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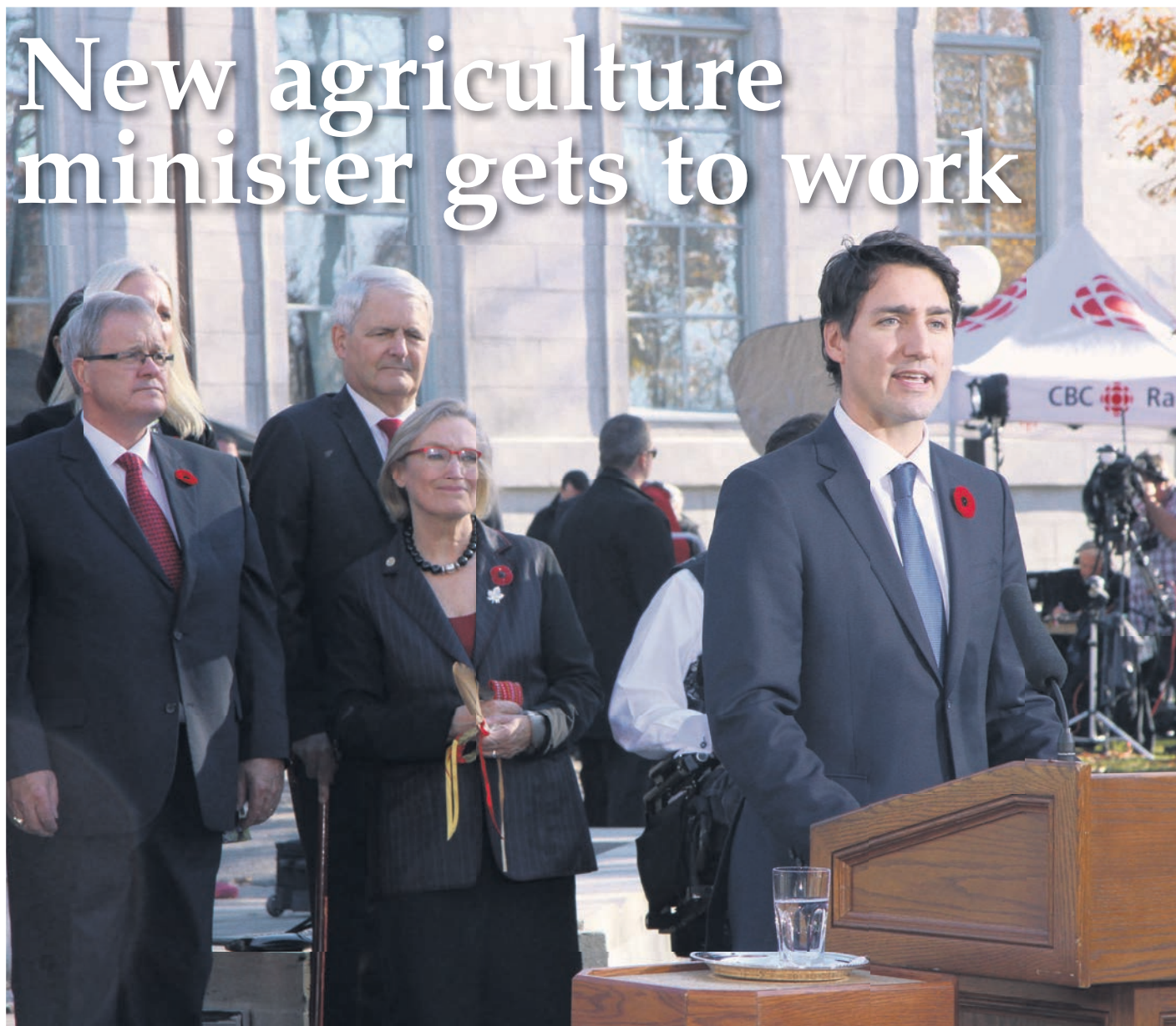
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New agriculture minister gets to work



The new minister of agriculture is a dairy farmer and a seed potato grower from Prince Edward Island.

"Not until I came to
Canada did I realize
that snow was a four-
letter word."

— Alberto Manguel

QFA's Farm Food Forums

Thursday,
January 28, 2016

Cooking with the Advocate:
Food, farming and health

See page 13 for details.

Andrew McClelland
Advocate Staff Reporter

Canada has a new minister of agriculture following the election of the Liberal government last month. And interestingly, he's not the obvious choice.

Lawrence MacAuley was sworn in as Canada's new Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food on Parliament Hill on November 3, as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau unveiled his cabinet. He was first elected to his riding of Cardigan in eastern Prince Edward Island in 1988 and has been re-elected nine consecutive times, making him the longest-serving MP to come from PEI. While he has not served as minister of agriculture before, he does come from a farming background. "Being a dairy farmer and a seed potato grower from Prince Edward

Island, I have some idea of what farming is all about," MacAuley told reporters outside the House of Commons after his swearing-in ceremony. "But I have to be briefed. I just met my deputy minister a couple of hours ago."

