



Vol. 35, No. 6 – June 2015

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"A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawn mower is broken."

— Anonymous

Like grazing?

We've launched a new
"Pasture Manager
of the Year" prize!

See page 11 for details...

A good year for farm debt?



ARCHIVESTON

Total Canadian farm cash revenue reached a record \$57.5 billion in 2014, including income from crops, livestock and direct payment programs. That's an increase of nearly \$2.5 billion from the previous year.

Andrew McClelland
Advocate Staff Reporter

According to the number-crunchers at Statistics Canada, Canadian farmers should be singing, "Let the Good Times Roll" these days. But the nation's agricultural producers seem cautiously optimistic and sometimes sceptical about spending and the future of the farm economy.

A recent report by Stats Can says that total farm cash receipts, including income from crops, livestock and direct payment programs, reached a record \$57.5 billion in 2014. That's an increase of nearly \$2.5 billion from the previous year.

Most of that increase has been thanks to rising livestock prices, brought about by the dwindling of the North

American beef herd. Revenue from the sale of livestock and livestock products rose more than \$4 billion in 2014 to \$25.6 billion.

Economists are saying that 2015 will not measure up as favourably for farmers when all the money is counted, but no sharp drop is expected.

"We'll have to wait and see what crops are like and so on, but 2015 to me would be a fairly decent year," says Farm Credit Canada chief economist J.P. Gervais. "I don't think we should expect the record year that we had in 2014 to repeat, but 2015 is shaping up to be pretty decent."

In 2014, livestock was king while cash crops suffered a slight dip. Income from the sale of agricultural crops declined by nearly \$1 billion, falling to \$29.7 billion from \$30.6 billion.

Who's making the most?

According to Statistics Canada, agricultural producers from the Prairie provinces saw the largest gains.

Alberta farm incomes were up 9.1 per cent to \$12.9 billion, Saskatchewan farm incomes rose eight per cent to \$13.1 billion and Manitoba's total farm cash receipts were listed at \$5.9 billion, up from 2.7 per cent from 2013.

Quebec has not been keeping up with the rest of the country when it comes to farm revenue. The province saw a drop of 2.2 per cent in 2014 overall. However, Quebec's cattle and calves market did experience a 34 per cent increase, impressive over the national average of 25.5 per cent.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



35th Anniversary

We want to hear about the Advocate!

This issue of the Advocate marks 35 years of being in print. That's something to be proud of!

We want to hear from you. Do you have memories, anecdotes, and thoughts on the QFA's very own newspaper? Throughout the next year, we'll be publishing reminiscences of our past issues, showing old excerpts from years ago, and taking suggestions for the future.

Write to us at

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

More money, more spending?

Canada's farm media has been awash recently in reports that high livestock prices are bringing prosperity back to the country's farms—a welcome change for an industry that has suffering since the BSE crisis of 2003.

However, Stats Can also reports that farm debt was up a frightening \$6 billion in 2014. That brings the national farm debt level to a record-high of \$84 billion. Many analysts—and farmers themselves—are asking how that can be a good thing.

"Obviously \$84 billion at the end of 2014 is a big number," says Gervais. "I think they are manageable because of the levels of income that we're seeing in the marketplace and because of where we're at in terms of interest rates."

The farm debt level is taking place to a backdrop of unprecedented consumer debt in Canada. In 2014, Statistics Canada said household total credit-

market debt (mortgages, consumer credit and non-mortgage loans) rose to 162.6 per cent of disposable income.

That means the average Canadian has around \$28,000 of consumer debt hanging over their heads, independent of mortgages, but including car loans, student loans, credit card debt and lines of credit.

"But more than interest rates, I think it's really the level of income that really matters," says Gervais. "If we can sustain net cash income in both crops and livestock, I think we're going to be all right."

Canada's farmers seem less convinced. The good times enjoyed by the beef and livestock industries has not translated into a proportionate jump in equipment purchases, supplies, or farmland acquisitions. Which perhaps goes to show that agricultural producers are cautious businesswomen and men who know that the market bubble won't last forever.



35 years of our own newspaper!



Chris Judd
QFA Past-president

"Why have a *Quebec Farmers' Advocate*?" That was a question asked 35 years ago and some farmers still ask the same question today. I won't try to answer that question. But I can give a brief history as to how a newspaper communicating about Quebec farm business—and containing stories about all the areas where about 10 per cent of our Quebec farmers prefer to receive their information in English—evolved into the professional 24-page publication you hold in your hands.

The majority of our English-speaking farmers live in five areas of Quebec—the Pontiac, Gatineau and Argenteuil counties, and of course the Montérégie area and the Eastern Townships. However, there are English-speaking farmers from Gaspé to Lac-Saint-Jean, from northwestern Quebec to the United States border, whose main tie to Anglophone farming community is the *Quebec Farmers' Advocate*.

On radio!

A great link that farmers all across Canada used (until the CBC decided that it had outlived "its day") was the Farm Radio Forum, which aired every Monday night at 8:00 p.m. and in every English area of Quebec during the 1950s. Farmers gathered to discuss local problems and also to debate one central "cross-Canada" question. Participants would record and send in the results of their discussion to a central location, which would compile comments and air the results the next Monday night.

When the Quebec Farm Forum found out that CBC would "axe" the program, directors from all across Quebec unanimously agreed that a network of English-speaking farmers must remain. It was at that time that the "Quebec Farmers Association" was formed. Both the QFA and the Farm Radio Forum lived and worked side-by-side for several years until the radio series was discontinued. Since there was no longer a weekly radio program to help producers share challenges and solutions from one area to another, a newsletter was born and distributed several times per year to all QFA members.

Birth of an association

Shortly after the "birth" of the QFA, the UCC (*Union catholique des cultivateurs*) also realized that although both English and French farmers worked very hard for the betterment of agriculture in Quebec, there were some that refused to join either association—but they sure didn't refuse to collect any benefits gained by the hard work of either one or both QFA-UCC! Both organizations worked very hard at educating the farm community and getting the Quebec government to organize a "vote" to allow the Quebec legislature to declare that the farm organization with the most support would have the right to have every farm pay a yearly "cotisation" (that's French for "contribution" or "union dues").

From this point on, the QFA took on more of an "information distribution" role to help keep English-speaking farmers informed about changes in laws, regulations, and agricultural information that was specific to Quebec farmers. The newly-formed UPA also felt obliged to get information out to their English-speaking farmers. Some UCC-UPA directors consulted with a group of QFA directors to address the problem. Once the UPA was informed that the QFA used a "mail-out letter" to their members, the UPA adopted the same plan and periodically mailed out a "one-pager" to all Quebec farmers registered as English-speaking.

But not all English-speaking producers were happy about the UPA now having the right to collect a yearly fee. Often, any letter that entered those houses that had a UPA letterhead was promptly deposited in the "round can". The UPA then decided to translate part of *La Terre de chez nous* and insert it into the centre of the paper and every English-speaking farmer would receive *La Terre* "free", as very few Anglophones actually subscribed to it. Of course, this caused a stir in the French-speaking farm community as all Francophones still had to pay for their subscription. And Quebec's sovereigntist crowd objected to having an English insert in "their" paper. After a second meeting of the UPA and QFA, it was decided to let the QFA insert the UPA "two-pager" into a package that the QFA sent to every member with a QFA newsletter and a complimentary copy of the *Eastern Ontario Farmer*. And all farmers gladly read that package.



The author himself (in jean jacket and stylish sideburns) as seen in the December 1980 edition of the *Advocate*, covering the QFA's annual general meeting of that year.

farmers only! It was also noted that this would be the only English farming publication that suppliers could advertise in. It was decided to try a Quebec English farm publication sent "free" to all our paid members and offer subscriptions to everyone. This could be achieved by dropping the complimentary *Eastern Ontario Farmer* and gaining some advertising income. A province-wide competition was held to give this new paper a name and many great names were put forward. The name "*Quebec Farmers' Advocate*" was chosen for two reasons. The popular *Farmer's Advocate* and *Canadian Countryman* had just ceased publication and the name *Quebec Farmers' Advocate* matched well with the organization name Quebec Farmers' Association (QFA).

Shortly after, rather than the QFA insert the letter from UPA into each issue of the *Advocate*, a deal was struck with the UPA to print a four-page section in each *Advocate* and send the paper to all English-speaking producers registered with the UPA. This led to some confusion among Anglophone producers. They figured that since they received the *Advocate*, they must be "paid members" of the QFA. But that's not the case, and still isn't. The QFA receives no core funding from the UPA. So, while you might get an *Advocate* delivered to your door, you're only a bona fide QFA member if you pay your yearly membership.

Changing with the times

Here at the QFA, our members are changing, sometimes getting older and sometimes coming from a non-farm background. Moreover, our younger members are increasingly more familiar with social media like Facebook and Twitter. The QFA recently launched a Communications Committee to investigate how best to take advantage of these new tools. While a digital edition of the *Advocate* is envisioned, our print edition isn't going anywhere anytime soon. The online world can help both the QFA and the *Advocate*—letters to the editor will no longer require an expensive stamp, they can simply take the form of a Facebook post. And getting info to our members and readers can be faster and generate more feedback.

The *Quebec Farmers' Advocate* has been your voice and source of information for an impressive 35 years. That's something to be proud of. Here's to another 35—and more!

Letter to the Editor

Hello? PDZA info? Are you there?

