

Quebec Farmers' Advocate

Vol. 35, No. 1 – January 2015



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Canadian agriculture looking strong for 2015



INDUSTRY ANALYSTS ARE PREDICTING A GOOD YEAR FOR CANADIAN AGRICULTURE, WITH STEADY OR INCREASING LIVESTOCK PRICES AND MORE EXPORT MARKETS OPENING UP.

Fanaticism is
overcompensation
for doubt.

— Robertson Davies

Next QFA Farm Food Forum

February 26

Your farm insurance
questions answered!

See p. 10 for details...

Andrew McClelland
Advocate Staff Reporter

Where will Canadian agriculture head in 2015? With autumn's welcome increase in livestock prices, many beef producers are enjoying the first taste of real profitability in a decade. But the question is: can it last?

"After travelling the country and hearing from thousands of producers throughout 2014, I'm confident that Canadian agriculture will continue to advance," says J.P. Gervais, chief agricultural economist for Farm Credit Canada (FCC). Many industry analysts are predicting good things for farming in the nation, from steady livestock prices to increased export markets.

First among the good news is that—for the second year in a row—rises in food

prices are expected to outstrip the rate of inflation. Grocery prices are expected to rise from two to four per cent, while the Bank of Canada's estimated inflation rate for the entire economy stands at 1.6 per cent.

"Consumers may be paying more, but they're also supporting their own economy and getting quality food," Gervais said. The FCC economist also believes that Canada will increase its exports of red meat and oilseeds to China and that the low Canadian dollar will mean good things for increasing our exports to the U.S.

While the Bank of Canada is projecting the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to grow from 2.2 per cent in 2014 to 2.9 per cent in 2015, China's GDP growth is expected to slow down from 7.4 per cent in 2014 to 7.0 per cent in 2015.

"It's important to know what's happening economically behind the scenes in the two countries," Gervais said. "GDP numbers can be misleading. While U.S. job numbers and consumer confidence are improving, wages on average remain flat. Conversely, the Chinese economy is slowing down, but the impact on food consumption may be minimal."

Getting off ASRA

For most Canadian beef producers, the rise in livestock prices is a welcome return to form. For Gib Drury, a cow/calf operator from Alcove in the Outaouais region, beef prices are getting up to where they should be after some dismal years.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

On the cover

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"Yes, we are benefiting from good prices," says Drury. "The forecast should remain where they are right now for at least another two years, provided we don't have a health crisis like BSE."

The QFA vice-president also points out that, despite rosy market predictions, it's not as though Quebec beef producers are making money hand-over-fist.

"Despite record high prices, we're just covering our cost of production—not making abundant profits," says Drury. "Prices have finally caught up with the inflation rate."

Another thing that has caught up is beef producers' profit margins with ASRA—or the Quebec Farm Income Stabilization program. Since the BSE crisis of 2003, many of the province's beef operations have stayed afloat thanks to the program.

"This is the first year in 20 years that ASRA has not had to intervene on behalf of beef producers," notes Drury.

"But just because we don't need it this year doesn't mean we won't need it ever! ASRA is simply an insurance program: we pay a premium and protect ourselves against market risks. That's all it is and that's all it should be!"



ARCHIVES/TON

Land values stabilize

Farm Credit Canada also foresees good things for farmland values across the country this year. Market analysis indicates that land values may level off after a few years of dramatic increases.

"Low interest rates and strong crop receipts have been the two driving factors behind the recent increases in the value of farmland," Gervais said. "But

we already know that commodity prices are no longer at record-high levels. While increases in interest rates may not be on the horizon before the end of 2015, there are some signs that they may gradually increase."

While farmland values increasing may be good news for producers looking to sell property, they have played havoc with many an operation in years

past. In areas of the country where farmers already feel they shoulder a disproportionate amount of the tax burden, high land values can mean a big drop in profits. Also, there is ample evidence showing that when land values go up, so do tax rates for the property owner, and higher land prices make it more difficult for young people to purchase property.



THE BEST OF

ALVIN



Your Farm Insurance Questions Answered...

At the next edition of the QFA's
"Farm Food Forums"

Thursday, February 26

At a Community Learning Centre near you

Great talks about agriculture
through videoconferencing...

See p. 10 for more



Readership survey

What you said about the *Advocate*...

Every year at our annual general meeting, the QFA conducts a readership survey about what its members think of the *Quebec Farmers' Advocate*. We ask readers how they think the paper can improve, what they've like about new columns and articles we've introduced in the past year, and what they'd like to see more of.

Well, the results are in! This year, like the previous years, the most common answer to the question: "What do you like most about the *Quebec Farmers' Advocate*?" was "The information about government policy." Which is all we need to hear to know that the QFA's main job remains making sure that English-speaking agricultural producers are aware of changes in government policy, particularly from the provincial government.

More specific answers to this question included: "Updates on government policy (MAPAQ)", "I like how it has information in English in a Quebec context", "Quebec news that affects farming!", "The variability of stories", "The UPA News Highlights" and "Editorials".

We also asked: "What do you think the *Advocate* needs more of, or could do differently, to become a better paper?"

No two answers were the same for this one! Which means we have our work cut out for us. Answers included: "More local district news", "Spotlight on QFA

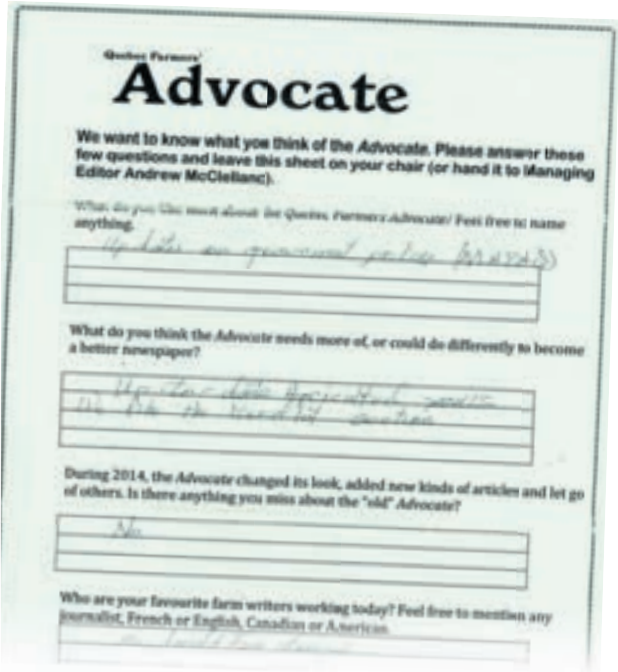
members and family and young farmers", "More up-to-date ag news", "More photos!" and "More about rules and regulations of Quebec pertaining to agriculture with opinions on how to improve them. Or get rid of them!"

Our readership surveys always ask: "Who are your favourite farm writers working today?" Our very own Paul Meldrum, who writes our "Devotion to Dairy" column, never fails to score high on this question. This year, Paul garnered many mentions, but readers also praised Paul Mahon and Ian Cummings of *The Ontario Farmer*, Gren Winslow of *Canadian Cattlemen*, and Jim VanDerPol of *Graze* magazine.

The *Advocate's* managing editor, Andrew McClelland, was also named a number of times amongst readers' favourite farm writers. We'll be sure to tell Andrew who will likely grin and say, "Ah, shucks...!"

Thank you to all who filled out the 2014 readership survey at our annual meeting. We keep your answers in mind all year, and years after, in making your *Advocate* a better paper.

If you have something you'd like to say about the *Advocate*, don't wait till next year's readership survey to tell us. Write us a letter to the editor at qfa_advocate@yahoo.ca. Or call 450-679-0540 extension 8536 and leave a message on our phone. Or write us a letter at



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QFA Editorial



Chris Judd
QFA Past-president

Last week, we had another near fatal accident in the Pontiac region involving a large (100hp “+”) tractor and a small car. A beef farmer was carrying a large round bale on his loader to feed some cows a short distance away. The ditch he was driving alongside was six feet deep, and he had moved over onto the shoulder of the highway as much as possible when he was rear-ended by a young woman driving a small car.

The impact broke both rear wheels off the tractor, broke the transmission and rear housing, and sent a two-year-old tractor to the scrap yard. The force of the collision also rolled the broken

Texting and driving a real rural risk

tractor into the ditch. Although the farmer sustained no major injury, he was taken to the hospital. The woman who drove the small car was eventually pulled from the wreck by the local fire department using the Jaws of Life. We all hope that she too will recover. Police uncovered a cell phone on the floor of the car. Cell phones can give a lot of evidence—GPS location, time of last call, last “Selfie”, last text, and last time used...

The Sûreté du Québec have stated that 27 per cent of automobile accidents involve cell phone use. The Ontario police say that close to 30 per cent of their accidents involve cell phones! Accidents caused by cell phone distractions far outnumber those caused by alcohol.

Last week, I read an article written by a neurologist who stated that after being disrupted by a phone call, it could take up to a half-hour for your brain to

be fully functional and able to process everything that is happening around you. How long do you wait after a phone call ends before working with potentially dangerous machines?

A year ago, I had the opportunity to sit uninterrupted in a quiet room and write down the names of people in our county (of less than 400 farmers) that had died from farm-related accidents. I wrote down how each one was killed, and only those that occurred in my lifetime. I was very surprised that I could name 40 unlucky souls.

I was just as astonished that in almost every case death, or even the accident, could have been prevented by only four or five more seconds of thought before making that fatal move. The vast majority of these fatalities happened before the days of cell phones, texts, emails, or other electronic disturbances.

In many cases, whether it was the owner that was killed or an employee

or friend, the farm where the fatal accident happened was sold or shut down within less than five years.

With that in mind, let's make two simple New Year's resolutions that you should also teach your family:

1: Even in these times when every second counts, please take an extra second to think before moving a muscle. Will that extra five kilometres per hour really get you there any faster?