The 69-year-old retired from farming in 1988, when he was elected as an MP, later serving as both labour minister and solicitor general under the Chrétien government. Having big shoes to fill after the very vocal and active Gerry Ritz served as agriculture minister during the Harper era, MacAuley cited his past experience as a senior minister as good preparation for his current job.

"If you need to be senior, I'm senior," said MacAuley. "I plan to meet with my provincial counterparts. I've been contacted by industry officials from across the country.... Over the next few days

I'll combine my briefings with meetings (with) provincial officials and industry. I'm looking forward to it."

Already speaking out

Barely a week into his new job, MacAuley has already spoken out in favour of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the sweeping free-trade deal amongst 12 Pacific Rim nations that received so much criticism from supply-managed sectors of Canadian agriculture.

"I suspect when I evaluate the whole thing, it will be something I support," MacAuley pronounced. "I see nothing today that would make me not want to support the whole package," he told international news agency Reuters, in his first-ever interview as agriculture minister.

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QFA News

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MacAuley said that the \$4.3-billion compensation package offered by the Harper government to dairy, poultry and egg farmers who will face more import competition looks fair.

The new agriculture minister's comments were surprising, and perhaps revealing. Prime Minister Trudeau has not said himself whether or not his government would fully support the TPP as negotiated and signed by the previous government.

So far Trudeau has not made any commitment to renegotiate the deal, but he has promised to give the TPP a full debate in Parliament, a study in committee and a vote in the House of Commons.

But MacAuley's comments may be an indication that a Trudeau government



Canada's new federal minister of agriculture, Lawrence MacAuley, says he approves of the recent Trans-Pacific Partnership, but is not pleased with the U.S.'s stance on Country-of-Origin Labeling.

would have been willing to go ahead with the same deal as the Conservatives had they assumed power before negotiations on the TPP ended.

Tough on COOL

MacAuley has also indicated that he

will be up for a fight with the United States regarding the two nations' long Country-of-Origin Labeling (COOL) dispute.

In 2012, Canada and Mexico won a case at the World Trade Organization (WTO) that accused the United States of

imposing regulations that discriminated against imported meat. Despite that ruling, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a proposal in March of 2013 that would call for foreign producers to list where the animal was born, raised and slaughtered directly on the package of any meat product.

MacAuley, like out-going minister of agriculture Ritz before him, says that is unacceptable.

"You cannot have a deal with foreign countries and not have them comply with the rules and then just continue on," MacAuley said. "You have to take measures. Do we want to? No. But if we have to, I suspect we will."

MacAuley also reported he had spoken with U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack on November 9, stating that he is hopeful that Washington will comply with the WTO's decision.



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Farm succession – “Start right away and allow a lot of time!”

Dougal Rattray
QFA Executive Director

“If you haven’t already looked at it, there is nothing to fear in getting started immediately with your farm succession plan, regardless of where you are in your stage of life. In fact, there is everything to gain.” That was the message heard - loud and clear - at the first Forum for the 2015/16 season, held October 29.

Forty-eight farmers and interested participants from across Quebec gathered in Community Learning Centres (CLCs) to learn about the challenging subject of succession planning and farm transfer. The content was highly relevant and the speakers were very well received. QFA is now making use of newly available software for its Forums and consequently the quality is much improved on previous years. The facilitated Forum started five minutes late and ran until 10 p.m. with each of the sites receiving time to ask questions and discuss the topic at hand.

As our community continues to grow older, a different set of challenges are facing farmers both old and young when it comes to succession. While living longer is no doubt a positive development, it also presents serious challenges for those running farm businesses, such as:

How, if facing a lengthy retirement, do you step back from day-to-day work but stay on the farm where you want to live?



Often standing in the way of making a decisive move is a huge fear of the unknown regarding what to do next.

How, if farmers are staying fitter for longer, do they bring on the next generation at a sensible moment?

If farmers are ready to retire but not totally convinced by the suitability of the would-be successor (be they family member or not), how can they bring about a phased and secure transition?

The speakers were veteran accounting expert, Mario Dumas, and specialized communications coach, Martine Deschamps, of Syneraction Management,

who did a great job, despite having just arrived back the same day from a business trip to Europe. Deschamps holds a certification of farm transfer issued by the Universities of Iowa and Wisconsin. Dumas is a much sought-after farm tax specialist with more than 25 years’ experience in intergenerational farm transfers, farm taxation and accounting.