I am writing today to ask other non-UPA land owners in 'green zones' to start actively following their local MRC's Plan de développement de la zone agricole (PDZA) process. Currently the MRC de la Vallée-de-la-Gatineau (MRCVDG) is taking part in a PDZA process and I am finding it difficult to keep track of how the 'consultation process' is unfolding. Specifically, I don't understand what the actual prescriptive powers of the 'comité technique du PDZA' will be when their report is finalized and I don't know who is really going to benefit upon the completion of the PDZA project. Our MRC hosted a public consultation meeting in the fall of 2014 where slides were shown and questions were asked but in hindsight the printed handout "Portrait préliminaire de la zone agricole de la Vallée-de-la-Gatineau" looks more like a comprehensive land inventory document than a plan-

ning document. The 72-page handout does not include a project timeline or projected completion date and it does not list the names of the authors or the names of the members of the "comité technique" referenced on the cover. It is not even clear if it was the "comité technique" that conducted the public consultation meeting I attended, although to be fair, the people on the panel were introduced to the public at the time of the meeting.

I didn't hear anything more about the PDZA until mid-March 2015 when a local UPA member told me they'd received a written invitation to a meeting to be held in Maniwaki on March 27, 2015. I took the initiative to email the MRCVDG's PDZA liaison person to get a copy of the agenda and the presentation notes for that meeting but, surprisingly, these documents were not released to me. Discouraged, I wrote two different letters of concern

to the UPA representative for my area, the Mayor of Low, the Préfet of the MRCVDG who had moderated the public consultation, the MRCVDG's PDZA liaison person and the QFA office to let them know that as a non-UPA land owner in the green zone I felt unfairly excluded.

I also brought up my concerns and feeling of exclusion from the PDZA process during question period at a Low Council meeting May 4, 2015 and coincidentally two more UPA members in attendance told me that they had not even heard about the March 27, 2015 meeting.

Based upon my experience with this process so far, I encourage all QFA members, especially "non-UPA green zone land owners", to find out about any PDZA projects in your area. Be sure to get in touch with your UPA neighbours to find out what's going on. I also encourage everyone to start digging into

how these PDZA projects will affect our ability to make our own decisions about how we use, preserve and protect our land both now and in the future.

Addendum: the Prefect of the MRC responded in writing at the end of May stating they did not have a list of all non-UPA greenzone landowners and they would appreciate feedback about how best to create this list. Upon reflection, this is a somewhat curious request because the MRC always provides a description of our land use zoning on our tax bills presumably extracted from their database.

Addendum: on Monday June 15, 2015 the municipality of Low circulated an email inviting people to attend a PDZA Diagnostic meeting to be held Thursday, June 18.

Wanda Gibson
Low, QC



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
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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.



Quebec Farmers' Advocate
Published to benefit the English-speaking agricultural and rural community in Quebec

Vol. 35, No. 6: 2015

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Legal deposit: National Library of Canada.
Dépôt légal: Bibliothèque nationale du Québec.
ISSN#0714-9518
Publication Mail No: 40033773

THE QUEBEC FARMERS' ASSOCIATION GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CANADIAN HERITAGE IN THE PUBLICATION OF THIS PAPER.

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The Call of Nature



Richer Morin opened Morin et Fils butcher shop in 2013.

PHOTO COURTESY FERME DES FILLES MORIN

LANAUDIÈRE

Audrey Desrochers
Special correspondent

SAINT-AMBROISE-DE-KILDARE — It's not always smooth sailing—or smooth sowing—for young producers who have not grown up in farming families. For Richer Morin of the Ferme des Filles Morin, who is setting out as a cattle producer through a non-family transfer, it's a matter of determination and passion.

Morin grew up in the country, close to a farm. Agriculture quickly played a big part in his life. At the age of 12, he was working for his neighbour before leaving for school, and haying for nearby producers. "When I was older, I would leave my job every fall to go back to work on a farm. It was the call of nature," he remembers.

When he was 25, after visiting a number of properties in the Lanaudière region, Morin acquired a farm near Saint-Ambroise-de-Kildare. "There were several cash crop producers ready to buy it," he recalls. "I was the only one who wanted to keep the animals, and I think that's why the farmer sold it to me." The previous owner, a Mr. Desjardins, offered the young man a

deal: a down payment upon purchase, and no further payments for the first five years. "He told me to get set up properly before paying him back. He treated me as though I were his son. Without his help, it wouldn't have been possible."

Recipe for success

Richer Morin isn't the only one to have chosen a non-family transfer. According to data from the ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation, 14 per cent of farms are transferred outside the family. In about half of cases, however, non-family transfers fail.

The key to success is to keep an eye on your debt level, Morin explains. "I owe less than what I'm worth," he points out. To stay afloat, he assesses his needs carefully. "For instance, I always calculate whether it's best to invest in machinery, or to have a job done for a flat rate."

The producer also feels that a good measure of passion is necessary to meet the inevitable challenges. "Because there's no one to tell me what to do and how to do it, I do the best I can based on what I know," he says. "Sometimes I fall flat on my face, but I get back up and start over again. You can't get discouraged."

According to him, this lack of coaching can also be an advantage. "I look to

the farms I've worked on for inspiration and I develop my way of doing things. It gives me a lot of freedom." The young man has chosen to raise cattle without hormones or antibiotics. He has also opened a butcher shop in Saint-Liguori, Morin et Fils, where he processes and sells his meat, as well as cutting to order.

Richer Morin feels lucky. He bought

his farm two years before land prices skyrocketed in Lanaudière. It is crucial, he says, that producers who wish to sell their farms develop ways to help young farmers outside their families. "Otherwise land prices make it impossible." With six children, the young farmer seems unconcerned about his own succession.



AUDREY DESROCHERS

Richer Morin has a herd of about 50 animals, raised without hormones and antibiotics.

Goat remains lesser-known meat

Gilles Lévesque
Special correspondent

There are 300 goat farmers in Quebec, raising the animals for meat, milk, and mohair. While goat production remains marginal, the sector benefits from a sound joint agreement and structure. Demand for goat-milk products is increasing, but there is a lot of work to be done before goat meat finds its way to the Quebec mainstream.

SAINTE-ANGÈLE-DE-MONNOIR — Issues

The first vice-president of the Quebec goat producers' union, the Syndicat des producteurs de chèvres, who also represents goat farmers on the board of the regional Montérégie UPA federation, admits that it's not an easy way to make a living. "Many [approximately 80 per cent] must work another job," Bernard Petit explains. "Although there has been a slight decrease in the number of producers over the past few years, production volumes have increased. It's a promising sign for the future," says Petit, who has been very involved in agricultural unions since his arrival in the Upper Richelieu from Belgium.

Sixty-five producers, of whom more than a third are in the Montérégie region, specialize in dairy production. An average herd consists of approximately 130 lactating females. Most milk is used in cheese production. Goat-milk products are increasingly present on the domestic market, and those adventurous enough to seek them out enjoy their atypical taste.

Raising awareness of goat farming among financial institutions and industry organizations is one of the challenges faced by the Syndicat. "It's not easy to reason with people who are just repeating the same thing: we are seen as a risky production. We have to work hard to make progress. It can be difficult," a weary Petit explains. He is optimistic about the dairy industry's openness to increasing annual production by over one million litres. "We're pleased, but at the same time we have to be aware of the increased production that will be needed. We'll have to evolve. It will require major awareness campaigns," according to the goat producers' spokesperson.

Meat

It may be surprising to learn that 95 per cent of goats raised worldwide are farmed for meat. Fully 60 per cent of the red meat consumed on the planet is goat meat. "It's very popular, notably in Asia and Africa, though in all honesty, we have a lot of work to do for Quebecers to appreciate it.



GILLES LÉVESQUE

Bernard Petit, first vice-president of the Syndicat des producteurs de chèvres du Québec.

It's not easy for us, for producers, to take on huge promotional campaigns. We would need marketing staff," says Petit.

What remains unsaid is the increased support the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ) could offer.

From Belgium to the Montérégie

Bernard Petit, who like his brother Pol is a well-known syndicalist, left Belgium nearly 40 years ago to start a new life in the Montérégie. He will never forget

September 6, 1978: landing at Mirabel airport at the age of 18, he had only \$86 in his pocket. With his partner, Petit started raising goats a little by accident over the years. The couple's 450-head farm in Sainte-Angèle-de-Monnoir, known as the Ferme Benchris (Bernard and Christine), specializes in goat milk production; the entirety is sold to Agropur. One of their four children, Philippe, is also involved; his sister Noémie will follow in her parents' and brother's footsteps soon.

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

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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.

VIA 
VIA Rail Canada



Turkeys gone wild

MAURICIE

Pierre Saint-Yves
Special correspondent

TROIS-RIVIÈRES — Farmers are up in arms about damage caused by wild turkeys. "Damage has been reported in fields, and in buildings as well," according to Michel Tessier, a land-use advisor with the UPA's Mauricie federation. "We are currently consulting with producers to assess the extent of the problem."

"We saw this coming. That's why we were against the introduction of wild turkeys in new regions," explains Rémi Marcoux, vice-president of the UPA Estrie. Marcoux would know, since his region has been among the areas hardest hit by wild turkeys. The Eastern Townships aren't alone: the Outaouais has also been affected.

Contamination

Some producers in the Mauricie have seen the animals on their properties, and claim that wild turkeys have damaged their grain, corn and even strawberry crops. Flocks have been spotted around and even inside buildings, where bags of corn have been ransacked.

In the Eastern Townships, Rémi Marcoux says he has heard about numerous cases of damage to fields,



Like farmers, hunters' associations are calling for the right to hunt females.

including one producer who lost three-quarters of an oat field. Others have reported torn silage bags and heap silos completely emptied or even contaminated by turkey droppings. "It's impossible to assess the cost of the damage, because producers don't necessarily reported to their insurers."

There is a significant wild-turkey population in the United States, and climate change has slowly pushed the animals north, with many settling along the American border in southern Quebec.

In the Mauricie and other regions, populations have increased even faster due to seeding by hunters' associations.

The ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs may also authorize seeding in the Gaspé, despite the opposition of local groups, including the regional UPA Federation.