2: Shut that “smart phone” or other electronic device off for one day a week and give your brain a day to rest a bit. Or at least turn it off when driving or doing some other job that requires total mental dedication.

If it is important to whoever is trying to reach you, they will leave a text, a message or at least a call back number. If it's not that important to them, why get so excited and risk your life, the lives of others, and the happiness of your family?



Mission

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

Vision

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

Shared Values

Members of the QFA believe in:

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

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Membership Includes

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- voting privileges at the QFA Annual General Meeting

Quebec Farmers' Association

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Receipts are issued upon request. Memberships are valid for 12 months from month of purchase.



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Bill 8: to maintain the competitiveness of the agricultural sector

Martine Giguère

This fall, the Parliamentary Committee on Labour and the Economy held consultations on Bill 8, which would modify the Labour Code with regard to certain salaried farm workers. This draft legislation aims to set guidelines regarding the right-of-association for workers on farms that employ less than three workers continuously throughout the year. More specifically, farm businesses that meet this definition and use temporary workers at certain times of the year would not be subject to a petition by workers for union certification.

The Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA) is in agreement with the Bill. Its 1st vice-president, Pierre Lemieux, declared that the legislation takes into account the particularities of Quebec's agriculture, especially the weather, which often dictates fieldwork operations and requires considerable management flexibility. "For 95 per cent of Quebec farmers, family and business are synonymous terms. Efficiency and simplicity are of utmost importance for these businesses, which are generally carried on the shoulders of a single person, supported by his or her family," Lemieux explained to the Committee.

The Association des producteurs maraîchers du Québec (APMQ) also supports the Bill as written. Union accreditation would open the door to the right-to-strike and other pressure tactics in a sector that is vulnerable because of its nature, according to André Plante, the APMQ director-general. The negotiation of collective agreements would also be a heavy burden for the majority of



The unionization of farm workers is a major issue.

farm businesses, where the administrative responsibilities generally fall upon one or two people.

The Association des producteurs de fraises et framboises du Québec (APFFQ) is also in favour of Bill 8. "Labour represents between 50 and 70 per cent of expenses for our producers. It is therefore an extremely important issue of competitiveness for all of our growers, whether they employ only local workers or both local and foreign labourers," added Guy Pouliot, the APFFQ 2nd vice-president. According to this association, where average profit margins are only three to four per cent, an increase in salaries of even one, two or three per cent could affect the survival of numerous businesses.

At the Conseil du patronat du Québec, Bill 8 also received approval. "This Bill is an excellent example of intelligent legislation, which constitutes a fair balance between the fundamental rights of employees to group together and the particular realities of the agricultural industry," declared Guy-François Lamy, the Conseil's director of legal affairs. Adding a regulatory and administrative burden to farm businesses would have an impact on their competitiveness, especially for a fragile and risky sector like agriculture, the Conseil du patronat maintains.

Among the opponents of the Bill, the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ) and the Travailleurs et travailleuses unis de l'alimentation (TUAC) question, among other things, the particular status that the Bill gives to agricultural businesses, compared to other seasonal industries such as tourism, golf and ski slopes. "Farm employees are no different than salaried workers in other sectors and we want [to negotiate] working conditions for these workers," insisted the FTQ president, Daniel Boyer. "The Labour Code should apply, with the only exception being farms genuinely family-run, where there are no other workers other than family members," declared Anouk Collet, a TUAC director and FTQ vice-president.

At the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN), its secretary-general, Jean Lortie, declared that "Bill 8 is not legislation that gives a genuine right to work to people who are hired on

farms." Thus, the CSN is in disagreement because, for economic reasons, workers are denied their rights. The organization describes farms of today as modern businesses that invest enormous sums. It deplores the fact that farm labourers do not have the same rights as others.

It may be recalled that last March, article 21(5) of the Labour Code was rendered inoperative, resulting in much concern in the agricultural sector. This legislative change made it possible for all farm workers to be allowed to belong to a trade union, no matter what the size of the business. On June 13, 2014 Labour Minister Sam Hamad tabled Bill 8, which would modify the Labour Code with regard to certain salaried farm workers. This proposed modification makes it impossible for workers in businesses with less than three permanent employees to unionize. However, it does give them the right to group together in an association of salaried workers, where they could express their grievances, either verbally or in writing, and the employer would have to take due note of their concerns. In this way, the two parties could come to some agreement. In cases of unresolved disputes with the employer, the association could then go before the Labour Relations Board.

During the coming weeks, the Committee on Labour and the Economy must make a report of its findings to the National Assembly. This report must be adopted before Bill 8 can subsequently be passed.



André Plante of the Association des producteurs maraîchers is relieved by the direction Bill 8 has taken

YVON LAPRADE/FTQ

\$1.8 million for research on non-GMO soybeans

Martin Ménard

A \$1.6 million investment from Réseau La Coop, combined with a contribution of \$182,558 from the federal government, through its AgriInnovation program, will fund a research project to improve the genetics of soybeans in order to better meet the requirements of international customers, particularly the Japanese. "Our soybeans are attractive to the younger generation of Asians, since they are sweeter. However, a problem of coagulation during the fabrication of tofu causes certain complications regarding firmness. This investment in research will allow us to improve our soybeans for human consumption and become more competitive on foreign markets," explained Alexandre Mailloux, the Coop fédérée's research director, during a recent press conference in Saint-Hyacinthe.

Blonde hair...

For Jérôme Auclair, the Coop's genetic selection specialist for soybeans, the money invested in this research project is essential.

But equally important, the participation of the federal government includes more than a financial contribution, since Agriculture and AgriFood Canada



Gaétan Desroches, the Coop fédérée's CEO, Laurent Bousquet, a grain producer and president of the Grain Élite steering committee, and Pierre Lemieux, parliamentary secretary, were the principal players behind the recent announcement of financial support for research on soybeans for human consumption.

(AAFC) has given him access to part of its "genetic pool" developed by government researchers. "To put it in simpler terms, if you want children with blonde hair, but you have only parents with black hair, you must look elsewhere. The AAFC genetic pool should

give us the coagulation characteristics we are looking for. Consequently, by 2018 we should be able to develop some interesting candidates. The first commercially-available seed for farmers will follow within a few years," explained the researcher.

For his part, the federal parliamentary secretary, Pierre Lemieux, stated that agricultural research is crucial, since it permits Canadian businesses to be more competitive while, at the same time, contributing to increased yields for farmers.

A century of agricultural research

Julie Mercier

The Dairy and Swine Research and Development Centre of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAC) is celebrating its 100th anniversary.

Located in the Lennoxville borough of the city of Sherbrooke, the Centre is one of 19 research facilities throughout the country. However, it is the only centre specializing in dairy production. It employs 20 researchers who work primarily on sustainable development, production systems and the health and well-being of dairy cows and swine.

This past fall, dignitaries, shareholders and employees of the Centre, representatives from the AAC, former employees and even institutional and industrial partners took part in official activities to commemorate the Centre's 100th anniversary.

Discoveries

The Centre's scientific teams are credited with many innovative agricultural technologies. Conclusive research on grain-fed calf production at the Lennoxville facility led to the popularity of this kind of production. Researchers also discovered that vitamin B12 in cow milk is absorbed twice as fast by the human body than B12 found in vitamin supplements. The results of this study are published in the British Journal of Nutrition. Regarding the environment, the Centre is responsible for the fine-tuning of a slurry-processing bioreactor. This technological breakthrough, which neutralizes liquid manure odours, was patented in Canada and the United States. After more than a decade of research, scientists at the Centre developed food strategies that reduce methane emissions in cows by 10 to 14 per cent.



The dairy complex of the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada research farm in Sherbrooke.

Standardizing the protein content of fresh milk: a worrisome path

Jean-Charles Gagné

The fat content of milk sold in grocery stores has long been standardized in Canada. Now, there is talk of standardizing the protein content as well, since the technology is available. If this practice is accepted, will it possibly tarnish the image of milk and lower its reputation among consumers?

In fact, this is the debate presently underway within Saskatchewan's Ministry of Agriculture, which is considering this option as part of its revision of regulations regarding the composition of dairy products. A modification of the protein content of fresh milk is presently prohibited in Europe, the United States and in Canada.

Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC) are vigorously opposed to this approach, which could damage the public's image of milk. "Canadian consumers want to conserve the integrity of milk and are resistant to adding other elements, such as somatotropin," declared the DFC spokesperson, Thérèse Beaulieu. "The removal of proteins would affect the taste of milk, its texture and its colour, not to mention the negative impact this would have on its nutritional value. Our marketing strategy is rather to promote milk proteins, which are high-quality proteins, as well as milk fat, the value of which has become more and more recognized. In fact, butter was featured on the cover of *Time Magazine* on June 23, 2014 in the US," she explained. Beaulieu also noted that the standardization of milk protein generated outrage among consumers in Australia.



Along with fat content, will we soon see the protein content of fresh milk mentioned on its packaging?

Historically, table milk comes under the jurisdiction of the provinces. However, DFC is calling for a national standard to regulate fresh milk, which is now marketed across provincial borders and has become a country-wide commodity. "This is a good example of how inter-provincial trade barriers can be reduced, as called for in the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) and which we support," she stated.

Who gains from this change?

According to Laval University professor Maurice Doyon, food processors

would probably be the only ones in the dairy value chain to benefit from this approach. "Consumers would get a product of lower nutritional value and I would be surprised if the grocery-store prices drop," he declared. Also, "dairy farmers could lose production, as processors could use the excess proteins in the fabrication of their cheeses, which would lead to a reduction in the quantity of milk normally required, namely about 10 kg of milk for 1 kg of cheese." Processors could also sell the low-cost excess protein extracted from the fresh milk for the fabrication

of other products. "It could possibly reduce the quantity of milk protein imported by the processors," Doyon added, "but that remains to be seen." Saputo is the principal dairy processor in Saskatchewan.