Often standing in the way of making a decisive move is a huge fear of the unknown regarding what to do next,

as ultimate control of the farm is relinquished. “It is often a sensitive subject which is left until the last minute, but a well-thought-out succession plan is vital to the future of any farming business,” said Dumas. The audience was delighted with the information session, with many commenting on the quality and knowledge of the speakers. The single most frequent comment received in the evaluation was the amount of time that is required to create a well-laid-out plan. When asked what they learned, most respondents answered: “Start planning early!”

The QFA’s next Forum on Thursday, November 26, is on the subject of “Precision Agriculture” where we will have amongst others, Viacheslav Adamchuk, an associate professor from Macdonald Campus whose research has focused on the development and deployment of on-the-go soil sensing technology to enhance the economic and environmental benefits of precision agriculture.

The QFA wishes to thank Mario Dumas and Martine Deschamps for their participation in this event. To talk with Mario Dumas, you can call him at 450-829-3466. To contact Martine Deschamps, please email: mendeschamps@syneraction.ca or call 514 578-3505

QFA’s Forums are supported by the Réseau Agriconseils



How to start a farm in four steps

Simon Pageau, agr.
Management Consultant
UPA de la Mauricie

Okay, so you’ve always thought farming was amazing, and you’re up for the adventure. The problem now is you don’t know where to start. Here are four steps to a successful farm start-up.

Step 1: Do your research, get informed and seek training

This is a good starting point. If you type “how to start a farm business” into a search engine, these three results will come up: Relève agricole, from the Ministère de l’Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l’Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ) website; Start-Up Grant, from La Financière agricole du Québec (FADQ); and Agro-Démarrage,

the toolkit for agriculture and agri-food start-ups, from the Centre de référence en agriculture et agroalimentaire du Québec (CRAAQ). If you browse these sites, you’ll find information on a wide variety of topics, including how to farm in Quebec, how to market your products, what steps you should take to become a farmer, who to contact (there’s a full directory), where to go for farmer training and plenty of other essential information.

Step 2: Discuss, share and network

Branch out into the farming community and get in touch with people who really know the business. One of the first entry points you should try is Réseau Agriconseils Mauricie. At your first meeting, you’ll be asked about your

project so that the experts there can put you in touch with the right people. Why do you want to be a farmer? How much work will you have to do? What’s your marketing strategy?

During this step, you should talk with MAPAQ specialists, FADQ consultants and established farmers.

Step 3: Draft, detail and plan

Business planning is an essential tool that will help you obtain financing and guide you through your decisions. It’s kind of like a travel itinerary that shows the way from point A to point B. Even if you run into a surprise along the way, all you have to do is look at your plan, remember what your destination is and find a different path. Generally, a business plan contains the following elements: a description of your project,

your farming approach, your marketing strategy and your financial outlook. Keep in mind that there are consultants out there to help you craft your business plan.

Step 4: Start!

Okay, you’ve done enough thinking. Your plan is in good shape. Now it’s time to roll up your sleeves and get to it. By this stage, you’ll have everything you need to start farming: financing, land, animals, machinery, equipment, potential clients, etc. Reach out to people who specialize in production, management, agri-environmental issues and human resources to help guide you in your decisions. You don’t have to know every little thing, but you can fill the gaps in your knowledge by getting advice from the right people.



Marcel Groleau
UPA President

Federal elections: Exciting challenges ahead

On October 19, the people of Canada elected a majority Liberal government—an outcome that surprised many, including certain political commentators. But then again, you could feel during the campaign that change was in the air.

Ultimately, it was Justin Trudeau and his party who embodied this change. I offer him my sincere congratulations on the campaign he led and on his electoral victory. Campaigns are built around leaders. As a leader, he delivered the goods, and his party has him to thank for this victory.

Because the campaign coincided with the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations, in which big agricultural issues hung in the balance, all parties spoke on the issue, specifically as it pertained to supply management. Gilles Duceppe of the Bloc Québécois and Thomas Mulcair of the NDP adopted very clear positions

and raised the issue on a number of occasions.

I would like to recognize the fact that about 1,800 individuals across Canada, from all kinds of backgrounds and political stripes, put their personal and professional lives on hold to run for office. Throwing one's hat into the ring and opening oneself up to the judgement of the people demands a certain courage. During this campaign, we saw people defend a diversity of ideas, opinions, viewpoints and, of course, party lines. Every citizen was allowed to exercise his or her democratic right and ultimately have his or her region represented in the House of Commons.

We have a new prime minister, a new government and newly elected officials all incoming while others are outgoing. On this point, I would like to acknowledge the work of our departing minister of agriculture and agri-food, Gerry Ritz. Mr. Ritz served in this role for eight of the nine years of Conservative rule. As part of his duties, he worked with Canadian farmers' organizations.