Getting back on track

The agricultural industry is asking for ways to rectify the situation, and is involved in the development of a wild turkey management plan. "We have a chance to share our concerns with the Table régionale de la faune," says Michel Tessier, who sits on the working group. "We don't want to eradicate the species, but we have to adopt measures to control the population."

The issue will also be discussed at an upcoming meeting of the regional working group on fauna. The UPA will present a number of wild turkey population growth management solutions, among them the authorization to hunt females, as hunters' associations have also requested. The UPA would prefer the ministry not classify the species as big game that must be declared.

Marcoux anticipates a battle like the one to control the deer population. "It took 10 years to make them understand that we had to reduce the herd. We hope not to have to wait as long with wild turkeys."

So do the farmers.

Ball is in your court, locals tell elected officials

GASPÉ

Antoine Rivard-Dézziel
Special correspondent

Considerable political goodwill is required to compensate for the CLD and CRÉ closures, Gaspé producers say

CARLETON-SUR-MER — In recent years, the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine Conférence régionale des élus (CRÉ) has played an important role in agri-food development.

The Regional Conference of Elected Officers was notably responsible for two agreements specific to the agricultural sector: one nearly \$3-million agreement, and another, \$1.3-million, agreement, which will end in 2017. "Our ability to speak with one voice was instrumental in persuading the provincial government to help fund these agreements. The CRÉ helped establish consensus among local elected officials," accord-

ing to Johanne Michaud, director of the Table de concertation bioalimentaire de la Gaspésie, a working group that has lost a third of its funding following the elimination of the CRÉ.

As well as supporting that working group, the CRÉ had contributed \$450,000 to the second agreement, which helped leverage equivalent support from other partners, including the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ) and the Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA), according to Gaspésie-Les Îles regional UPA federation Executive Director Marc Tétreault. The loss of the

CRÉ, Tétreault says, will require considerable political will from the regional county municipalities (Municipalité régionales de comté – MRC) to provide a common vision for the region, and hopefully to work towards a third sectorial agreement. "It's not impossible, but the MRCs will have to find way to talk to each other. And to what extent will they have the means to support agriculture?" he asks.

Valuable expertise

Local Development Centres (Centres locaux de développement – CLD) have also played an important role for many producers and processors. The Avignon CLD even provided subsidies up to \$10,000 for agricultural start-ups. Beyond financial support, the not-for-profit organizations also provided valuable expertise, including to Natalie St-Onge, from Natibo farm in Caplan. "Without the CLD to help us develop our business plan, we wouldn't be producing cheese

right now," she says. For the time being, St-Onge can still count on resources repatriated by the Bonaventure MRC, which is still offering services to businesses. "I'm taking advantage of it while it exists, but I do worry about losing that support," she adds. The region's MRCs have decided to continue offering support services. However, the budgets available are smaller, and funds from the temporary financial agreement have not yet been disbursed. Avignon MRC prefect Guy Gallant, himself a cattle farmer, maintains that the ball is in local elected officials' court. "Given their new economic development responsibilities, it will be up to the MRC is to decide whether agriculture is a priority. In Avignon, it will be," he vows.

Despite this political goodwill, Gallant warns that there will be an impact. "The funding envelopes won't be the same as before, so there'll probably be less for agriculture, notably for young farmers."

A passing grade for sheep

ABITIBI- TÉMISCAMINGUE

Émélie Rivard-Boudreau
Special correspondent

VAL-D'OR — For the past year, Avril Jobin, who hails from Trécesson, near Amos, has been developing the "Un mouton dans ma classe" program, to introduce school-aged children to sheep. Jobin brings a lamb between two and four weeks of age into kindergarten and grade-one classrooms in the region. She teaches the children sheep-related terms, and provides an overview of sheep farming.

"Can we pet it?" That's the question Jobin is most frequently asked. Yes, if the children are calm, and listen well, they will have a chance to pet the lambs. "It was important for me to use an animal, because I believe that the direct contact between children and animals make things more interesting," she explains.

Avril Jobin brings along a bin of items she uses every day on the farm, and talks



If you are quiet, you'll get to pet the lamb!

about their use. She also explains that the daddy, mommy, and baby sheep are called rams, ewes and lambs. "Even some teachers aren't aware of the correct names," she notes.

Julie Ouellet is a preschool teacher at Sainte-Thérèse school in Amos. When Avril Jobin visited with her lamb, the students were captivated, and were amazed to see a little sheep in the class-

room. "What we really appreciated was that the language she used was adapted to the children, without talking down to them," she remembers. What also gets their attention and makes them laugh is hearing the little lamb bleating in the school hallways.

Prelude to a tourism project

Before launching "Un Mouton dans ma

classe," Jobin was initially interested in agri-tourism. She and her partner would one day like to welcome visitors on their farm, although their facilities do not currently make this possible. "So I decided to travel [...] And that's how people are getting to know us," she says.

The experience also helped Jobin assess the reaction of the animals around groups of humans. "The animals are very calm, because I keep them on me. It's not traumatic for them," the sheep farmer says. She does make sure to never stay away for more than three hours, so that the lambs are not deprived of milk for too long. Jobin has also noticed that the lambs are less skittish around humans after socializing with children.

Over the past year, Avril Jobin has visited four groups into different schools. In the coming weeks, she will be presenting her project, and expects to book several more visits before the end of the school year. As for her agri-tourism project, new facilities are currently under construction, and in about two years, the children will be able to come to the lambs.

COURTESY JULIE OUELLET

GIVE. TO A YOUNG FARMER.



QFA Board Member Mark Boyd presents Macdonald Campus student Amelie Sarrasin with her scholarship from the Warren Grapes Fund at the QFA's 2014 annual general meeting.



The QFA's Warren Grapes Agricultural Education Fund 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.

Support the young farmers of tomorrow and give to the Warren Grapes Fund!

Please make cheques payable to "Warren Grapes Agricultural Education Fund". Receipts will be issued for all donations of \$25.00 or more.

WARREN GRAPES FUND
c/o Quebec Farmers' Association
555 boul. Roland-Therrien, Office 255
Longueuil, QC J4H 4E7

VALACTA – Dairy Production Centre of Expertise

valacta

1, 2, 3, 4 ... which cut is the best?

Robert Berthiaume, PhD, agr.,
Forage Systems Expert, R&D, Valacta

By the time you read this article, you will probably have finished your first and, in many cases, second cut of hay. Do second-cut forages “make more milk” than first-cut forages? Are the fourth-cut forages “special” and their quality hard to predict? What’s the real story?

Producers simply have to deal with their area climatic conditions in such a way as to maximize the yield, quality and persistence of their forages. Nonetheless, a number of factors argue in favour of the idea that “first-cut forages are special.”

Growing conditions

Plants respond to temperature as well as to the quantity and intensity of the sunlight and precipitation they receive. More sunlight means higher forage yields and a higher sugar content. Conditions in Quebec during the period preceding the first cut are typically characterized by intense sunlight and increasing daylight hours, reaching a maximum at the summer solstice on June 21. This is not the case for the later cuts. The fourth cut, for example, coincides with decreasing sunlight intensity and shorter days.

With regard to temperature, it is important to remember that forage plants prefer cool climates. When temperatures are high, forage plants tend to deposit more lignin (the completely indigestible fraction) in their cell walls in an effort to save water. Hence, the hotter the weather, the greater the plant growth, but digestibility is necessarily reduced. Hence, first- and fourth-cut forages have an advantage.

The next consideration is rainfall. Under dry, cool conditions, forage plants grow slowly but retain their quality. When conditions are hot and humid, however, yields are high, but quality is poor.

Neutral detergent fiber (NDF) digestibility

Variations in climatic conditions affect the digestibility of the NDF contained in forages. Figure 1 presents the results of a trial conducted on dairy farms in Wisconsin. It is clear that NDF digestibility is higher in first-cut forages than in those of subsequent cuts.

Window of opportunity

The first cut thus gives producers the opportunity to harvest more digestible forages. Why is this not always the case?

Although generous, Mother Nature often presents farmers with challenges like the speed at which forage quality is lost. Because quality diminishes more rapidly in first-cut forages, cutting at the optimal stage of development is difficult. Only those producers with efficient harvest operations are able to do so year after year. Grasses are particularly challenging; they mature faster than legume crops, narrowing down the window of opportunity for harvesting top quality grass forages.

Potential yield

Dairy producers must juggle yield, quality and persistence to optimize their forage harvest. Under normal conditions, first-cut yields exceed the subsequent ones. Indeed, the authors of the study report that in a harvest system with three cuts per year, the first cut represents 43 per cent of the total season yield. It drops to 36 per cent in a four-cut system. Greater variability is observed in first-cut yields however.

The first cut sets the tone

Ultimately, one of the most important factors – and an oft-forgotten one – is the limited length of our growing season. This means that when the first cut is done at the right time, subsequent cuts must be timed so as to take into account not only the needs of the herd but those of the plants as well. This is especially true for alfalfa, which requires a rest period in the fall to reduce the chance of winterkill.

What is the NDF digestibility of my forages?

NDF digestibility varies greatly from one type of forage to another and from one

cut to the next. Since NDF can reach 60 per cent of the dry matter of the forage, digestibility of NDF has an enormous impact on the energy contribution of forages in the ration. Hence it is important to determine the digestibility of your forages.

Use Analyses PLUS

Conventional forage analyses use the lignin content of the plants to predict NDF digestibility. The relationship between lignin and NDF digestibility is not perfect, however, and it is thus preferable to measure NDF digestibility directly. This is exactly what Valacta’s infrared Analyses PLUS service does.

Ration’L, the software used by Valacta advisors to formulate rations, is programmed to use a value of the NDF digestibility of your forages that is based on infrared Analyses PLUS measurements. Hence your cows’ rations will be adjusted according to a measured value rather than a value estimated from the lignin content.