Doyon noted that there is a significant difference between milk fat and milk protein when it comes to standardization. "Fats were negatively perceived by consumers, who were therefore happy to be able to identify the fat content of milk, which was less than what comes directly from the cow."

LTCN 2014-09-10

Nestlé joins the animal welfare bandwagon

Martine Giguère

Nestlé has recently signed an agreement with World Animal Protection, a non-governmental organization working in the animal welfare sector. The company's objective is to improve animal welfare throughout its supply chain. As a result, hundreds of thousands of farms that supply Nestlé around the world will have to respect the company's animal welfare standards. For instance, farmers will have to switch to group housing for preg-

nant sows, calves and laying hens. The company also wants to ban certain practices, such as dehorning without analgesics. A third-party organization will be responsible to visit the farms dealing with Nestlé in order to monitor compliance with the established animal welfare rules. The company has assured farmers that it will accompany them in their efforts to conform. That said, Nestlé will cease dealings with farmers who do not respect the company's standards.

LTCN 2014-09-10



Organic apple production focuses on ancestral varieties



Mirella Aoun, head of fruit production research at CETAB+, believes that organic apple production is possible in Quebec, particularly by focusing on ancestral varieties.

Martin Ménard

Settlers arriving on our continent from France, England, Ireland and Scotland, along with certain religious communities, brought with them some of their preferred varieties of apple trees from overseas. An era that may seem like a long time ago, but surprisingly, it could still have a major impact on the development of organic apple production in Quebec! In fact, some of these ancestral apple varieties, most of them now abandoned, did survive for many years and may now provide some particular disease-resistant genetic traits. "Since 1982, Yves Auger has been roaming the ranges and back roads of Quebec, in search of ancestral apple trees - and he has found about 100 varieties. We have done DNA testing on some of his findings and, in every case, we were able to confirm that they were indeed genuine ancestral apple trees that do not correspond to any of the varieties known here today," explained Mirella Aoun, head of fruit production research at the Centre d'expertise et de transfert en agriculture biologique (CETAB+).

Ruby – better than McIntosh

Among the many varieties inventoried, six were tested over a period of two years for their resistance to apple scab, for their consumer appreciation and their storage potential, etc. The Ruby variety turned out to be the most firm and sweetest. Subsequently, during a blind taste-test by consumers at a farm-

ers' market, it received the same level of satisfaction as the well-known McIntosh apple. That in itself is quite impressive!

"The varieties we evaluated can provide various desirable characteristics. For example, the Ruby is an excellent eating apple; the Sophie, with its pink juice, could be useful in the production of cider, along with the Green Delicious, a later-maturing variety. The old Yellow variety would be good for its juice and the McKillop would be better as a cooking apple," explained Ms. Aoun. With regard to their resistance to scab, the principal disease in apples, all six ancestral varieties studied proved to be more resistant than McIntosh.

A more serious evaluation

Following the results obtained for the Ruby variety, CETAB+ proceeded with a more serious evaluation, by dedicating two plots in its organic orchard to Ruby; the first under an intensive regime with 1,150 trees per hectare and the second under a more extensive system, with 600 trees per hectare. "We want to compare the two models under organic production conditions. The production costs, the technical challenges, crop yields and pest management – everything will be evaluated," explained Ms. Aoun.

A new technique

The installation of the two Ruby plots is part of a new technique. The trees are planted in a row seeded down with a mixture of plants (including white clover) so that their height does not

compete with the apple trees. This band, which is a source of nitrogen, will also receive compost that will be incorporated using a rotary cultivator attached to a tractor. Irrigation nozzles are positioned between the trees in order to improve root development. In addition, by not spraying water directly on the trees, the trunks do not remain wet, thus limiting disease.

The research centre also evaluates other techniques designed to reduce pest damage in its orchard. "We are testing nets that completely cover the trees to exclude certain pests. Also, small patches of flowers attract certain beneficial insects that are predators to the insects that attack apple trees," Ms. Aoun reported.

A magic tree?

Ancestral apple varieties such as the Ruby could improve the health and genetic diversity of orchards. This could be a very interesting avenue for organic growers, who have a limited choice of tools to fight against disease and pests, which are particularly numerous in apple production. At Victoriaville, where the CETAB+ orchard is located, the Ruby trees are not yet producing apples, but as of September of this year, a season particularly prone to apple scab, the researcher was pleased to observe that the leaves on these trees showed no sign of this disease, even without any treatment. Has a magic tree been born, or has it simply been rediscovered?

LTCN 2014-09-17

Quebec organic apples?

The production of organic apples remains marginal in Quebec, at least from a commercial point of view. Indeed, growers are spread out and, at least for now, are quite rare – only about 35. Relatively large businesses can be counted on the fingers of one hand. With regard to production volumes, CETAB+ agro-economist François Martineau completed a survey that showed the average production of the five biggest operations was only about 5000 bushels per year. This is well below the average of conventional orchards, which is 29,000 bushels. Approximately 60 per cent of the organic production is sold on the fresh market. Farmers receive an average of \$37.64 per bushel, compared to \$14.28 for the conventional apples (average prices paid by apple packers in 2013).

Nevertheless, demand is seen as strong; many consumers know that there are heavy applications of pesticides in apple production. As a result, apples have become the second most popular organic fruit sold in Canada (2010 statistics) after bananas. Even food processors are in short supply of organic apples. "Certain Quebec processors do not purchase their organic apples from here, claiming that there is an insufficient volume available," Martineau explained. The reason is simple: the challenges, already numerous in conventional apple production, are significantly multiplying in organic growing. "It requires much more observation and know-how. The grower must be present and very proactive because in organic production, if you miss a critical step, the negative effects are directly apparent at harvest time. That said, I believe that organic apple production is possible in Quebec. In fact, it is our role at CETAB+ to develop solutions," Ms. Aoun concluded.

LTCN 2014-09-17

Young farmers

Urban Montrealer picks farming for her career

Each year, the Quebec Farmers' Association (QFA) receives donations from its members to the Warren Grapes Agricultural Education Fund—the association's very own scholarship trust which helps to promote agricultural and silvicultural education and learning among the English-speaking farm community of Quebec. Bursaries are distributed to post-secondary students of agriculture each fall as a cash prize, and can be used for any and all reasonable expenses assisting their education.

At this year's annual general meeting on November 14, the QFA continued its tradition of presenting the winners of the Warren Grapes Awards with their scholarships. Macdonald Campus students Philippe Beauregard, Shelby Drew and Amelie Sarrasin each received their award and spoke with the Advocate about agricultural politics, education, and the future of farming. Here's our interview with Amelie Sarrasin, a student in Macdonald's Farm Management and Technology program. To read our profiles on winners Shelby Drew and Philippe Beauregard, please see p.4 of our November 2014 issue and p.12 of our December 2014 issue, respectively.

Andrew McClelland
Advocate Staff Reporter

Amelie Sarrasin is part of an exciting new trend in agriculture: urban youth becoming interested in food production and deciding to make farming their life and career.

Sarrasin grew up right beside downtown Montreal, in that city's artistic and touristic neighbourhood known as "The Plateau". But after travelling the globe for 15 years, she wound up living in France. There, Sarrasin spent five years in a small town in the south-central region of Ardèche where there were only 200 residents. She worked on a small sheep and produce operation and fell in love with farm life.

"I just loved the fresh markets, the life I could lead there," the 35-year-old explains. "But, since I don't come from a farm, I would need to farm partners, and create relationships to make a business work on that model here."

Sarrasin is now in her second year of studies at Macdonald's Farm Management and Technology program. Her reasons for wanting to pursue a career in agriculture are different than those of most Mac students: Sarrasin doesn't want to continue in the family business or devote her life to livestock production. She's interested in a new way of life for herself and her 10-year-old son, Macéo.

"When I'm working on the land and I'm doing all different kinds of tasks, time is stopping," says Sarrasin. "I'm being and living in the moment. I think that's one of the big challenges these days with computers and the internet and all the technology we have around us."

Sarrasin completed an internship on a small dairy and produce operation in Saint-Dominique (10 kilometres south of Saint-Hyacinthe) in October of 2013. Next summer, she intends to return to that farm and take over all fruit and vegetable production to let the current own-



Warren Grapes award-winner Amelie Sarrasin grew up in downtown Montreal. But she's not letting that get in the way of her love of the farming life. Sarrasin is pictured here with QFA Board Member Mark Boyd upon receiving her cheque from the Warren Grapes Agricultural Education Fund at the QFA's annual meeting on November 14, 2014.

ers focus on their dairy herd. "There, I could do community-supported agriculture baskets or supply restaurants in Montreal with fruits and vegetables," Sarrasin explains. But ultimately, her ambition lies in educating children and

youth about how farming affects our lives. "I want to help kids to understand what they eat, where it comes from. Many children don't know anything about it."

Sarrasin acknowledges that farming

has a lot of fairweather friends these days. But she's determined to show that her love and knowledge of agriculture is no passing fad.

"There are people who are sceptical when I tell them that I don't come from a farming background," she explains. "Sometimes, farmers are the most sceptical! They're confused by why someone would want to do this when it's not their family business."

"It is a trend, I know. There are a lot of people who get into farming that don't know it's not a 30-hour-a-week job, but more like 60- or 80-hours-a-week!"

But that's a challenge—and a life—that this ambitious young farmer is ready for.

The Warren Grapes Agricultural Education Fund survives exclusively by donations made to the QFA. If you would like to help a young farmer get started, please donate by sending a cheque to
WARREN GRAPES FUND, QFA
555 Roland-Therrien, office 255
Longueuil, QC J4H 4E7



Farm Food Forums

Forum attendees learn soils and crop management

Dougal Rattray
QFA Community Reporter

There was a healthy number of participants at the Farm Food Forum held on November 29 with the topic of Soil and Crop Management being an obvious attraction. After a brief welcome and introduction, the forum got underway with a presentation from Dr. David Burton P.Ag., president of the Canadian Society of Soil Science who gave a very in-depth presentation on the role of the soil environment in influencing the nature and extent of microbial metabolism in soil.