Having met him on numerous occasions, I can testify to Mr. Ritz's great respect for farmers and for the farming profession; never once did he insult farmers by treating them like "economic illiterates." We have him to thank for the compositional standards for cheese and the new tariffs on milk protein isolates. He also led a number of trade missions on behalf of the agricultural sector. We can always point to what he didn't deliver on, but on the whole, and in the context of his party's policies, his contributions deserve recognition.

For his part, Christian Paradis—who served in several positions, including secretary of state for Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, minister of public works and government services, and minister of industry—has now left politics. Paradis also made a difference as minister of international development and minister for La Francophonie. In the wake of the death of the Canadian International Development Agency, he was given the delicate responsibility of redefining his ministry's role with respect to funding international development assistance organizations. UPA Développement International and other organizations have benefited from his sensitivity and vision.

Canada has great agricultural potential, and the next government will have

to invest in the sector once again. The Liberal Party of Canada made a number of agricultural commitments during the election campaign. These include reviewing the standards, rules and practices concerning importation of food products, such as milk proteins; holding a public debate in Parliament to consult with Canadians on the TPP; investing in risk-management programs to benefit businesses, especially growing ones; undoing the changes made to Employment Insurance in 2012; reviewing the Temporary Foreign Worker Program to cut down on the administrative burden and make the program more flexible; providing additional funding for the Youth Employment Strategy; and allocating research funds to meet the needs expressed by farmers.

The ushering in of a new government is always followed by a period of adaptation. Let's hope this one is brief and that we can get down to business without too much delay. Expectations are high, and I will be eager to work with the new prime minister and his future minister of agriculture. The agri-food sector could be an engine for the economic development of Canada and its regions, and, indeed, exciting challenges lie ahead. In light of the magnitude of these challenges, we'll need to hurry up and roll up our sleeves.



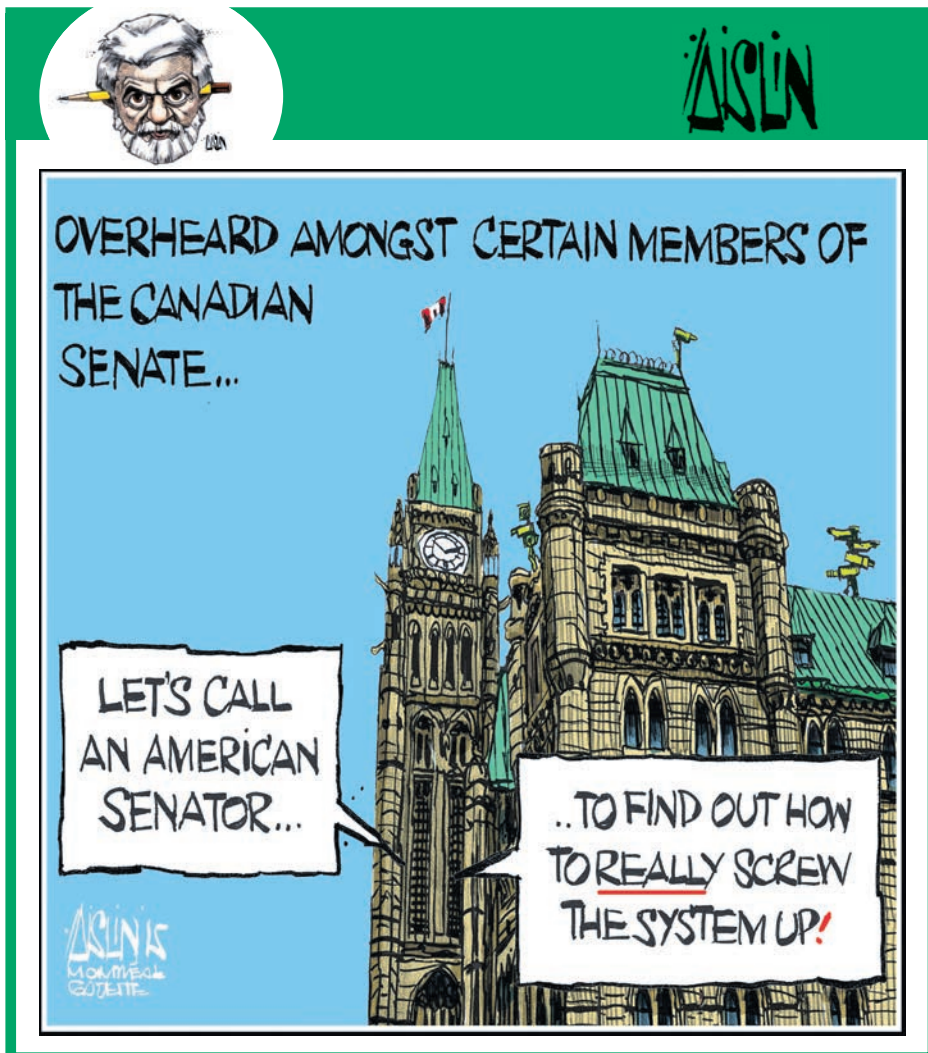
Farm Food Forums

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The ten Liberal promises to keep an eye on in the farming world

Thierry Larivière

1

In a letter to the GO5 Coalition, the Liberals promised to conduct a "close examination" of compensation under the details of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), adding that consultations would be held.