How to plan the first cut

When farmers often use plant maturity and/or experience to determine when they should start the first cut. They are useful tools but they are also subjective and imperfect. Valacta is currently working with a number of partners to

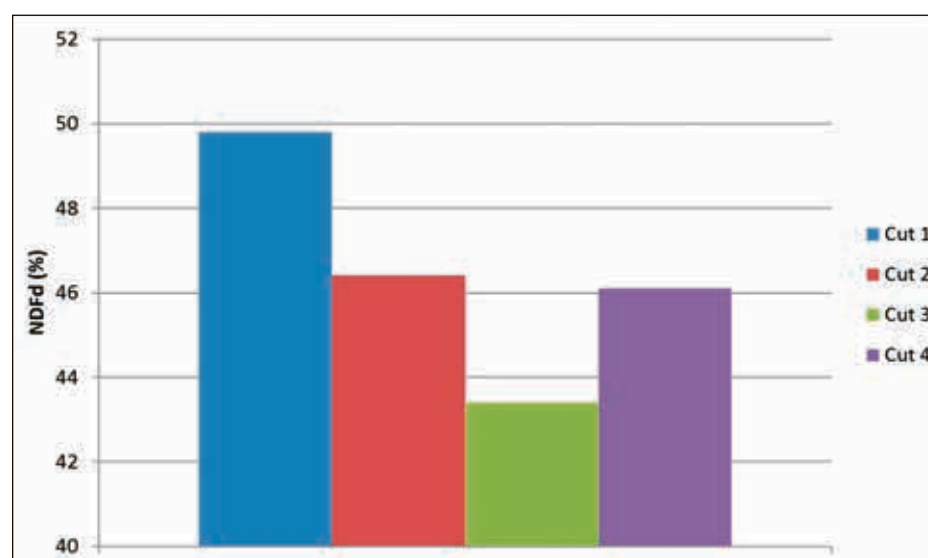


Accurate measurements mean accurate rations

Precise values for NDF digestibility translate into more accurate calculations of a forage’s energy contribution and its breakdown in the rumen. Ration formulation is thus that much more exact – provided those measurements are taken into account by the formulation tools you are using!

perfect the “alfalf-o-meter”, a tool that is already used by U.S. farmers. Height measurements combined with accumulated growing degree days will help to better synchronize the start of the first cut to maximize the yield, quality and persistence of forages. So stay tuned...

Figure 1. NDF digestibility by cut for five consecutive years (2007-2012).



Source: Wisconsin Alfalfa Yield and Persistence Project



An alfalf-o-meter.

Macdonald

Reports



\$1 Million donation to Macdonald College Campus

Gift from graduate William Ritchie forms centrepiece of \$2.5-million plan to educate the public, open campus to more visitors

A \$1-million gift from Macdonald College of McGill University alumnus J. William Ritchie, BSc(Agr)'51, will provide major support for the Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences in its efforts to open the Macdonald Campus to more visitors and provide a unique, hands-on education into the critical role of agriculture in the food supply chain.

Ritchie's gift will support construction and renovations to an original stone dairy barn dating back to 1907 that will serve as the centrepiece of the Faculty's renewed outreach efforts. The

historic building is designated to become the Macdonald Farm Community Engagement Centre and will include the centrally-located Lorna and William Ritchie Educational Hall. The 279-square metre hall will serve as an initial point of contact for visitors, accommodate a 140-seat instructional area and be home to multimedia displays and other interactive exhibits portraying the workings of the Macdonald Farm and themes related to agriculture, nutrition and food production.

"Thanks to the outstanding generosity of William Ritchie, our Faculty will be able to connect our teaching and research programs even more deeply with the community of which we are a part," said Chandra A. Madramootoo, Dean of the Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. "As an internationally renowned leader in fields like sustainable agriculture, food safety and food security, and human nutrition, the Faculty is ideally positioned



to contribute to important public engagement about agriculture and food production, and to showcase the vital link between good agricultural practices and a healthy, sustainable future."

The Macdonald Farm Community Outreach Program currently provides bilingual guided tours aimed at educating school children about agriculture and environmental stewardship. Last year,

more than 5,000 children participated in activities on the Ste. Anne de Bellevue campus during a limited spring and summer schedule. Operating on a year-round basis out of the new Centre, the Faculty estimates that the Campus and the Farm could welcome up to 15,000 visitors a year, mainly from surrounding suburban communities as well from areas closer to Montreal's inner city.

"As a graduate of Macdonald College, I have come to appreciate the Faculty's role and its proud tradition when it comes to agriculture, food, nutrition and the environment," said Ritchie, a Nova Scotia businessman and loyal McGill volunteer and supporter who grew up in Montreal. "Supporting the Macdonald Farm Community Engagement Centre is an opportunity to open the campus, and its many activities, to even more students and more people in the community."

Family Fun at the Mac Farm

Nadia Wendowsky
Associate Director of Development,
University Advancement, Macdonald

On a bright Saturday morning, alumni and friends made their way to the Macdonald Campus Farm to participate in Family Day and get reacquainted with a world seemingly far removed from their own. The purpose of the event was simple—to give families the opportunity to experience the Farm and understand firsthand where their food comes from.

The tour was designed with the urban visitor in mind. Numerous stations were set up, including a mini-farm complete with traditional animals like ducks, goats and pigs; a viewing of the award-winning dairy herd and calf nursery; a student-run ecological garden and mobile hen house; as well as a culinary demonstration allowing children and their parents to transform milk into butter and make their very own ice cream.

"The McGill farm is such a great place! The staff is super friendly and informative and our daughter had the time of her life getting up close to all the



In the Show Ring, learning how to make butter and ice cream.

farm animals!" said West Island resident Pamela Sorenti of the experience.

Children and adults alike participated in the various activities designed to promote critical thinking while providing a deeper understanding of the life of a farmer. Part of a broader initiative known as the Community Farm Outreach Program, bridging the gap between the agricultural producer,

the consumer and the community is at the heart of the mission of the Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.

As a teaching institution, McGill's Macdonald Campus has been making major contributions to Quebec's agri-food sector for generations. It has a proud tradition of educating students, as well as the community for more than

100 years. This tradition has grown to include people from all sectors of our society and encompasses not only primary production but food processing, environment, agricultural engineering and nutrition.

Farm manager Paul Meldrum, added about the event "[visitors] got to see how we will be transforming the old stone dairy barn into the new Macdonald Farm Community Engagement Centre, which will be open to school children year-round. It will also allow us to host special events that will bring the public to Macdonald Campus, where they can see the great things we do and the unique and interesting educational opportunities that exist here."

With the last working farm on the island of Montreal, Macdonald is a natural place to showcase the historical and enduring value and importance of agriculture in everyday life.

For more information on the Macdonald Farm Community Engagement Centre, please contact Nadia Wendowsky at nadia.wendowsky@mcgill.ca or at 514-398-7593.

QFA Pasture Prize



The Quebec Farmers' Association Announces

"The Roland and Shirley Maxwell Pasture Manager of the Year Prize"

The Quebec Farmers' Association is proud to announce the launch of "The Roland and Shirley Maxwell, Pasture Manager of the Year Prize", awarded to farmers displaying exceptional pasture management.

The inspiration for creating the prize was sparked during the 2014 QFA annual general meeting, to make use of monies donated by long-time QFA members and pasture management advocates, Roland and Shirley Maxwell. Sadly, Roland passed away in 2012—this prize is respectfully dedicated in his memory.

Each year, the QFA will award prizes amounting to \$2,000 to participants.

Quebec 4-H Clubs are invited to submit a video, no more than six minutes long, showcasing a farmer local to their area displaying exceptional pasture management practices.

Quebec 4-H winning club entries will win:

- 1st Prize video - \$300 – to be shown at the annual QFA Information Day at Macdonald Campus
- 2nd Prize video - \$200
- 3rd Prize video - \$150

- Every other club entry submitted will win \$100. Only one entry is permitted per club.

The winning farmer will receive \$1,000 plus a seed donation from seed company DLF Pickseed.

The top three entries and winning farmer will be featured in the *Quebec Farmers' Advocate*. The top two video entries will be uploaded onto the QFA website.

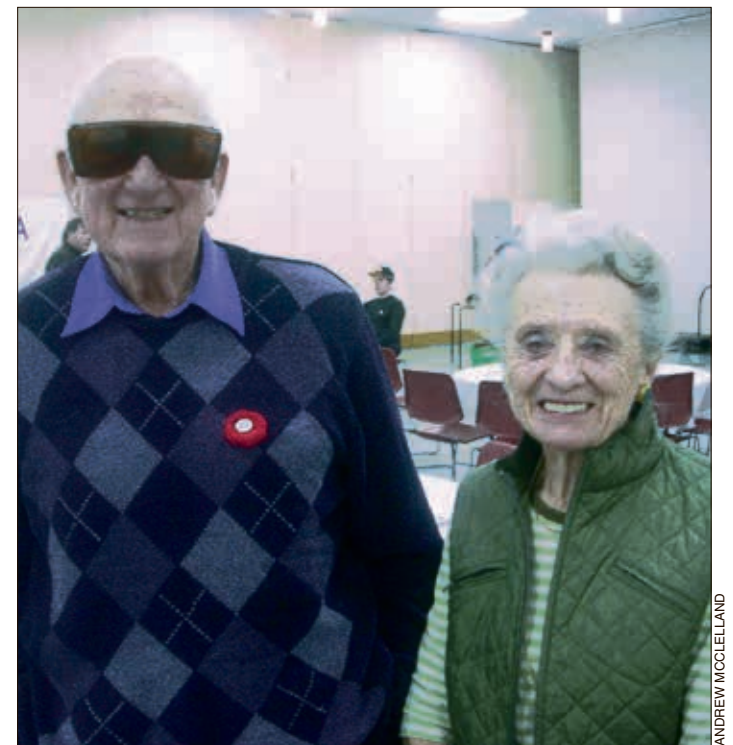
Entries will be judged on intensive pasture management Best Practice, and quality and interest of videos created.