With this knowledge, farmers are better able to understand the factors that control microbial metabolism and use this information to developing sustainable land management systems in a changing climate.

Farm Credit Canada software expert Nanette Hamon was next to speak. Hamon gave a demonstration of the FCC software package Ag Expert Field Manager Pro. As stated in her presentation: "Good farm managers manage their risks all the way from their inputs and outputs to managing their cash flow and price risk."

With that in mind, FCC's 'Field Manager' software is an extremely versatile and useful tool to have in the armory of management tools. Together with the Financial Analysis tool that FCC has developed, they are unarguably a tremendous resource for the busy, professional farmer.

Hamon went on to explain the hows and wherefores on set-up; operations entry and tracking; harvest, inventory and storage tracking; harvest sale and financial farm planning; field boundary and crop recording along with GIS data and field equipment entry and mapping. All in all, this was a well-laid out and interesting presentation. On being asked his thoughts on the software package, one producer commented, "Using this I can see where each dollar goes, so I know where I can make savings."

The QFA's "Farm Food Forums" series brings live presentations to far-flung communities across Quebec through videoconferencing technology. Participants can see and hear, and ask questions, to our changing panel of leading experts. Events are free for QFA members. See a list of host sites for these videoconferences in the ad below.



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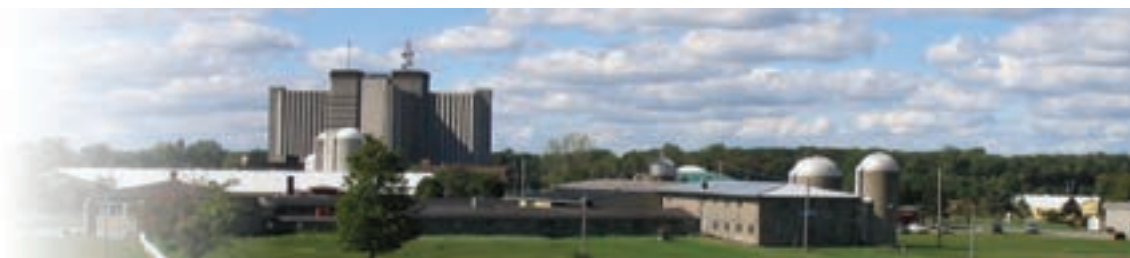
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Magog	Princess Elizabeth School	Tel: 819-843-4847
Richmond	Richmond Regional School	Tel: 819-826-3702
Bury	Eaton Valley CLC	Tel: 819-872-3771

Macdonald

Reports



Remembering Marcel J. Couture 1944-2014

Serge Lussier

Assistant Director, Farm Management and Technology Program, Macdonald Campus

The fall of 2014 saw the Macdonald community lose a dear friend and one of its greatest ambassadors. Marcel J. Couture passed away accidentally at his house in Saint-Lazare, 20 minutes west of the college where he had been an active member of the community for close to 50 years.

The boy from Saint-Camille

Marcel was a native of the village of Saint-Camille in the Eastern Townships. This was one of the reasons why he had such close ties with former *Union des producteurs agricoles* president Jacques Proulx, also a native of Saint-Camille. Originally a unilingual francophone, Marcel was hired during his teens by the late John Standish of Rougemont to work in his orchard. This changed the youngster's life forever and an enduring friendship was ignited. Mr. Standish saw a lot of potential in the young Couture boy and he finally steered him towards the Diploma in Agriculture program at Macdonald College in 1963. Not only did Marcel complete the program but upon graduation he was hired by Dr. John Moxley to be part of the original field crew of the Dairy Herd Analysis Service (DHAS). He then went on to complete the BSc degree (1972) at Macdonald, during which time he met his wife Susan.

Back to Macdonald

His life then took another direction when he accepted a position at Canfarm, while also attending the University of Guelph to complete a Master's degree in Agricultural Economics. He returned to Macdonald in 1976 to accept the dual positions of lecturer in Agricultural Economics and Assistant-Director of the Diploma in Agriculture program. He was appointed Director of the Farm Management and Technology (FMT) program in 1986, a position he held until his retirement in 2005.

Not content to have two jobs at the same time, Marcel also became Director



relationship between these two entities. He worked tirelessly to ensure that Macdonald remained a major player in the agricultural landscape of the province that he was so passionate about. In particular, he was heavily involved in the transfer of DHAS from McGill to a group that included the Quebec Milk Producers Federation. This difficult process eventually led to Valacta becoming the largest dairy program in Canada.

"Monsieur Macdonald"

In many areas of Quebec, Marcel was known as "Monsieur Macdonald", a tribute to his implication in a vast array of activities. He was on the board of directors of many organizations and the organizer of many events both on and off the Macdonald Campus. One of the most memorable of these was the visit of then Russian President Boris Yeltsin to Macdonald in 1992. This visit represented months of dealings with government officials, police forces and many other parties at all levels. It was so successful that President Yeltsin delayed his departure from the Macdonald Campus Farm to prolong the discussions.

In 2005, his dedication and hard work at McGill University was recognized with a Mastery for Service Award. After retiring from McGill University in 2005, he accepted a position as interim Director of Alfred College, University of Guelph.

Said Dean Chandra Madramootoo, "Marcel wore Macdonald College on his sleeve, right to the very end, always proudly appearing in the College tie, cap, sweater or t-shirt. He was enormously proud of the Institution, its connection to McGill, and its place in rural Quebec, Canada and the world. He flew the Macdonald flag high, and was truly our ambassador at large."

A memorial service was held at Macdonald College in early December and a number of poignant, personal tributes were presented. Marcel is and will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

"Marcel wore Macdonald College on his sleeve... He was enormously proud of the Institution, its connection to McGill, and its place in rural Quebec, Canada and the world."

of the Extension Service and eventually Associate-Dean (Community Relations). Along the way, he had to give up teaching and did so most reluctantly because his students were so dear to him. Farm management was a top priority for him all along and he remained heavily

involved in the program's capstone "Farm Project" course throughout the years.

During these years, Marcel had a profound impact on the Macdonald community, on the farming community of Quebec and especially on the

PHOTO COURTESY COUTURE FAMILY

Community

AgriWeek helps farmers meet industry pros

In business and in life, there's a little thing called "The 80/20 Rule". It says that 80 per cent of your results should come from 20 per cent of your efforts. However, when speaking about agriculture, the majority of farmers would likely agree that most days it feels like the other way around!

Fortunately, there is no shortage of consultants, resources, and tools out there to help you gain the most from your business management efforts—it's just a matter of knowing what they are and where to find them.

To help Quebec's farmers connect with experts who provide services in English in business management and innovation, CEDEC—the Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation—will host the second edition of "AgriWeek" during the *Le Mois de la gestion agricole* (Agriculture Management Month), February 17 - 20, 2015.

"Based on feedback from the first AgriWeek in 2012, and numerous

requests to hold another, we're looking forward to packed events," says April Stewart, AgriWeek coordinator. "The calibre of experts and partners who have agreed to come on board is proof that an event like this is needed."

AgriWeek's mission is to offer Quebec growers, producers and agripreneurs the tools to identify new business opportunities using current management trends and skills development to impact their bottom line. Its vision is to inspire those growers, producers and agripreneurs to proactively seek out opportunities to cultivate their management skills and knowledge.

AgriWeek will start off with a bang with Farm Credit Canada's Ag Knowledge Exchange event, presented by a national leading expert in the field of farm business management.

Throughout the week there will be numerous activities both online and off including:

- two webinars (which you can enjoy over lunch in your warm house!)

- a videoconference in partnership with the Quebec Farmers' Association
- a 'Farming in Quebec: What Works and Why' consultation session
- two workshops related to improving farm management
- the AgriWeek Salon.

The Salon, which will gather together dozens of industry experts from management, technology and innovation sectors, will focus on practical programs farmers need to grow their business rather than ones that create more paperwork.

New to the Salon this year is the Ag Bar: a place where salon attendees can meet with consultants one-on-one in a more private venue so they can ask questions specific to their business.


And because all work and no play makes Jack (or Jane!) a dull boy (or girl!), the Salon will also feature a fun photo booth replete with agriculture related props thanks to the Agriculture More Than Ever initiative.

"Agriculture continues to be a major contributor to Canada's economy and its success and innovation will play a key role in our nation's prosperity and growth for years to come," say Stewart. "There's so much valuable information out there to help farmers succeed, but it can be a challenge for Quebec's English-speaking growers and producers to find it. Thanks in part to technology, we can bring it to them!"

For the complete AgriWeek schedule or to register for events, please visit www.cedec.ca/agriweek, email sbs@cedec.ca or call 1-888-641-9912.


CEDEC is a leading partner and driving force for community economic development and employability. A volunteer-driven organization, CEDEC sparks economic innovation in building forward-looking, prosperous and confident communities across Quebec through sharing expertise, knowledge and building partnerships.

How FCC helps producers improve their farm management skills



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For details please contact the Quebec Farmers Association or consult our website at: 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.