2

Regarding tighter control over imports under supply management, the Liberals' letter mentions that "the current standards, rules, and practices regarding the importation of food products, specifically milk proteins, must be reviewed to ensure they serve the interests of Canadians."

3

In terms of federal agricultural support programs, the Liberals committed to reviewing the AgriInvest program and the overall strategic framework in consultation with farmers and the provinces.

4

As part of its agriculture and agri-food platform, unveiled in Regina by MP Ralph Goodale, the Liberal Party of Canada promised an additional \$100 million in agricultural research funding as well as another \$160 million over four years for an Agri-Food Value Added Investment Fund.

5

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is to receive an additional \$80 million over four years to increase the number of inspections conducted for local and imported food.

6

It's clear that the Liberals will put more effort into reducing greenhouse gases than the Conservatives did. To cut emissions, the agricultural sector will have access to a fund of \$200 million each year to support innovation and green technologies in the natural resources sector. It's too early to say whether farm-generated green energy or carbon sequestration solutions will figure into the equation.

7

The Employment Insurance program will be reviewed. The Liberals have promised to cut the waiting period from two weeks to one week as well as to "reverse" the changes made to the program in 2012 (specifically, the obligation to accept work that is far from home or that pays less).

8

The Liberals also have their eyes on the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. They are promising to make it both more flexible and more agriculture friendly.

9

The Liberals committed to cutting taxes for the middle class by up to \$670 per person, as well as taxes for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which should gradually go from 11 to 9 per cent.

10

The Liberal platform states that infrastructure investments will be increased by \$5 billion per year over the next two years and by \$3.4 billion in the two years after that. Some of this infrastructure could contribute to facilitating transport and exports of agricultural commodities.

Finally, while it's best not to hold our breath, the Liberals' promise to legalize marijuana could do wonders for the farming sector...



News



A site for purchasing and storing Canada yew harvested without a permit, discovered by an investigator from the Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs (MFFP).

Yew being plundered from forests

Martin Ménard

The branches of the Canada yew plant are highly prized by global pharmaceutical companies, and collectors are taking prodigious amounts of the stuff from Quebec forests without permits.

The harvesting of the yew from crown land is permitted only to supply-processing facilities located in Quebec. Even then, a permit is required. The catch in this case is that there are currently no processing facilities operating in the province. This means that the harvest taking place on provincial crown land is definitely illegal.

In Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean, 14 collectors have been caught and slapped with minimum fines of \$450 each. This is a drop in the bucket considering there are 350 collectors at large. “The illegal harvest went down in 2014, but we’re seeing an increase again for 2015. That’s a problem because unauthorized harvesters don’t always use the appropriate methods, and that puts the sustainability of the resource in danger,” says Catherine Thibeault, chief of communications at the Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean office of the MFFP. In Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean alone, authorities estimate

that about 250,000 kilograms of yew will be lost to the black market this year.

According to an investigation conducted by *La Terre de chez nous*, a purchaser in Quebec has been recruiting harvesters on the Internet to supply a company in New Brunswick, without regard for MFFP rules. Canada yew is highly valued for its taxanes, which are an active ingredient with anticarcinogenic properties.

“Unauthorized harvesters don’t always use the appropriate methods, and that puts the sustainability of the resource in danger,” says *Catherine Thibeault*

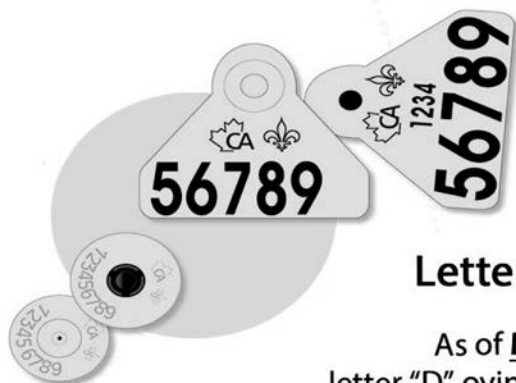
Removing yew without a permit often affects the long-term survival of the resource, according to certain sources that are well versed in the matter. One source has visited sites where collectors were harvesting yew with a weed whacker. “Instead of cutting a foot off each branch, they were cutting entire bushes right down to the ground. The yew won’t ever grow there again,” the source said.