The deadline for submissions is September 15. Winners will be announced on October 16 with a feature appearing in the October issue of the *Advocate*.

Judges include: QFA President John McCart; QFA Vice-president Gib Drury; Hubert McClelland, agronomist, Pasture Guru; and Walter Last, grassfed dairy producer.

The guidelines for entries appear in the text box below.

For further information please send enquiries to the general administration email address: qfa@upa.qc.ca



Roland and Shirley Maxwell at the QFA's 2008 annual general meeting.

ANDREW MCCLELLAND

GUIDELINES

1. Videos to feature a producer who practices intensive pasture management for 120 to 180 days per year.
2. "Intensive pasture management" means that "the producer(s) have a definitive rotation on the pasture under management where the grazing period is one to no more than five days in length with a definitive rest or restoration period of 15 to 50 days, depending on the season, for each parcel grazed."
3. Adequate livestock watering systems that meet environmental regulations in regard to restrictions from watercourses will be present.
4. Supplemental feeding is permitted to extend the grazing season as a drought contingency, but must not be part of regular practice during the grazing season.
5. Producers utilize additional acres in forages such as annual forage crops, stockpiled forages, mob grazing or high density grazing, no-till methods of improving grazing acres and multiple species grazing.
6. Reference to grazing records will be favoured, with reference to number of acres, number of animal grazing days per acre, as well as the number of head of livestock, both mature adult and young stock in the system.
7. An explanation of the grazing management by the manager is expected.
8. Creative ideas on how to explain the benefits of best management practices for intensive grazing management, environmental protection and soil conservation will also be taken into consideration.

Summer Fairs

Lachute Fair celebrates 190th anniversary with horse pull, derby and quad jumping

Tara Kirkpatrick

The Lachute Fair, founded by local farmers in 1825, is Quebec's oldest agricultural fair and the second oldest in the country. As part of its 190th anniversary celebrations, the 2015 fair will feature an extensive array of antique farm machinery as well as a mix of modern equipment, demonstrating how farming methods have evolved over time.

The traditional parade down Main Street, Lachute, will begin at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday and end at the fairgrounds around 7:30 p.m. Participation is free and is open to all local businesses, industry and community groups. The opening ceremonies will be held in the entertainment tent afterwards and will include speeches by local dignitaries and agricultural representatives. The local 4-H Club will then take to the stage performing a lively square-dancing demonstration.

Special features include a high-octane Friday evening quad-jumping show in front of the grand-stand, where stuntmen will perform aerobatics 50 feet in the air.

Little Ray's Reptile Zoo will be displaying a variety of reptiles throughout the day on Saturday. Also on Saturday, soldiers from The Royal Canadian Hussars will be hosting an information booth, to include armoured vehicles and a display of tactical gear. The historical

connection between the Royal Canadian Hussars and Argenteuil dates back to 1862 when Sir John Abbott formed the "11th Argenteuil Rangers". Following disbandment in 1912, many of the soldiers joined the 17th Duke of York's Royal Canadian Hussars which became the Royal Canadian Hussars in 1958.

Saturday night is the demolition derby and is expected to be one of the largest in recent history, with more than 80 derby cars and a number of specialty classes. As the pit crews are preparing their cars, there will be a children's demolition derby using battery-operated kids' cars.

Respecting the agricultural theme, Sunday is dedicated to horses. There will be horsemanship classes all day and special presentations on the history of the Canadian Horse and on horse health. Horsemanship master classes with France Vanier from Pine Haven Quarter-horses will be held all weekend and there will be a horse-pulling competition featuring Les Races Chevalines.

"It's going to be a spectacular fair this year and it will combine a lot of returning favourites and some things we haven't seen in a long time. It's been at least 20 years since we had a horse pulling competition – a special event for our 190th anniversary", said Fair Board President Filion.

Written by Tara Kirkpatrick for Ag Review, a publication of The Review.



COURTESY OF THE LACHUTE FAIR

The Lachute Fair runs from July 9 to 12 this year. It's the oldest agricultural fair in Quebec and the second-oldest in Canada!

190e EXPO LACHUTE FAIR
 Depuis 1825 Since 1825
 Juillet 9-12 July 2015
 info@expolachutefair.com
 T. 450.562.3741
 Société d'Agriculture d'Argenteuil
 100 Chemin Gauthier, Lachute, QC

Free-Style Quad Show	Spectacle UTT
Horse Pull	Tire de Cheval
Tractor Pull	Tire de Tracteur
Parade Safety Demo	Démonstration de sécurité à la ferme
Dairy Show	
Entertainment Show	
... much, much more!	... et bien plus!

JULIET 11 JULY DERBY

WWW.EXPOLACHUTEFAIR.COM



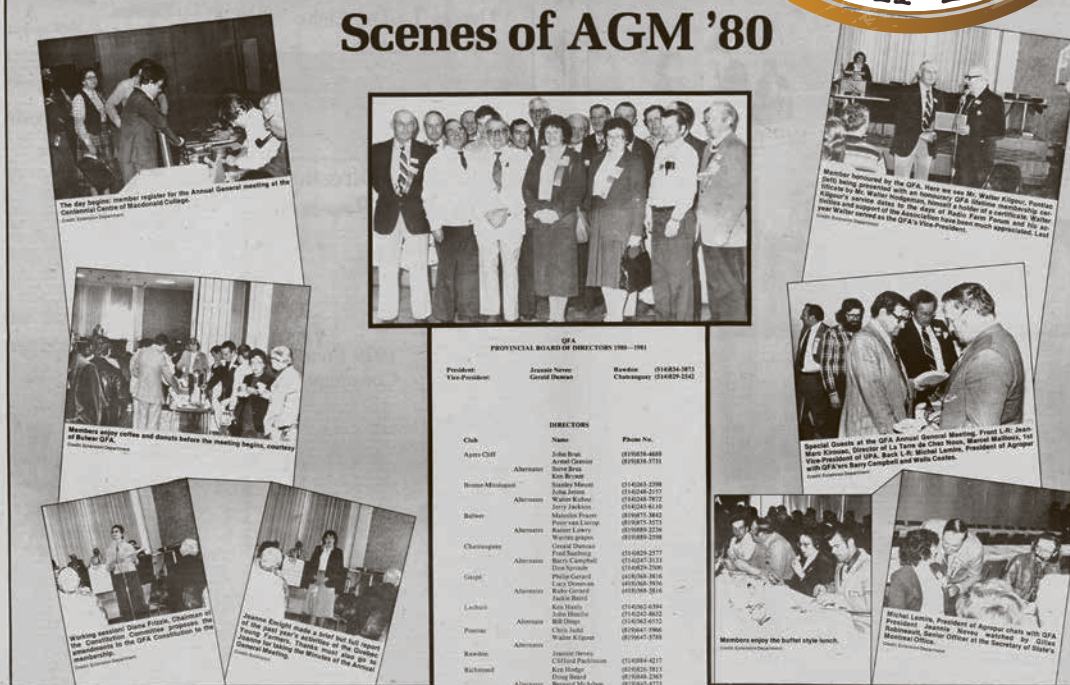
COURTESY OF THE LACHUTE FAIR

Saturday night is the demolition derby! It's expected to be one of the largest in recent history, with more than 80 derby cars.

The *Quebec Farmers' Advocate* – 35 years and counting!

Take a look at these headlines from the very early days of the *Quebec Farmers' Advocate*! A quick glance just might leave you feeling proud that the QFA and its members are still here and still strong.

Scenes of AGM '80



The QFA's annual general meeting for the year of 1980 got a big spread in the *Advocate*. Many of the names present on the Board of Directors and in attendance are still the same after all this time! Congratulations to the *Advocate* for being a voice to Quebec's English-speaking farm community for 35 years!

JUNE 1980

issue of the "Advocate"—when it Association as a letter "public

Early August for 1st

The Richmond QFA invite one and all to come and enjoy a nite of dancing and help support the Richmond Fair at the same time. The "Country Sundowners" will be supplying the music on August 23rd, at the Richmond Fair, at 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.

The Richmond QFA invite one and all to come and enjoy a nite of dancing and help support the Richmond Fair at the same time. The "Country Sundowners" will be supplying the music on August 23rd, at the Richmond Fairground. Admission is \$2.50 and bring your own refreshments. The proceeds will go for the Richmond Fair.

Warren Grapes—the namesake of the QFA's very own scholarship for agricultural students—smiles from the cover of the August 1980 edition of the *Advocate*. The article reports on the fact that 18,000 Quebec farmers decided to get out of dairy between 1971 and 1976.



The federal Census of Agriculture was conducted in 1981, often to agricultural producers' consternation and frustration. Statistics Canada promised that the new questionnaire would have "20 per cent fewer questions than the census of 1971"!

This cartoon expressed some farmers' irritation!

The front page of the very first issue of the “Advocate”—when it was still called the “Quebec Farmers’ Association newsletter”—published in June of 1980. The energy crisis of the 1970s is still in evidence—the main article reports on the QFA’s support to prioritize agriculture in the event of gas rationing! And an accompanying article announces a contest to design the now-famous QFA logo! In the end, it was one John Nyenhuis who won the logo contest for his great design. He was awarded \$100 by QFA President Jeannie Neveu at the 1980 annual general meeting.

Handling kickback



Leilak Anderson
Certified Arborist
Advocate Arboriculture Columnist

I know tree guys with decades of experience under their belt who wear mean scars and live to warn others. And I've heard stories where kickback was a fatal mistake. Kickback is a reactive force that happens when the upper quadrant of the bar tip makes contact with any solid object: the saw is suddenly thrown back towards you in an uncontrolled manner.