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Farmall 95N	95 (71)	82 (61)	53.4 (1.4) - MFD
Farmall 105N	106 (79)	92 (68)	53.4 (1.4) - MFD

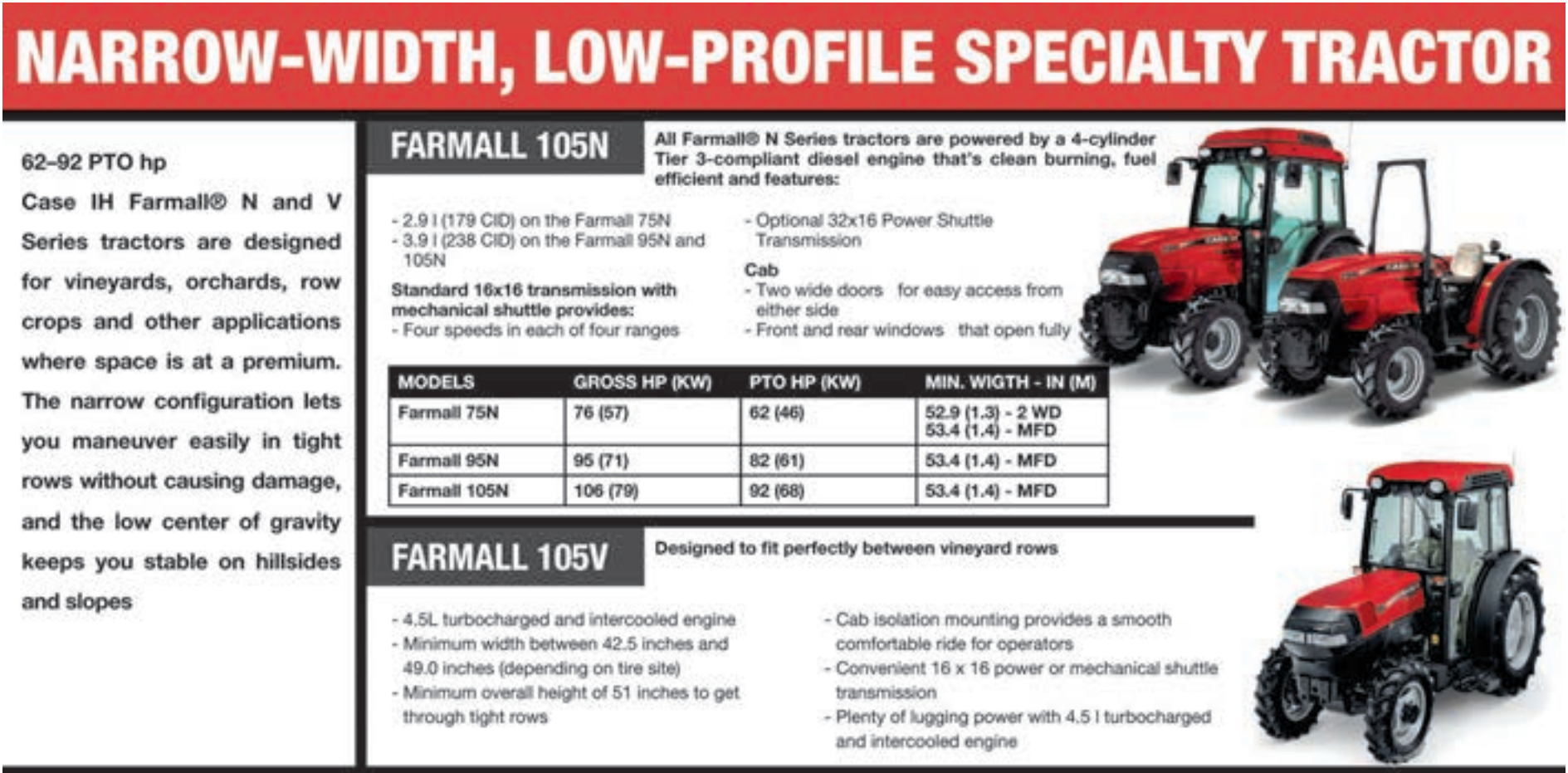
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Join your fellow farmers

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 2 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!)

Notice of Meetings

Once again, at the request of the QFA, the Quebec Beef Producers Federation (FPBQ) is holding information meetings of producers in English prior to the official regional annual general meetings. This provides English-speaking beef producers with up-to-date reports on activities during the past year, and highlights the main topics that will be voted upon at the annual general meetings.

Region	Date and Time	Location
Montérégie-Ouest	Thursday, February 19. (7:30 p.m.)	McDougal Hall, 19, Lambton, Ormstown
Outaouais-Laurentides	Thursday, February 26. (7:30 p.m.)	Pine View Lodge, 6, chemin de Pine Lodge, Bristol
L'Estrie	Wednesday, February 11. (1:00 p.m. - 3: 30 p.m.)	UPA Regional office, 4300 Blvd Bourke, Sherbrooke





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Mitchell Beer
President, Smarter Shift

With tens of thousands of dollars on the line when you buy a new tractor, it's important to buy the equipment that meets your specific needs, while using as little fuel as you can.

With record-low oil prices in the headlines, it may seem less important to think about limiting your fuel consumption. But while the current price drop isn't expected to last more than a couple of years, a tractor is a long-term commitment. After you buy the equipment and bring it home, fuel and lubricants can represent up to 45 per cent or more of total machine cost, according to the Virginia Cooperative Extension program at Virginia Polytechnic Institute.

Far from being a reason to throttle back your energy savings, a short period of relief on fuel costs might be just the right time to invest in the longer-term efficiency of your operation.

Calculating fuel efficiency

The best methods of calculating a tractor's fuel efficiency depend on how you actually use it. You can measure performance based on the fuel efficiency of the engine, the mechanical efficiency of the drivetrain, the power available to the drawbar, and the ideal travel speed for your purposes.

Finding the right tractor saves fuel and money

Fuel efficiency is measured based on power take off (PTO) and drawbar efficiencies at different speeds and gear settings, and with different loads. It's expressed as the amount of fuel used over a specific time span—either in horsepower hours per gallon (Hp-hr/gal) or kilograms of fuel per kilowatt-hour (kg.kWh).

Tractor manufacturers make the picture more complex, with competing claims based on duelling fuel efficiency measures. In 2011, after the United States introduced its Tier 4i emissions standards, *Farm Industry News* rated the 40 top fuel-efficient tractors. But the publication cited Roger Hoy, director of the Nebraska Tractor Test Lab, on the difficulty of testing performance claims.

"Confusion comes when companies use different test numbers to back their claims, preventing apples-to-apples comparisons," the *News* reported. "For example, technicians measure power and fuel use at both the PTO and drawbar and at varying rates of power and pull to replicate the full range of field conditions."

Comparing your options

The stakes are high, because "the result of improper size can be costly," note Paul E. Sumner and E. Jay Williams, extension engineers at the University of Georgia. "A tractor too small can result in long hours in the field, excessive delays, and

premature replacement." But "a tractor too large can result in excessive operating and overhead costs."

Sumner and Williams compare three types of tractors—four-wheel drive, front wheel assist, and two-wheel drive—and provide a tractor sizing worksheet that factors in required field capacity, minimum width, total draft, drawbar horsepower, and minimum PTO horsepower.

For the NSW Farmers Association in New South Wales, Australia, that calculation is part of a wider business planning process that includes seeking out independent advice and information, documenting the tasks you'll need to complete and the power you'll require, analyzing equipment and suppliers, and assembling a full business case for the purchase.

"Correctly specified, a new tractor will use less fuel to perform the same job and may also incorporate digital technologies that help you organize and monitor your farming operations," states an NSW Farmers fact sheet. The selection process "warrants considerable time and effort, as investing in an unsuitable machine can lock in fuel wastage and other operational inefficiencies for decades."

Tractor fuel is one of those inevitable features of rural life that carry two continuing risks for farming.

By tethering day-to-day operations to the boomeranging price of oil, over-con-

sumption of fuel makes it harder to predict costs and run a financially sustainable business.

And by pumping carbon pollution into the atmosphere, inefficient use of tractors contributes to a climate crisis that is already leading to drought and threatening crop yields in many parts of the world.

It's a challenging picture, but it turns out that the two problems help solve each other: Anything you can do to cut your fuel consumption makes your own operating budget more resilient, while helping to build a low-carbon economy that will keep farming viable for decades and generations to come.

To see Sumner and Williams' "Why Size Farm Tractor Do I Need?" worksheet, go to http://www.caes.uga.edu/departments/bae/extension/pubs/documents/farm_tractor.pdf

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.

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Cookin' with the Advocate

Moroccan Chicken

Ingredients

1 lemon
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 large onion, halved, thinly sliced
2 garlic cloves, pressed
1 tablespoon paprika
2 teaspoons ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground ginger
2 cups low-salt chicken broth
1 4 1/2-pound chicken, cut into 8 pieces
1/2 cup green olives

Method

You will need a heavy bottomed cast iron-type skillet or stew-pot large enough to hold all of your chicken pieces. I use an old Creuset stew pot with a lid for this type of dish.

Cut 1/2 lemon into 4 wedges. Squeeze enough juice from second 1/2 lemon to measure 1 1/2 tablespoon and set wedges and juice aside. Heat oil in large skillet over medium-high heat. Dredge chicken in flour, sprinkle with salt and pepper, and sear on each side for about three minutes. Remove from pan. Add onion and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Sauté on medium heat until golden brown, about 8 minutes. Add garlic and spices and stir 1 minute. Add broth and bring to a boil. Place chicken skin-side up in skillet. Add lemon wedges. Cover, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer until chicken is cooked through, 25 to 30 minutes. Add olives and 2 tablespoons lemon juice to skillet. Simmer uncovered about 5 minutes. May be served immediately, or be kept in a 250 degree oven for up to an hour. Alternatively, it may be cooled and refrigerated for up to two days and reheated at 300 degrees for an hour.

Try serving with couscous or brown rice and pita wedges.

This recipe has been slightly adapted from the original recipe, which can be found in the May 2009 Bon Appétit.

Spices bring warmth to winter

Cynthia Gunn, Advocate Food Writer

As soon as I see a recipe that calls for skinless boneless chicken breasts, I have an instinctive reaction to hit the delete button, or turn the page. This is especially true if it is a recipe that is remotely "stew-like", and calling for long-cooking or a slow infusion of some lovely spices into the chicken and sauce.