Keeping you in the loop
NOTE TO SHEEP PRODUCERS

2015: Letter “C” Ovine Tags

Sheep producers have until **Friday, December 4**, to order and pay for letter “C” ovine tags for lambs born from now until the end of December 2015.



2016: Letter “D” Ovine Tags

As of **Monday, December 7**, letter “D” ovine tags will be available for lambs born in January onwards.

1-866-270-4319
Monday to Friday,
from 7:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
and from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

183058



Collection of evidence and material used by an investigator from the MFFP.



April Stewart
Alba PR

As recent Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade talks concluded, some clear winners and losers emerged. For example, while small-scale manufacturers, cattle ranchers and grain exporters fared very well, Canada's auto and sugar beet industries and supply-managed sectors (dairy, eggs, chicken and turkey) were, for all intents and purposes, losers—though it certainly could have been worse!

Many media sources played fast and loose with terminology and innuendos, resulting in portrayals of consumers in the role of Oliver Twist and whiney, nouveau-riche farmers as the workhouse master. I've been both appalled and pleasantly surprised by consumers' reactions to TPP talks as regards our dairy industry; some understand that farmers are getting as screwed as they are (some would argue even more so), while others seem to think their milk supply is part of some big conspiracy plot.

All of which begs the question: Do Canadian consumers consider agriculture a vestigial organ?

According to the go-to online source for anything you want to know, Wikipedia, vestigiality refers to "genetically deter-

mined structures or attributes that have apparently lost most or all of their ancestral function in a given species, but have been retained during the process of evolution." Has farming as we've known it become something we hold onto because it's always been there?

Unlike an appendix or tonsils, Canada's agriculture industry is an important part of the economic structure that continues to drive our country forward. To repeat some oft-cited statistics:

- Canada's agriculture industry creates one in eight jobs.
- Canada's agriculture industry contributes \$27.5 billion to the country's GDP, with dairy contributing \$18.9 billion.
- Canada's agriculture industry generates \$6.4 billion in taxes, with the dairy industry contributing \$3.6 billion.
- As expressed on the Dairy Farmers of Canada website, "the biggest determinant of how much we pay for dairy, poultry and egg products isn't supply management—it's where and when we shop."

It's clear to me that Canada's ag industry is a contemporary, relevant and integral part of our economy, our society and our well-being.

Outside of the alternate universe of unchecked facts, pronouncements rather than a balanced portrayal of research, and writing content just to fill the page the journalist needs to fill that day, the reality is that FARMERS DO NOT SET

THE PRICE OF MILK. The other reality, as Ralph Dietrich, chairman of the Dairy Farmers of Ontario, says, is that price cuts are always up to processors and they are "theoretical but unlikely... Canadian consumers didn't get a break earlier this year when processors refused to pass along savings from paying less to buy milk from domestic farmers"—and they certainly didn't get one when the pork and beef industries capsized several years ago. Numerous farmers lost their businesses through no fault of their own, but processors, grocery chains and restaurants continued to thrive...

I think Canadian agriculture has managed to find a fine balance between growth and maintaining the integrity of the profession and the environment. One need only look to the south for striking comparisons in how differently we operate within our borders. I will be the first to agree that supply management is not perfect, but based on the train wrecks of post-supply management dismantlement in Australia, New Zealand, France, and many other countries, I'll take the devil I know over the devil I don't—until a smarter, handsomer one walks in the door...

April is a sixth-generation dairy farmer and owns Alba Public Relations, which focuses on strategic agricultural communications. She writes the bi-monthly newsletter "The Rural Milieu to the Urban Dweller™" and the blog A Farmer & Her [57+] Purses. She is co-ordinator for Agriculture in the Classroom Quebec and lives with her boyfriend (who also farms), her four stepchildren and the usual menagerie of farm animals.

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More details on page 13

QFA News

Starting a farm: An obstacle course

Julie Mercier

Every year, about 800 farm businesses cease operations, while just over 500 are established. According to the Fédération de la relève agricole du Québec (FRAQ), it is entirely possible to reverse this yearly loss of 300 farms if the barriers to starting a farm can be lifted.

The shortfall of new farms is a result of the many barriers making it impossible for young farmers to realize their goals. According to the FRAQ's report entitled "Les aspirations et les besoins des jeunes qui nourriront le Québec de demain" (the aspirations and needs of the youth who will feed the Quebec of tomorrow), three of these barriers are especially problematic: access to assets (especially land), the effectiveness of support programs and constraints in the business environment.

In terms of access to assets, the growing gap between the market value and the economic value of farms, which is driven by the price of land, is the chief stumbling block for would-be farmers. The FRAQ says this barrier reduces or even negates the effect of assistance programs for starting farms.