The only way to prevent kickback is to be acutely aware of your surroundings

and cutting position. A proper stance means firmly holding the saw with both hands (we'll leave one-handed lassoing to the real cowboys). Take time to free your working site of tripping hazards. You should never have to overreach to make the cut, and never cut above your head: instead, change your body position so that the saw is comfortably below your shoulders.

Think critically about your cuts: take extra precaution when you re-enter a previous cut with a running chain. When you are cutting through a pile of logs, you have to keep in mind the unseen limbs underneath, and work one limb at a time.

Aside from your fashion-forward personal protective equipment (PPE), make sure you are cutting with a sharp saw and a properly tensioned chain. If you have to lean in or push hard to make your cut, you're not only making harder work for yourself, but you are putting yourself in a dangerous situation.

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



When using a chainsaw, body positioning—and being aware of your surroundings—is paramount.



When cutting into a pile, keep in mind the limbs underneath that can enter the kickback zone.



One-handed chainsawing is a no-no. Leave lassoing to the cowboys.

Symbols for Safety

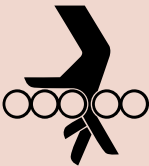
There are hundreds of potential hazards to keep in mind when working on a farm. Be aware of the risks by getting to know the symbols and signs that alert you to danger.

Below, we've reprinted some of the warning signs you might find on farm machinery and equipment. Take a quick look at them and remember what they stand for. It could save your life.



WARNING:
Danger of bodily entanglement from rotating drive shaft/PTO

WARNING:
Danger of hand entanglement in roller.



Hazard symbols taken from the Association of Equipment Manufacturers.



Climate of change



Mitchell Beer
President, Smarter Shift

How to read the battle lines on neonic pesticides

The battle lines are drawn between Ontario grain farmers and beekeepers, with the province's decision to reduce the use of neonicotinoid pesticides 80 per cent by 2017.

Grain farmers were distraught in early June when the province introduced North America's first restrictions on neonics. "It is becoming increasingly frustrating to try to explain to the government how wrong-headed their approach to pollinator health is," fumed Vice Chair Mark Huston. "Instead of focusing on key issues that have been identified by responsible parties, Ontario's policy is being driven purely by politics and special interest groups."

But the picture is more urgent, and more evidence-based, if you turn to the position statement issued by the Ontario Beekeepers' Association in May 2014.

"Neonicotinoid pesticides are killing our bees," the association asserts, citing Pest Management Review Agency reports from 2012 and 2013. "Our members face excessive and unprecedented losses of colonies from the inappropriate use of neonicotinoid pesticide-treated seeds on 50 per cent of Ontario's cropland."

These toxic "systemics" are accumulating in soil and water, and "the widespread use of neonicotinoid seed treatments on vast acreages of field crops is not only putting the health of critical pollinators at risk," the OBA added. "It is also discouraging farmers from using



are alarming enough, but they initially add up to less variety and a lot of inconvenience. For producers, it's about livelihoods.

While the honey bee decline is a relatively new crisis, attacks on the science behind environmental warnings is a very old story. (Some day when you have three hours, let me offer you a short-form summary of the attacks on climate science.) In recent years, public health professionals have coined a gently ironic name for the practice: where smart decisions depend on evidence-based policy-making, they note that too many politicians and special interests fall back to policy-based evidence-making.

When that kind of shoddy, dishonest advocacy threatens an ecosystem resource as precious as pollinators, we should all be very worried. So it's great news that Ontario is severely restricting the use of neonicotinoids, and it would be a smart move for Quebec farm producers to advocate a similar ban on your side of the Quebec-Ontario border.

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.

more pollinator-friendly practices like Integrated Pest Management, and contributing to the evolutionary selection of resistant insects."

In adopting its neonic ban, Ontario's Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change noted the products are already subject to a two-year ban in the European Union. The province cited strong scientific backing for its action, beginning with a review of 800 peer-reviewed papers conducted by an International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) task force.

"Improving the health of bees and other pollinators is a necessity," states the Ministry website. "Without pollinators, much of the food we eat and the natural

habitats we enjoy would not exist. Taking action now to protect pollinators and reduce toxic pesticide use is a positive step for our environment and economy."

The Ministry cites an alarming list of crops—from peaches and plums to cucumbers, asparagus, squash, and pumpkins—among the examples of products that rely on pollinators. Over the last couple of years, social media sites dealing with health and environment have carried warnings about the depleted store shelves and impoverished diets we can look forward to if the honey bee collapse continues.

And here's the mandatory hat-tip from your overly-urban columnist: For food buyers in cities, the impacts of neonics



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 JUNE 2015

Centralized Quota Sales System

Fixed Price \$25,000.00

	Number	Quantity in kg b.f./day
Total offers to sell	77	852.9
Offers to sell participating in the distribution	77	852.9
Successful offers to sell participating in the distribution	77	852.9
Net quantity sold by the reserve		3.0
Total offers to buy	1,977	10,791.0
Offers to buy participating in the distribution	1,976	10,790.0
Successful offers to buy participating in the distribution	1,976	855.9

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
1	23.1		< 25,000.00	1	1.0	
76	829.8	852.9		1,976	10,790.0	10,790.0

The fixed price for June 2015 is the ceiling price for this month. A quota quantity of 852.9 b.f./day was offered for sale at the fixed price. Of this quantity, an amount of 1.8 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 = 0.2 kg BF/day • 2nd step distribution by prorata = 4.44% • Portion of quantities satisfied = 7.93%

177937

News Highlights

4 to 0 for Canada

Julie Mercier

The World Trade Organization (WTO) has again judged in favour of Canada. Indeed, in a fourth indisputable verdict, it has found the American legislation on Country of Origin Labeling for meat to be discriminatory against Canadian livestock.

In effect since 2008, the Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) obliges American retailers to print on meat packaging the places of birth, raising and slaughter of all livestock. On three separate occasions (November 2011, June 2012 and October 2014), the WTO determined that COOL was in violation of the United States' trade obligations and discriminated against Canadian beef and pork. The most recent judgment on May 18, 2015 represents a fourth victory for Canada and Mexico.

Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz, along with his colleague for International Trade, Ed Fast, welcomed the WTO verdict and have demanded that the United States abolish "their protectionist and discriminatory labeling policy [...]." A position also shared by the industry. "The COOL legislation must be modified. Only in this way can the US stop Canada from exer-



Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) is considered a protectionist measure by the World Trade Organization.

cising its right to block American pork exports," explained Jean-Guy Vincent, the ex-president of the Canada Pork Council and a Quebec hog producer.

Canada now has the right to impose retaliatory measures on a wide range of American products exported to Canadian markets. Besides beef and pork, the list includes many fruits, cereals, maple syrup, ketchup, orange juice, wine and alcoholic beverages. The WTO could approve these retaliatory measures by the end of the summer. According to

the Canadian livestock industry, damages caused by COOL are in excess of \$1 billion per year.

Quebec

Since its introduction, COOL has negatively impacted the lives of Quebec beef producers. "COOL has hurt us a lot," declared André Roy, the marketing director for slaughter steers with the Fédération des producteurs de bovins du Québec (FPBQ). Many small American slaughterhouses and some big players

have stopped buying Quebec steers. Other establishments have reduced their purchases and have introduced special measures, such as specific slaughter days. The disappearance of buyers and the additional logistics costs have generated losses of about \$50/head for Quebec producers, according to Roy. He hopes that the American government will now conform to the WTO judgment. "For our producers, we want COOL to be eliminated, rather than introducing retaliatory measures," he asserted.

For the moment, Washington has not indicated its intention to comply with the WTO verdict. However, on May 20, the House of Representatives' Agriculture Committee did approve a Bill to repeal the COOL legislation for beef, pork and chicken.

An integrated industry:

- the United States is the principal export market for Canadian beef
- 77.5 per cent of Canadian beef is exported to the US
- Canada is the United States' number-one supplier of grain-fed beef

Source: Canada Beef

LTCN 2015-05-27

A move towards organic will cost \$9 million

Yvon Laprade

QUEBEC – The Couillard government has made a firm decision to support organic farming and has set aside \$9 million over three years to "support the prosperity of businesses" in this fast-growing sector. "The planets are in alignment," declared Agriculture Minister Pierre Paradis. "This is a major shift in direction," he remarked during a budget review on agriculture last week. "There are opportunities for growth here and many farmers are ready to accompany us." This financial support is part of Quebec's new "Strategy for the Growth of the Organic Sector".

A \$400-million market

The minister and MNA for Brome-Missisquoi hopes that this government contribution will help local farm businesses to occupy a larger part of this lucrative market. "Organic is a \$400-million market here, but our businesses represent only 30 per cent of this," he emphasized. Minister Paradis



One year ago, following his nomination as agriculture minister, Pierre Paradis did a reconnaissance visit of Brome-Missisquoi, where he met a young organic farmer, Jean-Martin Fortier, author of the successful book *Le Jardinier-maraîcher*.

believes that organic products are "better" for his health and also beneficial to the economic health of farmers. "I buy organic products myself," he declared. "I also try to buy Quebec products. So, in effect, I am voting with my wallet. However, it often happens that I am

forced to buy organic products from outside Quebec."

The minister believes that organic farming represents "a sector that will inject new economic vitality into rural regions," in addition to meeting consumer demand "regarding health, food

safety, environmental protection, animal welfare and buying local."

Financial support measures

Among the measures that will be introduced to support organic farm businesses will be a \$200,000 budget envelope to the Filière biologique du Québec, for the introduction of a financial aid program. Businesses hoping to convert to organic will have access to a grant of up to \$20,000 over the life of the program.

In addition, the Institut de recherche et de développement en agroenvironnement (IRDA) will receive a \$550,000 budget. Furthermore, the Financière agricole du Québec (FADQ), for its part, will provide additional aid through its Diversification and Regional Development Support Program. Thus, businesses converting to organic may benefit from a rebate of the interest on loans up to \$200,000 over three years. The maximum rebate per business is set at \$15,000.