Two years ago, I lost my Moroccan chicken recipe. This stew-like dish is exactly the type that requires bones and all parts of the chicken for full flavour. I searched everywhere for that yellowing piece of newspaper. I can't remember which

newspaper or how long ago I cut it out, or I might have had some success searching for it on-line. It is truly lost, and I have never made Moroccan chicken since. It's time that changed, it's time I filled my kitchen with the smells of a warm and distant place.

In downtown Ottawa I often notice people huddled against the cold that sound and look like they began their passage on this Earth in a warmer land. I often wonder how they feel during those first few winters here: bleak, perhaps, faced with an alien cold, grey and white landscape. They must yearn, I often think, yearn for warmth and colour. Yearn for their food.

In *The Book of Negroes*, Aminata, near the end of her life, observes the British disinterest in food and longs for the tastes of her childhood. "In the endless grey of London, I missed the colours and tastes of my homeland. I found bread and meat uninteresting and unpalatable, and I wondered how it was that people who sailed the oceans and ruled the world cared nothing for food and how to prepare it...I especially missed the malaguetta peppers, and found myself writing to Debra, pleading with her to send me a shipment of spices for cooking."

In this spirit, I looked for a replacement for my lost recipe, and settled on this one because it used a whole chicken, bones and all, and because others that cooked it thought it wonderful.) After I tried it, I thought it tasty, too. It is also a simpler version of my original recipe—a good place to start so you don't turn the page because you don't have many of the ingredients (such as *ras el hanout* spice mixture and dried apricots.)

This stew should help bring colour and warmth to your winter's meal, and fill your home with delicious smells from a faraway place.




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Minister Paradis has no lack of priority files

Yvon Laprade

Quebec's Agriculture Minister Pierre Paradis appeared at the 90th Congress of the Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA) in Quebec City on December 3, carrying a briefcase full of priority files. He left without making any promises, but he gave the impression to the 350 delegates in attendance that he "was on their side."

The previous evening, the UPA president Marcel Groleau had set the stage by reminding delegates that the minister had acted "rapidly" to the controversial Robillard Commission's report, which proposed nothing less than the elimination of the Farm Income Stabilization Insurance Program (known as ASRA). It was in this context that the minister addressed the delegates and commended the work of producers. He touched on

all the files: land grabbing, supply management, international trade, access to capital for young farmers, food security, specialty cheeses and income stabilization insurance.

With regard to the free-trade agreement between Canada and the European Union, which risks to destabilize Quebec producers of specialty cheeses, he assured them that the Couillard government would be "vigilant in ensuring that the Harper government compensates dairy and cheese producers."

Regarding ASRA, he said he believes "the solution" to the problem facing certain productions "will come with the tabling of the report" of the revision committee.

Concerning access to capital to allow young farmers to buy the family farm, he mentioned the recent fiscal measures announced by his government, particularly the exemptions on capital gains following a transaction.

Not everyone convinced

Nevertheless, the delegates in attendance were not all convinced that Quebec's agriculture, as perceived by the Couillard government, is all "blue skies ahead." Furthermore, Minister Paradis admitted that he did have to tighten things up upon his arrival at Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ) in a climate of austerity and cost control. "There were certain areas where I had to do some belt-tightening," he conceded. "For example, it is true that I did a review of all the programs and I signed the checks myself."

But he added in the same breath that the government, as well as himself, are "favourably biased" towards the agricul-



Minister Pierre Paradis addressed the 90th annual UPA Congress in a spirit of collaboration with farmers, but left without making any promises.

tural family, at a time when producers are concerned about investment funds and financial groups buying up farmland at high prices. On this sensitive issue, he admitted that the government has not completely closed the door to the UPA's demand to block sales of farmland by investment firms. "Nothing is impossible," declared the minister in a press briefing. However, he refused to get ahead of himself. It is clear to him that the government will not impose a moratorium on all transactions done by investment firms and financial groups. "The moratorium solution would be taking the easy road," he explained. "When you decree a moratorium, it is because

you have not found the real solution."

A real issue

From his perspective, UPA President Groleau believes that the minister appears to acknowledge that land grabbing is a genuine problem. However, he added that the UPA and Minister Paradis have different opinions on the methods and tools to be implemented in the short term to retard this existing phenomenon. "Apparently, we do not have the same transactional data. The buying up of farmland is not a marginal phenomenon and we must take action," Groleau concluded.

LTCN 2014-12-10

The liquidation process continues

Jean-Charles Gagné

The Couillard government continues to liquidate rural development tools, which it started by eliminating Solidarité rural du Québec (SRQ). Indeed, Quebec has now targeted the rural development officers, in essence the heart of the province's Politique nationale de la ruralité (PNR) [National Rural Policy].

As of March 31, 2015, regional county municipalities (RCM) will no longer be obliged to transfer all of the money in the PNR budget to their 139 rural develop-

ment officers and they can also modify their mandates.

From the viewpoint of Solidarité rural president, Claire Bolduc, these rural development officers are the generators of energy and ideas in the development of rural communities. According to her, "this marks the end of the PNR; because money alone does not constitute a policy. What does define this policy are the objectives it pursues and, in particular, the guidance and support that it provides to the communities in achieving their objectives. In the context of the

present budget situation, where RCMs are already having to deal with only a third of their normal budget envelopes, it is certainly difficult to imagine how they will continue to be able to finance the PNR."

As of 2016, all of the money allocated to the rural development officers and to rural pacts will be integrated into the Fonds de développement des territoires [regional development fund], with a budget of \$100 million, where municipal officials will be able to spend the money according to their own priorities. For

Ms. Bolduc, "the specific issues of the rural communities are at risk of being extremely diluted in a situation like this."

Unquestionably, we have come a long way from the pomp and ceremony of the launching of the National Rural Policy in December 2013 in the Salon Rouge of the National Assembly, where former Premier Pauline Marois announced the renewal of the PNR for a 10-year period, along with a budget of \$470 million – seen by some as a movement towards decentralization.

LTCN 2014-12-10



Marcel Groleau
UPA President

Nor was the agricultural sector spared. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ) saw its 2014-2015 budget amputated by \$41.6 million. For the same period, the Financière agricole du Québec (FADQ) underwent two successive cuts, including \$17 million last spring and \$113 million this past fall. These cuts had less impact on farmers this year because of the extraordinary situation we are presently experiencing in the agricultural sector; i.e., higher market prices simultaneously for meat and cereals.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the \$600 million budget remains a necessity, since this current situation is not the norm.

We must roll up our sleeves

Recent months have proved to be difficult for Quebec society. A major reorganization of school boards, reform of the health network, modulated fees in the childcare centres, a decrease in transfers to municipalities. Indeed, the route towards a balanced budget has hurt many groups and we are not done yet.

Rural communities did not escape the consequences of political austerity either, with the abolition of the Centres locaux de développement (CLD), the elimination of the Conférences régionales des élus (CRÉ) and the end of funding for the advisory body Solidarité rural du Québec (SRQ). And to top it all off, the final grant payment to SRQ due in October was withheld without any notice. Consequently, it was the employees of the organization who were hardest hit by this decision.

Last December 17, the UPA's executive committee discussed the challenges ahead due to the loss of all the rural development tools. Like the farmers it represents, the UPA adopted a resilient attitude rather than one of discouragement. We must now rethink the role, the

functioning and the future of the coalition of rural forces. For my own part and that of the Union, there is no doubt that, more than ever, the SRQ coalition has its raison d'être.

During this troubling period, the members of the coalition must close ranks. We must join together under a message of unity, reposition ourselves behind common projects and solidify our position based on the declaration signed in the aftermath of the États généraux du monde rural in 1991.

The Fédération québécoise des municipalités and the Union des municipalités du Québec signed a fiscal pact under extremely difficult conditions. In my opinion, it is hard for us to criticize them for signing. This one-year fiscal pact is less than ideal - and the municipalities

are the first to admit this. However, did they really have a choice if they wished to minimize the damages and prepare for what is to follow; that is, to negotiate a fiscal pact to cover the next several years?

The loss of development tools like the CLDs and the CRÉ is very regrettable, particularly for the agricultural sector. We conducted numerous joint projects with these partners. The municipalities and the regional county municipalities must now reorganized with less human and financial resources. Nevertheless, as a member of the coalition, we have the responsibility to continue our mission, to help each other and maintain our efforts for the development of our regions. And that is exactly what the UPA intends to do.

LTCN 2015-01-07

Organic farming: taking the proper action to respond to the demand

Marcel Groleau
UPA President

The world market for organic foods has shown significant growth in recent years. Previously a niche market, it has now reached a value of US \$63.8 billion in 2012, an increase of 320 per cent since 1999. This phenomenon is also apparent in Quebec, as shown by the opening of health-food supermarkets by chains like Rachelle-Béry and Avril supermarché santé. When I attended the annual meeting of the Association des détaillants en alimentation du Québec [Quebec Food Retailers Association] last fall, it was mentioned that the organic and natural food market is presently the most dynamic sector.

The situation calls for concrete action in order to meet the demand. The Filière biologique du Québec, which groups all of the sector's shareholders, including the Fédération d'agriculture biologique du Québec (FABQ), has been working for several years to meet this challenge. Although possessing limited means,

the Filière has contributed in promoting and stimulating this market. Between 2008 and 2013, the number of certified organic farms has grown from 924 to 1020, an increase of about 10 per cent. Furthermore, there are presently about 100 businesses waiting for their certification.

The crop area under organic production, all productions combined, has also seen significant growth, going from 41,629 ha in 2008 to 49,513 ha in 2013, an increase of 19 per cent. Today, Quebec is the principal producer of organic milk among the Canadian provinces, at 40 per cent, followed by Ontario at 28 per cent. The Réseau des fermes de famille Équiterre [Équiterre Family Farmers Network] is present in all regions of Quebec. The market for organic products in the province reached \$400 million in 2013. These are only a few examples, but they do illustrate the work that has been done over the past few years.