For example, the value of land in the central regions of the province makes it difficult to transfer or start farms that produce field crops. The FRAQ reports that, in this sector and farming model, transferors are required to pay an extra \$3.9 million to transfer their businesses to new farmers relative to five years ago.

With the arrival of new players, such as investment funds and real estate



Photo Mickael Roy: Quebec loses over five farms per week, while nearly 1,000 people are graduating from agriculture schools. The FRAQ says there is no lack of young farmers, contrary to what is often said to be the case.

developers, accessing land isn't as easy as it used to be. Since 2010, the 15 most active corporations on the market alone have collectively acquired over 32,000 hectares—the equivalent of 320 family farms.

In terms of support programs, the report indicates that the vast majority of projects simply would not meet the

criterion of profitability without them. However, support has been diminishing in the last few years and is lower than the average amount available in many jurisdictions around the world.

When it comes to business constraints, the FRAQ says that high food-quality standards, strict environmental standards and rules governing the labour

market and animal welfare make production costs on Quebec farms higher than on competing farms in other jurisdictions. These conditions make young farmers' businesses especially vulnerable. Support programs are a key resource when coping with the competitive disadvantage that flows from the expectations society places on farmers.

A ten-point game plan for new farmers

Julie Mercier

In its memorandum "Les aspirations et les besoins des jeunes qui nourriront le Québec de demain" (the aspirations and needs of the youth who will feed the Quebec of tomorrow), the Fédération de la relève agricole du Québec (FRAQ) proposes ten solutions to "overcome the barrier facing tomorrow's farmers."

Here they are:

1. Create a land transaction registry.
2. Limit the amount of land any one person or entity can acquire by any means other than intergenerational transfer or business consolidation to 100 hectares per year.
3. Establish parameters for renting (minimum contract period, payment amount, renter's priority upon renewal of contract or redemption of land).
4. Enhance the Banque de terres (land bank) tool and coordinate it province-wide.
5. Keep an inventory of abandoned land, tax the owners of land with agricultural potential and make rules against abandoning land.
6. Modify the Fonds d'investissement pour la relève agricole (FIRA), specifically by:
 - making the equity lease product more attractive for young farmers in the current context of speculation (e.g., rental rate below market value and repurchase price lower than market trends);
 - ensuring the FIRA is more connected with the needs of young farmers through a close relationship with the Banque de terres tool; and
 - allowing an interest reduction for transferors in applying the seller-lender formula.
7. Enhance financial assistance programs for young farmers administered by La Financière agricole du Québec (FADQ) by:
 - increasing payment amounts;
 - evaluating the importance of changing the criterion that farmers must be full-time to apply; and
 - doubling the grant amount by making a second payment based on the long-term success of the business five years after the first start-up assistance payment.
8. Lengthen the period of the 25 per cent discount on young farmers' Farm Income Stabilization Insurance contributions from two years to five.
9. Do a better job of publicizing the seller-lender formula offered by the FADQ, and allow beneficiaries of the FIRA's land equity lease products to obtain a loan (either a traditional one or one from an individual) for their other assets while receiving benefits from the seller-lender formula.
10. Develop an information program for business-transfer planning.

How do young farmers feel about the future?

Julie Mercier

The Fédération de la relève agricole du Québec (FRAQ) got some mileage out of its forum on the barriers to starting a farm and how to overcome them. The organization surveyed 700 young people under the age of 40 who are involved either directly or indirectly in agriculture. Here are the results:

- 92 per cent of young people surveyed considered agriculture both an occupation and a lifestyle.
 - 86 per cent of them thought that the rural setting of farm life is one of the main reasons behind their career choice.
 - 83 per cent of respondents chose agriculture so they could be their own boss.
 - 84 per cent aspire to own their own business.
 - 95 per cent want to practice their occupation full time.
- Nearly 75 per cent of respondents ranked collective marketing of their products as the most or second-most important form of assistance required for their business to remain viable.
 - Nearly 90 per cent of respondents support the idea of an agricultural profession that is viable, diversified and based on independent family businesses spread out across the country.
 - 83 to 86 per cent feel the farming profession has a role to play in feeding the world, respecting the environment and contributing to social and economic development.
 - 73 per cent want society to support and recognize agriculture as a strategic sector for Quebec's social and economic development.

* Survey conducted by Bureau d'Intervieweurs Professionnels (BIP).



For young farmers, agriculture is more than just an occupation. They feel that their sector plays an important social and economic role—and that their fellow citizens should recognize its value.

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QFA News

Farmers unable to meet demand for milkweed

Pierre Saint-Yves
Special contribution

SAINT-ADELPHE — This fall, for perhaps the first time in the history of farming, a harvester was used to bring in an unusual field crop: milkweed pods.