LTCN 2015-05-13

News Highlights

A major turning point for neonicotinoids

Martin Ménard

Pesticides in the family of neonicotinoids ("neonics") are being increasingly accused around the world as the cause of the decline of bees, but also for their potential harmful impact on humans.

Europe clamping down

In France, Minister Ségolène Royal has taken action to extend and toughen a moratorium to limit the use of agricultural pesticides, particularly three belonging to the neonics family. "Italy has been even more courageous, by banning neonics outright," declared Jean-Marc Bonmatin, a French researcher speaking at a conference in Montréal, hosted by Équiterre on May 29. "Furthermore, farmers saw no loss of yields, even in corn. But bee mortality dropped to almost zero," he added.

While Europe has already taken a hard-line against neonics, Ontario could soon be doing the same, by formalizing a regulation to take effect on July 1, 2015 that would reduce the use of seeds treated with neonics by 80 per cent by 2017. This decision by Ontario could represent a turning point, leading other provinces and American States, including Quebec, to do the same.

Here in Quebec, the Ministère du développement durable, de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre



According to French researcher, Jean-Marc Bonmatin, the use of neonicotinoid pesticides is definitely not compatible with sustainable development.

les changements climatiques is in the process of developing a strategy to govern the use of all pesticides. Clément Falardeau, a ministry spokesperson, said that his department wishes to raise user awareness and to tighten the conditions of use for the most hazardous agricultural pesticides, including neonics.

Tangible results

Bonmatin also mentioned to the conference participants that the neonics family of pesticides is more toxic than DDT, a banned product. In fact, a group of about 50 researchers, of which he is a part, do evaluations of systemic pesticides. They found that neonics, even at extremely low doses, can kill insects

that are exposed for only a few days. The insecticide also affects their fertility and immune systems. "In France, we were experiencing bee die-off rates of 30 per cent per year. Moreover, this phenomenon was generalized in numerous countries," he affirmed. In this regard, the United States recently introduced a national plan on May 19 to stop the "alarming" decline of pollinator populations.

Not only bees

The researcher also explained that successive applications of neonics have a cumulative effect. "Normally, it takes over 20 years to contaminate deep groundwater. With neonics, which are water soluble, it can take only 15 years."

His research colleague, Madeleine Chagnon of the Université du Québec à Montréal, presented some Japanese findings from 2014 in 2015, showing that 19 per cent of residents living near agricultural zones had neonics in their urine.

In closing, Bonmatin added that low doses of neonics have detrimental effects on bird populations. "The decline of certain birds have been correlated to zones where neonics are used. This is a real menace; we cannot continue like this!" he warned.

LTCN 2015-06-03

Antibiotics: the Auditor General sounds the alarm

Julie Mercier

The Auditor General of Canada blames the federal government for not investing enough in the fight against antibiotic resistance. In his report released on April 30, Michael Ferguson openly criticized Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada with regard to antimicrobial resistance. "In Canada, data from the Public Health Agency has shown that the number of infections caused by organisms resistant to antibiotics are on the rise," the report states. The document also emphasizes the absence of a national strategy to combat antimicrobial resistance. "Overall, we have observed that the Public Health Agency of Canada has not mobilized all of the federal, provincial and territorial partners and other stakeholders

in order to develop a pan-Canadian strategy to fight against antimicrobial resistance," the report states.

It also criticizes Health Canada for not having taken significant steps to promote the prudent use of antibiotics in animals destined for human consumption. For example, the ministry presently authorizes the sale without prescription of certain antibiotics, commonly used in human medicine, for use in animals destined for the human food chain. Furthermore, it has not reinforced control measures against the importation of antibiotics for non-approved veterinarian use.

Veterinarians

In Quebec, the Ordre des vétérinaires (OMVQ) [Québec Order of Veterinarians] has condemned the lack

of regulations that permits the importation of non-approved antibiotics into Canada and the purchase of animal medications. "These medications are used without veterinarian supervision and consequently can be found in the food chain and may contribute to the problem of antibiotic resistance," the Order declared.

Furthermore, a study by the World Health Organization published in 2006 stated that 50 per cent of medications sold over the Internet are counterfeit and harmful to health, according to the Order's president, Dr. Joël Bergeron. The OMVQ also added that 98 per cent of Quebec veterinarians have received extra training on the appropriate use of antibiotics.

LTCN 2015-05-27



The Auditor General of Canada reported that the Public Health Agency of Canada and Health Canada have not fulfilled their principal responsibilities to reduce the risks of antimicrobial resistance.

News Highlights

A 345 per cent tax increase for a forestry producer

Pierre-Yvon Bégin

SAINT-ÉTIENNE-DE-LAUZON – Gilles Brunelle will not soon forget the stunning surprise that, on January 1, 2010, the value of his woodlot property increased by a huge 74 per cent overnight. Furthermore, the property tax bill for his 55.28 hectare woodlot jumped from \$886 in 2004 to \$3,945 in 2014, a shocking increase of 345 per cent over 10 years. 'Perhaps it is not expropriation per se, but it is certainly a way to get rid of us,' exclaimed the woodlot owner. Now 65 years old, Brunelle cannot see how he will be able to continue the family tradition of leaving his property to the next generation. Indeed, on his mother's side, the family has lived on this land since 1862, where his great-grandfather was one of the first pioneers to settle in Saint-Étienne-de-Lauzon. 'I am sure that if I get to heaven after selling the land to a stranger, there will be a terrible riot,' he joked.

Brunelle believes that the tremendous increase in his property evaluation began with a municipal merger. In 2002, his municipality of Saint-Étienne-de-Lauzon amalgamated with the city of Lévis. Wishing to better understand the logic of his property evaluation, he contacted the city, only to find out that it

was next to impossible to compare two different woodlots.

With the patience of Job, the forester set out to compile the evaluations of 51 woodlots in his area. Wanting to compare 'apples to apples,' he reduced all the evaluations to a per-hectare basis. The results were astonishing. 'They started at \$399 per hectare and went all the way to \$6,027 per hectare,' he declared. 'This is a tax grab based on virtual wealth.'

Denis Labonté, an administrator with the Syndicat des propriétaires forestiers de la région de Québec, deplores the magnitude of the phenomenon documented by Gilles Brunelle. According to him, the problem is particularly evident in areas near large cities, especially with regard to small woodlots, often sought after for recreational purposes. 'The problem has become generalized everywhere,' he complained, while emphasizing the unsuccessful attempts over the past few years to reverse the current trend. He maintains that municipal leaders are insensitive towards forestry producers. 'My own property evaluation has reached \$7,185 per hectare,' he declared. 'There must be gold nuggets hidden there somewhere, but I haven't found them yet.'



PHOTO: PIERRE-YVON BÉGIN/TCN

Gilles Brunelle, a forestry producer from the Saint-Étienne-de-Lauzon sector of Lévis, feels he is being forced out by property taxes. He has compiled the evaluations of 51 woodlots in his area in order to document the unfairness of the tax hikes.

Over the past 15 years, Labonté has seen the evaluation of his woodlot property jump by 1398 per cent, or 93.22 per cent per year. In comparison, his residence increased by only 132.6 per cent, or 8.84 per cent per year.

Due to an injury, Gilles Brunelle was not able to harvest any wood last winter. This woodlot owner, who likes to speak of 'cultivating his forest', usually generates

an income of between \$10,000 and \$15,000 each year. Now, he cannot see how he will be able to pay his municipal and school taxes, knowing that, by conservative estimates, they will eat up 20 per cent of the price of the wood. Furthermore, he is still wondering why he should contribute to public transportation. 'My deer never take the bus,' he stated with disdain.

LTCN 2015-05-06

Businesses must adapt

Étienne Dupuis

Food-processing businesses will have to be more imaginative to compensate for the loss of foreign workers. "We must find ways to attract Quebec workers," declared Lise Perron, director-general of the Comité sectoriel de main-d'oeuvre en transformation alimentaire [Sectoral committee on the food-processing workforce].

New federal government measures will oblige businesses to pay \$1,000 in administrative fees for each foreign worker hired. Ottawa will also set quotas on the number of workers coming from other countries. "Therefore, if a processing plant reduces its foreign workers from 100 to 50, it will save \$50,000," Perron explained. "This money could then be spent to attract local workers."

Transportation problems

Perron believes that some food processors could provide buses to pick up workers



PHOTO: ARCHIVES/TCN

Food processors must find new ways to attract Quebec workers, according to Lise Perron, director-general of the Comité sectoriel de main-d'oeuvre en transformation alimentaire.

in certain regions where unemployment is high. 'There are Quebec workers who could occupy these jobs, but they have

no means of transportation,' she declared. 'Unfortunately, the subway system does not yet reach into the fields.' She added

that the money saved could also be used to increase the salaries and fringe benefits of workers.

LTCN 2015-05-20

News Highlights

Free-market agriculture: the other side of the coin

Julie Mercier

Australia, one of the countries that provides the least support for its agriculture, is experiencing an unprecedented debt crisis, according to the European think-tank, Momagri, which has completed a study on the situation.

According to Momagri's calculations, the Australian agricultural debt load has reached \$66 billion, while one-third of its farm businesses are at risk of disappearing over the next several years.

Since the early 1980s, the Australian government has progressively withdrawn from the agricultural sector and has opened its borders, based on the principle that agriculture must adapt to free-market conditions. Several production sectors have had to restructure, particularly dairy. Following a 15-year period of dismantling its dairy policy, the Australian government withdrew completely from the sector in 2000. Subsequently, over the next

few years, the country lost a quarter of its dairy farms. The price of milk at the consumer level crept upwards, but the price at the producer level decreased in favour of the distributors, revealed Momagri.