My support role with the FABQ and my experience gained while serving

as president of the Fédération des producteurs de lait du Québec has convinced me that our Union can increase and improve our support for organic production. Presently, between 70 and 75 per cent of organic foods consumed in Quebec are imported products. Consequently, in collaboration with the FABQ, the UPA has created the Table de production bio [Organic Production Roundtable], which groups 19 production sectors as well as key industry players such as the Centre d'expertise et de transfert en agriculture biologique et de proximité, Équiterre, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ), Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAC) and the Conseil des appellations réservées et des termes valorisants du Québec. A development officer will soon be made available to groups, in order to help them prepare action plans in their respective sectors.

To enhance its development, the organic sector also requires programs adapted to its specific needs. This may include crop insurance and risk man-

agement tools that are designed for the sector and, in particular, risk sharing programs for the transition period between conventional to organic farming. Indeed, this is the most critical period for farmer who decides to go in this direction. Furthermore, a network of expertise must be developed to help producers with technical problems. In this regard, the UPA had forwarded these demands to the Income Security Committee, which recently submitted its report to the Agriculture Minister.

The efforts of the UPA to encourage the development of the organic sector are aimed at ensuring that the sector possesses the proper tools to meet increasing demand in the marketplace. The idea is not to make any judgment or choice between the conventional and organic production sectors. Ultimately, this choice belongs to consumers and our role as farmers is to take the proper action to respond. Otherwise, outside competitors will continue to take advantage of these opportunities.

LTCN 2014-12-17

Ottawa will compensate cheesemakers

Yvon Laprade

"Specialty cheesemakers in Quebec can count on the federal government's generosity," declared the Conservative MP and parliamentary secretary Jacques Gourde, in the presence of skeptical farmers in Quebec City. "If there is lost revenue, they will be compensated," he affirmed. However, he did acknowledge that cheese shipments from Europe, under the free-trade agreement between Canada and the European Union, represent "a significant challenge for cheesemakers." Under the agreement, the European producers can ship, without any restrictions, 17,000 additional tons of cheese into this country. "Quebec's artisan cheesemakers will be the hardest hit," he admitted.

Some "ifs"...

The Conservative MP said he hopes that producers from this side will be able to export their cheeses. Nevertheless, according to local producers, it is expected that there will be a considerable difference between the quantity of cheese coming in and the Quebec cheese being exported to Europe.

In such a case, if the MP's logic is being interpreted correctly, cheesemakers will be compensated for the negative difference. However, it would seem that there are many "ifs" in this mathematical calculation, according to the president of Producteurs de lait



Following his speech, MP Jacques Gourde met with the president of Producteurs de lait du Québec, Bruno Letendre (right) and its director-general Alain Bourbeau (centre).

du Québec, Bruno Letendre. The question becomes how will Ottawa evaluate these losses. This argument was brought up again by Marcel Groleau, the Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA) president. "In Brussels, Prime

Minister Stephen Harper announced compensations. There were no 'ifs or buts'," he emphasized.

On another sensitive topic, Jacques Gourde repeated, not once but twice, that his "government remains steadfast

in maintaining supply management. This is not negotiable," he asserted. No doubt energized, he then added: "As we look ahead, the future looks bright."

LTCN 2014-12-10

Summary of the past year in dairy production

Jean-Charles Gagné

The dairy industry performed well in 2013-2014, with an historical increase of 5.1 per cent in demand on Canadian markets. The financial position of dairy farmers also improved, with almost 50 per cent of farms able to cover their production costs – an objective set by Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC). Last year, this level was about 40 per cent.

Quebec dairy farmers saw their milk quota volumes increase by 7.6 per cent from April to December 2014, when taking into consideration the issuance of 11 additional production days. Producers received \$82.95/hl (combined class average) for their milk, an increase of 3.5 per cent over the previous year. This rise

was primarily due to higher prices for the specialty classes (further processing, exports, non-fat solids) on international markets

However, the on-farm price may decrease in 2014-2015, since world prices are in decline. Furthermore, the indexation formula for fluid milk will induce a price drop of \$0.14/hl on February 1. Producers will also soon learn of the future price of industrial milk when the Canadian Dairy Commission sets the support price for butter and powdered skim milk.

Sales

From September 2013 to September 2014, butter sales in Canada rose by four per cent, generating an increase of three

per cent in non-salable production quota in December. Margarine decreased by 3.7 per cent over the same period. Cream sales have risen by about three per cent per year over the past three years and fluid milk demand has continued to rise. The yogurt market, stimulated by the popular Greek yogurt, is now stabilizing after several boom years. Cheddar sales, along with mozzarella and specialty cheeses, also increased.

"Quebec dairy processors produce over 80 per cent of yogurts, 54 per cent of all cheese and over 60 per cent of specialty cheeses in Canada," explained the president of Producteurs de lait du Québec, Bruno Letendre, in his speech to delegates attending their annual meeting on November 27 in Quebec City.

During the dairy year 2013-2014, restaurants bought over 29,000 tons of mozzarella for the production of fresh pizzas, on a potential market of 33,000 tons. The Canadian Dairy Commission (CDC) is looking into the possibility of expanding this class (3d), created in July 2013 in an attempt to limit mozzarella imports, to include other cheese categories as well.

Canadian cheese manufacturers have pre-ordered, albeit at a reduced price but not less than \$40 per hectolitre, the milk necessary to produce 1,842 tons of cheese under the CDC's Planned Export Program for Cheese. The permitted volume is 3,000 tons per year, which will be reached in 2014-2015.

LTCN 2014-12-17

News Highlights

Agriculture – a creator of jobs and an economic motor

Martine Giguère

"Every time a government commission is created, the agricultural sector is always put on trial. I am fed up with this!" declared the president of the Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA), Marcel Groleau. Indeed, he hopes to send a clear message to the government and its Treasury Board president, Marcel Coiteux, regarding the important role played by the agricultural and agrifood sector in Quebec's economy. "Over the past six years, the GDP generated by agriculture and agrifood increased by \$2.5 billion. If we succeed in doing the same thing in the next six years, that is 25,000 new jobs that will be created." Investments by producers and food processors could reach \$8 billion and exports could climb to \$36 billion. "This is what is available to the Quebec government if it is willing to believe in agriculture and agrifood. Are you ready to do that?" challenged Groleau.

Balancing finances to the detriment of rurality

Since the election of the Liberal government in Quebec, the agricultural sector has been in a state of uncertainty. "The government has set its mission on turning around the public finances. This objective has led to unfortunate decisions regarding some of the rural and regional development tools, such as the abolition of the Centres locaux de développement (CLD) [local development centers] and the Conférences régionales des élus (CRÉ) [regional conferences of elected officials]," deplored Groleau. Yet, these development tools have proved themselves in the regions.

Groleau admitted he was outraged by the way the government terminated the funding of Solidarité rural du Québec (SQR): "The SQR was one of the voices that reached even the urban community, a neutral voice that differed from that of the UPA, the Quebec Federation of Municipalities (FQM) and other organizations. It is very unfortunate that the government decided to do without it."

Farmland: finding a common position

The issue of land grabbing has divided farmers, as it affects them differently depending on whether they are young and beginning farmers or the region



"Today, I can assure you that I am proud to be a farmer and so are my children," declared Marcel Groleau, the 13th president of the UPA.

in which they live. In spite of this, the UPA has indicated it has found a common position in order to go ahead with this file. In this regard, Groleau is calling for a limit of 100 hectares per transaction, in order to slow down the purchases made by investors for a period of three years. "I don't think this will be

intergenerational farm transfers would not be affected, thus diminishing the impact of investment funds. The UPA has calculated, using the land registry, that over a period of four years, the number of hectares acquired by investment funds will reach 75,000 ha or 3.75 per cent of the agricultural zone.

"Solidarité rural du Québec was one of the voices that reached even the urban community... It is very unfortunate that the government decided to do without it." — UPA President Marcel Groleau

too limiting. During these three years, we would be able to analyze the situation and have time to come up with some solutions." Under this proposal,

The purchase of farmland by investors causes prices to rise and this becomes a problem for young farmers and for the consolidation of existing

farm businesses. According to the UPA president, this prevents farm businesses from developing, particularly those that cannot count on the agronomic yield of their land to finance their purchases. "I remain fundamentally convinced that the best way to develop an entrepreneur is to have him or her become the owner or part owner of the farm assets," he declared, receiving applause from the audience.

Finally, the Union maintains that support for agriculture is beneficial to consumers, since it ensures food security and reasonable prices. Consequently, the UPA is calling for relevant and responsive programs. "We must send a clear message to the government. It cannot achieve a balanced budget on the backs of farmers," Groleau declared. LTCN 2014-12-10

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Les Producteurs de lait du Québec

ATTENTION: Change to the SCVQ

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

Centralized Quota Sales System

JANUARY 2015

Centralized Quota Sales System

Fixed Price

Total offers to sell

Offers to sell participating in the distribution

Successful offers to sell participating in the distribution

Net quantity bought by the reserve

Total offers to buy

Offers to buy participating in the distribution

Successful offers to buy participating in the distribution

The quota sale has been cancelled because the quota quantities offered for sale were not enough to allocate at least a 0.1 kg increment of butterfat per day to each purchaser in accordance with section 41.1 (4) of the Règlement sur les quotas des producteurs de lait (by-laws respecting quotas for milk producers).

