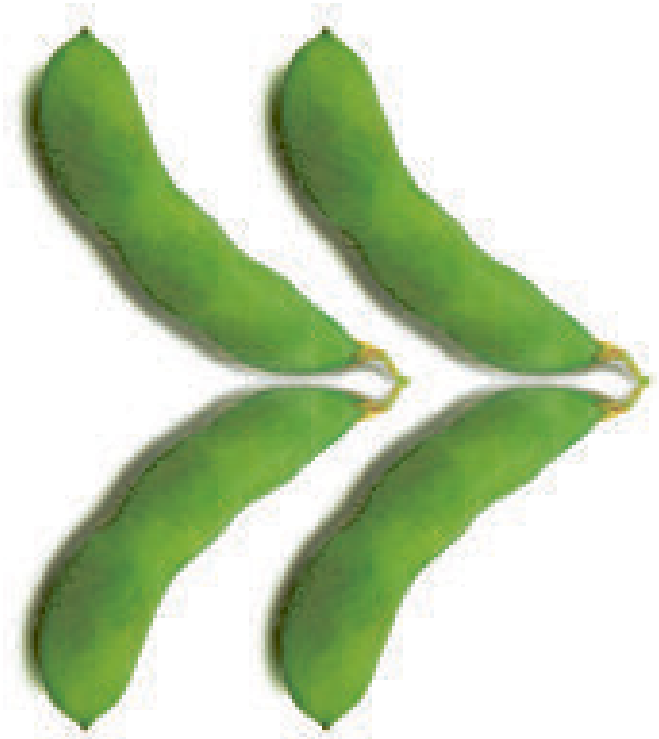
Quirky QFA Crack-Ups

Hard work

An angry wife was complaining about her husband spending all his free time in a bar, so one night he took her along with him. "What'll you have?" he asked. "Oh, I don't know. The same as you I suppose," she replied. So, the husband ordered a couple of Jack Daniel's and threw his down in one shot. His wife watched him, then took a sip from her glass and immediately spat it out. "Yuck, that's TERRIBLE!" she spluttered. "I don't know how you can drink this stuff!" "Well, there you go," cried the husband. "And you think I'm out enjoying myself every night!"

Saint Peter

St Peter is checking IDs at the Pearly Gates, and first comes a Texan. "Tell me, what have you done in life?" says St. Peter. The Texan says, "Well, I struck oil, so I became rich, but I didn't sit on my laurels--I divided all my money among my entire family in my will, so our descendants are all set for about three generations." St. Peter says, "That's quite something. Come on in. Next!" The second guy in line has been listening, so he says, "I struck it big in the stock market, but I didn't selfishly just provide for my own like that Texan guy. I donated five million to Save the Children." "Wonderful!" says Saint Peter. "Come in. Who's next?" The third guy has been listening, and says timidly with a downcast look, "Well, I only made five thousand dollars in my entire lifetime." "Heavens!" says St. Peter. "What instrument did you play?"



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