Bankruptcies

Since the 1980s, agricultural debt in the fifth continent has continually increased. From 32 per cent of the gross production value in 1980, it climbed to 51 per cent in 1990 and 156 per cent in 2010. "Even businesses showing all the comparative advantages and low production costs are failing, because the free-trade model no longer provides them with sufficient income to cover their debts," Momagri states. The organization cites the case of Walton Investments, one of the largest cereal producing businesses in Queensland. In spite of its impressive size (12,000 ha), with an extensive production regime allowing for economy of scale and very low production costs, the

business was finally liquidated by its bank, having a debt of over \$30 million (AUD). According to Momagri, this is not an isolated case, but one of many victims of the ultra-liberalization of the Australian agricultural market.

To curb the crisis, a Working Group on Rural Finances proposed the creation of a reconstruction bank, which would be funded by the Central Bank of Australia. In April, the Senate refused to approve the project. The Association of Australian Bankers was strongly opposed to it.

New Zealand

Agricultural debt is also a very worrisome issue in neighbouring New Zealand. Researchers at Lincoln University are studying the high farm debt loads and the stress that this generates. The study will examine the dairy sector in particular, according to Bruce Greig, a researcher with the New Zealand information network, Stuff.

LTCN 2015-05-20



The Australian example has shaken the conviction of many observers regarding the benefits of a free-market model for agriculture.

Some major challenges ahead for CEPOQ

Louise Thériault

Special collaborator

SCOTT – The Centre d'expertise en production ovine du Québec (CEPOQ) [Quebec Centre of Expertise in Ovine Production] took advantage of its annual general meeting held in Scott on April 24 to survey the some 75 members and shareholders present. Grouped in thematic workshops, they discussed various issues concerning ovine production (genetics, research and development, coaching and mentoring). The results of these consultations will be used to improve CEPOQ's strategic plan, according to its director general, Hélène Méthot. CEPOQ's mission remains unchanged: i.e., to improve the profitability of the farm businesses and to promote the industry's development through research, genetic improvement, agricultural extension and disease eradication. That said, its general objectives had to be revised in view of the new financial constraints facing the Centre of Expertise. "A large portion of our operating budget traditionally came from research activities," Méthot explained. "However, budget cuts in federal programs, and also at the provincial



CEPOQ's president and director-general, Georges Parent and Hélène Méthot, are confident in the future, in spite of the challenges facing the organization's long-term survival.

level, has forced CEPOQ to restructure in order to survive. We must adapt our list of services to meet the needs of sheep and lamb producers, as well as other stakeholders, with a user-pay strategy."

Consequently in 2014, CEPOQ was obliged to terminate its OVIPRO advisory service activities, which it had provided to ovine businesses since 2008. "In spite of numerous cost-cutting attempts, the service continued to generate deficits, which put CEPOQ in a precarious posi-

tion," deplored Méthot. To compensate for the absence of "in-field" expertise, the Centre has developed new activities in order to ensure a continuation of knowledge transfer. For example, "web seminars" permit producers and other stakeholders to participate in training sessions without having to leave their farms or offices.

Necessary collaboration

Due to the absence of major commer-

cial companies in ovine production, as found in other sectors such as dairy, to contribute to the funding of research and development projects, CEPOQ must be very innovative. Thanks to the participation of the Table filière ovine du Québec [Quebec Ovine Round Table], a new project on meat quality is now underway. Indeed, Eric Pouliot, a young researcher who recently joined the CEPOQ team, will characterize the various lamb meat available on the Quebec market, for a period of one year, taking note of its origin (Quebec, Western Canada, Australia, New Zealand). The project will determine the strengths and weaknesses of lamb produced in Quebec, in order to improve sales and plan future research. The Centre also intends to increase its efforts to encourage other organizations not necessarily specializing in ovine production to contribute to the needs of the sector. For example, some research parameters concerning bovine forages could be adapted to ovine production. Participants at the annual meeting also had the opportunity to hear a first-hand account from a couple who Méthot considers as model ovine producers.

LTCN 2015-05-06

Atlantic company brings safety to work and school

Amy Petherick
Canadian Agricultural Safety Association

Oxford Frozen Foods, is widely known as the world's largest processor of wild blueberries but lesser known is the company's stellar commitment to safety. Based in Oxford, Nova Scotia, the company's reputation for agricultural safety began with efforts in the workplace but now those efforts have spread out into surrounding Atlantic communities too. David Powers, the company's Director of Health, Safety and the Environment, says strong support from upper management goes a long way in making his efforts successful.

"I've worked in many companies in my almost 25-year safety career and I feel that safety is taken seriously at Oxford," Powers says. "Our senior management is terrific." As the director of safety initiatives within the company, Powers says they are challenged to address safety hazards in their processing facilities but also on affiliated farms. "There's a lot of similarities between the two, but obviously farming has some challenges that a plant or factory wouldn't have," he explains. Working alone serves as a good example he says. "In a facility, you're rarely working alone, there's always someone else around you but working out in the fields, you could be the only one for miles around." He says another considerable risk on their farming operations



Oxford Frozen Foods shows their commitment to farm safety in their community through Progressive Agriculture Safety Day® events.

is fatigue management. Powers likes to promote solutions to risks like these by making simple changes. What worked best for their farms was to minimize these risks through scheduling. "We have changed our schedule both in Canada and the US to give most workers a day off in the week," he explains. "Takes a little bit of work and convincing that's the way to go, but we've been doing that for the last couple of years and it's been a huge success." Powers is modestly reluctant to share that 'lost time', as a result of injuries, reached zero at the Oxford site in 2012 and has stayed there for three years.

"Statistics are lagging indicators and you don't want to hang your hat up on lagging indicators," he says, "it's more important that we can go into a harvest season or even a re-pack season with safety systems." Powers is quick to point out that it's really been the commitment of the supervisors and employees that work for Oxford Foods that puts these safety systems in place, keeping that lost time at bay. But in no way is employee commitment more evident than during Oxford's annual Progressive Agriculture Safety Day®. What started as a simple agricultural safety fair for Oxford school kids in

2011 has grown to a much grander scale. Powers says that in 2015, the company will host three safety days in Nova Scotia, one in PEI, one in New Brunswick, and one in Maine. "We anticipate reaching approximately 1500, Grade 4 and Grade 5 students this year with that program," he says. "It's a free day for the schools and we take care of everything." Not only does the program rely on the financial support of the employ but Powers says employees even help run the event. During safety days, Robert Mannette, Oxford Food's Information Technology specialist, is most likely to be found operating the virtual fire extinguisher. As someone who started with the very first fair in 2011, Mannette admits the events do make for some long days of setting up but he believes there's a lot of value in what they're doing. "The kids are engaged, they're learning, and they're having fun," he says. Troy Miller, Oxford's Engineering Specialist and a past chaperone for one classroom in attendance, agrees that the safety day is well received by the kids. "It's extremely well received by the children," Miller says. "There's a lot of interactive things going on... and the PTO demonstration is fantastic, all the kids loved that, especially the boys," he chuckles. Miller says his son will be the next one to attend the safety day, as the tradition continues for another group of classmates. Both Miller and Mannette says it's just one more initiative to be proud of as employees of Oxford Frozen Foods.

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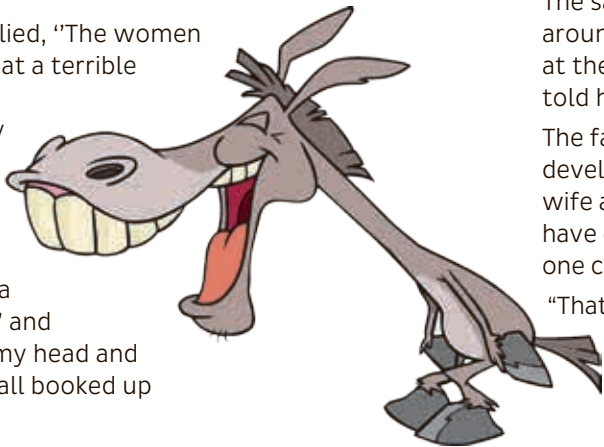
Quirky QFA Crack-ups

Darned old mule

A newlywed farmer and his wife were visited by her mother, who immediately demanded an inspection of their house. While they were walking through the barn, the farmer's mule suddenly reared up and kicked the mother-in-law in the head, killing her instantly.

At the funeral service a few days later, the farmer stood near the casket and greeted folks as they walked by. The pastor noticed that whenever a woman would whisper something to the farmer, he would nod his head "Yes" and say something. Whenever a man walked by and whispered to the farmer, he would shake his head, "No" and mumble a reply. Curious, the pastor later asked the farmer what that was all about.

The farmer replied, "The women would say, 'What a terrible tragedy' and I would nod my head and say, 'Yes, it was.' The men would ask, 'You wanna sell that mule?' and I would shake my head and say, 'Can't. It's all booked up for a year.'"



Three-legged race

One day a traveling salesman was driving down a backcountry road at about 40 km/h when he noticed that there was a three-legged chicken running alongside his car.

He stepped on the gas and sped up to 70km/h. The chicken was still keeping up. After about a mile of running the chicken ran up a farm lane and into a barn behind an old farmhouse.

The salesman had some time to kill so he turned around and drove up the farm lane. He knocked at the door and when the farmer answered he told him what he had just seen.

The farmer said that he was a geneticist and had developed this breed of chicken because he, his wife and his son each like a drumstick when they have chicken and this way they only have to kill one chicken.

"That's the most fantastic thing I've ever heard," said the salesman. "How do they taste?"

"I don't know," said the farmer. "We've never caught one."



Powerball

Interviewer: "Congratulations on winning the \$140 million dollar Powerball lottery."

Farmer: "Thank you."

Interviewer: "Do you have any special plans for spending all of that money?"

Farmer: "Nope. Not really. I'm just gonna keep farm-ing until the lottery money is all gone."



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