Purchase and Sale offers by Stratum

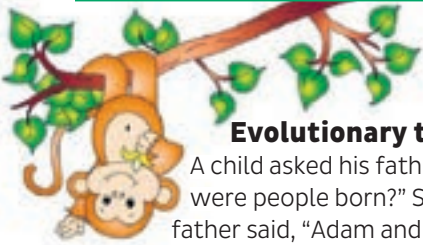
SALES			Price offered \$/kg b.f./day	PURCHASES		
Number	Quantity in kg b.f./day	Cumulation		Number	Quantity in kg b.f./day	Cumulation
17	153.1	153.1	< 25,000.00	2,134	11,625.60	11,625.60
			25,000.00 ceiling price			

CANCELLED

1st step distribution by iteration = • 2nd step distribution by prorata = • Portion of quantities satisfied =

177932

Quirky QFA Crack-Ups



Evolutionary theory

A child asked his father, "How were people born?" So his father said, "Adam and Eve made babies, then their babies became adults and made babies, and so on." The child then went to his mother and asked her the same question. "We were monkeys then we evolved to become like

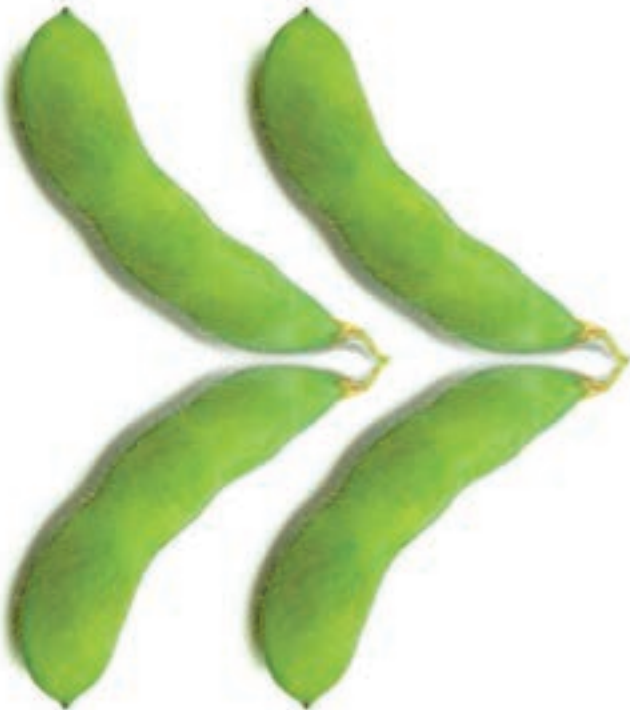
we are now," she told him. The child ran back to his father and said, "You lied to me!" His father replied, "No, your mom was talking about her side of the family."

One-upmanship

During the wedding rehearsal, the groom approaches the pastor with an unusual offer. "Look, I'll give you \$100 if you'll change the wedding vows. When you get to the

part where I'm supposed to promise to 'love, honour, and obey' and 'be faithful to her forever,' I'd appreciate it if you'd just leave that out." He passes the minister a \$100 bill and walks away satisfied. On the day of the wedding, when it comes time for the groom's vows, the pastor looks the young man in the eye and says, "Will you promise to prostrate yourself before her, obey her every command and wish, serve her breakfast

in bed every morning of your life, and swear eternally before God and your lovely wife that you will not ever even look at another woman, as long as you both shall live?" The groom gulps, looks around, and says in a tiny voice, "Yes," then leans toward the pastor and hisses, "I thought we had a deal." The pastor puts a \$100 bill into the groom's hand and whispers, "She made me a better offer."



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National Energy
Board

Office national
de l'énergie

Notification of Application to Participate in National Energy Board Public Hearing

Energy East Pipeline Ltd. Energy East Project

The National Energy Board (Board) received an application from Energy East Pipeline Ltd. (EEPL) for approvals needed to construct and operate the proposed Energy East Project, a 4,500 km crude oil pipeline system from receipt points in Alberta and Saskatchewan to delivery points in Quebec and New Brunswick, comprised of both new oil pipeline facilities and existing natural gas pipeline facilities to be transferred from TransCanada PipeLines Limited to EEPL and converted from gas to oil service (Application).

EEPL's Application and a description of the Energy East Project are available on the Board's website at www.neb-one.gc.ca.

The Energy East and Eastern Mainline Projects will be reviewed by a single Panel made up of three Board Members, who will consider all evidence filed on both projects. This is the most effective approach to conduct a thorough review. The details of the hearing process will follow once the Application to Participate (ATP) process has ended. Further information on the Panel can be found on the NEB website.

The Board is currently assessing completeness of the Energy East Project application. The completeness determination is an initial threshold question where the Board determines if an application is sufficiently complete to proceed to assessment. If the application is found to be sufficiently complete, the Board will hold a hearing, at which time it will collect evidence from the parties approved during the ATP process. Any information received prior to the completeness determination is not considered to be evidence in the hearing.

Participation in the Hearing

The Board has updated its List of Issues. The List of Issues is available on the Board's website and will be part of the ATP form for the Energy East Project.

Those who wish to participate in the hearing for the Energy East Project must apply to participate using the ATP form. Persons who apply to participate must clearly describe their interests and how those interests relate to the issues on the List of Issues. Those persons or groups who, in the Board's view, demonstrate clearly that they are directly affected will be allowed to participate. The Board may allow people who clearly demonstrate they have relevant information or expertise to participate.

The Board encourages persons to collaborate or form a group with those who share similar interests or views or will present similar evidence. Groups should complete one ATP form on behalf of their group, identifying the individual(s) who will speak on behalf of the group.

The ATP form will be available on the Board's website from **3 February to 3 March 2015**. All deadlines must be adhered to.

The deadline to submit an Application to Participate is noon, 3 March 2015, Mountain Standard Time.

To access the ATP form, select "Energy East Project" from the Quick Links menu on the right hand side of the Board's main page. A link to *Apply to Participate* will be visible on the right hand side menu of the Energy East Project webpage.

Process Advisory Team

The Board's Process Advisory Team will provide general information and a step-by-step overview of the ATP process through technology-based (online) sessions. The ATP forms and the schedule for information sessions are available at www.neb-one.gc.ca along with information on the Board's hearing process and participant funding.

If you have process questions or need further assistance accessing the website or the ATP forms, please contact the Board's Energy East Process Advisory Team:

Email: energyeast.processhelp@neb-one.gc.ca

Telephone: 403-292-4800

Telephone (toll free): 1-800-899-1265

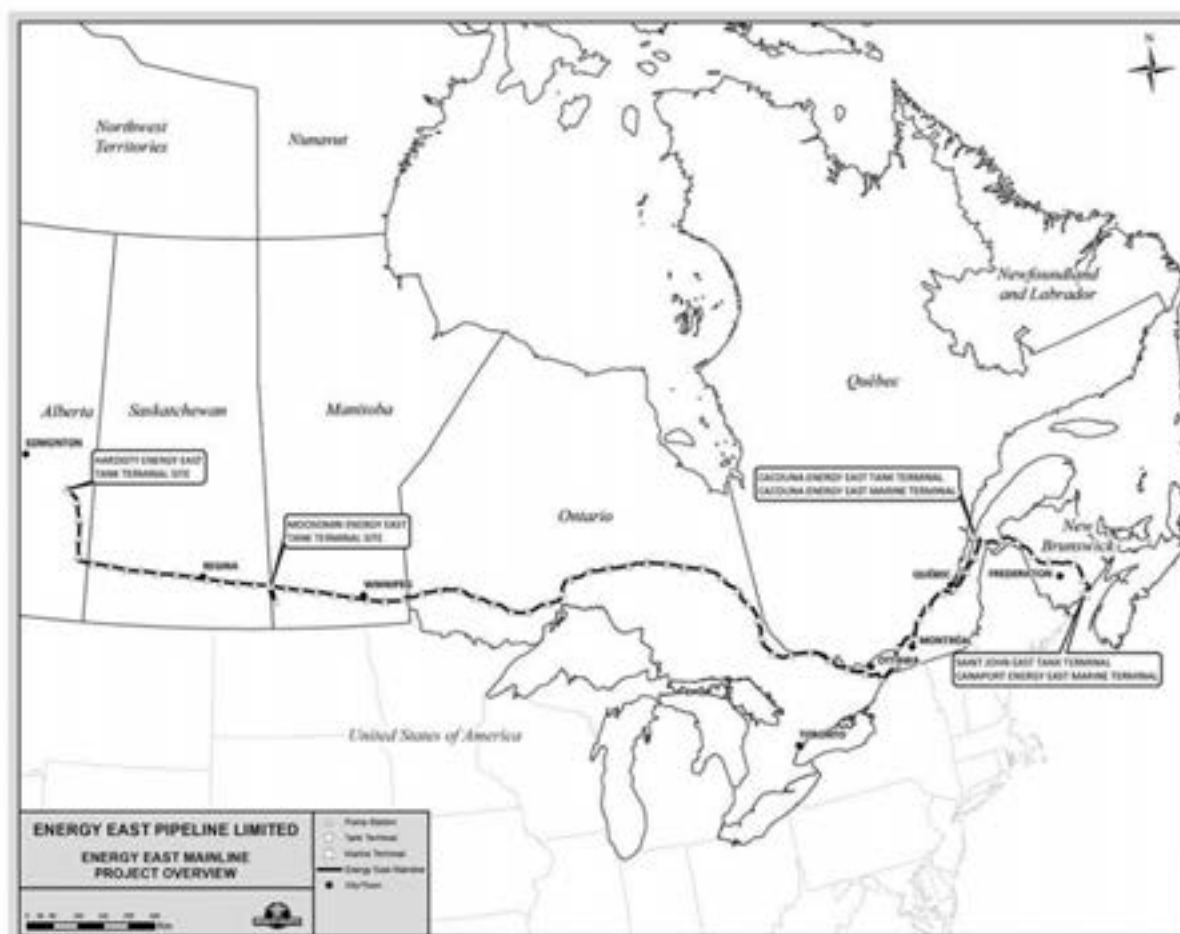
Ms. Katherine L. Murphy

Communications Officer, NEB

Email: KatherineL.Murphy@neb-one.gc.ca

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