And Daniel Allard, president of Coopérative Monark, was in the driver's seat. "We're still in the fine-tuning stage," he explains after a pass through a milkweed field owned by his friend and co-founder of the co-operative, Jacques Gauthier. Gauthier, a grain grower in Saint-Adelphe, joined the milkweed venture last year. He planted 15 hectares of the crop in his first season before adding 10 more hectares this year.

"Our goal is to perfect a machine that can harvest a hectare in an hour," Allard explains.

On this crisp autumn day, the two men record their observations on the machine's performance. This information will be sent to engineers at two companies: Encore 3 and Protec-Style. The companies are financing the development project with the aim of upping the supply of milkweed. The plant, which is called *soyer du Québec* (Quebec silk) by the people who farm it, grows prolifically on abandoned land and roadsides. Until recently, it has been considered an agricultural weed, as



Jacques Gauthier and Nicole Pouliot of Saint-Adelphe were among the first to get into the milkweed venture.

its name suggests. Encore 3 is currently starting up a milkweed processing facility in Saint-Tite to manufac-

ture petroleum absorbents and textile products.

Meanwhile, milkweed producers are busy refining their growing methods. "This is the first time we've grown this crop," Allard says. "We have to test the waters at every stage so we know where we're putting our feet. Our goal is to design a reliable growing system that all producers can follow."

Coming up short

Coopérative Monark was founded by a group of about ten farmers mainly located in the regions of Mauricie, Estrie, Outaouais and Bas-Saint-Laurent. The name comes from the familiar monarch butterfly. Today, the co-op has 35 members who grow milkweed on at least 10 hectares each.

It will be three years before they can expect a harvest worthy of the name. This year's harvest will total about 20 tonnes, from those farmers who planted the crop in 2013. "It will be welcome income," says Gauthier with a smile. When production is in full swing, farmers might gross as much as \$2,500 per hectare.

"That's much more than we could get for other crops," says the co-op president. "But that doesn't mean we should forget about food crops either."

Next year, 250 hectares of the crop will be harvested. "They say it's not very optimistic to think we'll get a yield of two tonnes per hectare," says Allard.

The projected harvest still won't be enough to meet the industry demand. To do that, there would have to be 1,000 to 1,500 hectares planted by next year, and over 3,000 within the next few years. "We obviously won't be able to meet the demand; milkweed takes three years to establish," admits Allard.

That doesn't stop him from seeing the socioeconomic potential of this industry, which is experiencing steady growth. "For every ten hectares of milkweed, we create two jobs. And we need jobs to revitalize our rural areas and keep our young people from leaving and settling elsewhere."

The co-op president is betting that it's not just monarch butterflies who will make milkweed a large-scale crop.



For the first time, a harvester has been used in a field of milkweed.



Marcel Groleau
UPA President

Last month, Radio-Canada aroused some attention from its viewers in a news story on a report from the Minister of Sustainable Development, the Environment and the Fight Against Climate Change stating that sales of agricultural pesticides have reached record levels in Quebec. The report specified that this increase undermined the objective set out in the Québec Phytosanitary Agricultural Strategy 2011–2021 to reduce the impact of risks associated with pesticide use by 25 per cent by the year 2020.

The impact of these risks isn't measured solely in pesticide sales. Quebec is the only province in Canada that tracks sales; Ontario has stopped doing so. In the international context, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reports that there seems to be consensus on the difficulty of determining meaningful and readily available indicators that measure the impact of pesticides.

Jean-François Cliche, a science columnist with *Le Soleil*, reacted to Radio-Canada's report, saying that even though pesticide sales have increased

Pesticides: Not “out of control,” but we must do better

and the risk index hasn't gone down, Quebec hasn't necessarily “lost control.” Quebec has the strictest rules in Canada: training is mandatory for farmers who use pesticides, on-farm management and storage of pesticides are regulated and distributors must follow laws. It seems we are indeed a long way off from the “loss of control” implied by Radio-Canada.

The increased use of certain products, such as the weed killer glyphosate, can be explained by changes in farming practices. The increase in area under zero tillage should also be taken into account. This practice carries with it a number of agricultural and environmental benefits. Reducing tillage also decreases both soil compaction and fuel consumption. And conserving crop residue in the field promotes nutrient retention while limiting wind and water erosion. The practice of zero tillage, which is promoted by agri-environmental advisory clubs and by environmentalists, involves greater use of herbicides. According to statistics from these clubs, the area under zero tillage increased from 8 per cent to 24 per cent among their members between 2004 to 2013.

Vegetable, fruit and grain crops are threatened by new pests as insects venture into more northerly regions of the

continent as a result of climate change. The phenomenon isn't just limited to cities that are being infested with the emerald ash borer. The frost-free period is longer than it used to be, which results in more generations of pests per season. Given the high competition in our markets, the consequences are dire. If we're going to cut down on the use of herbicides and pesticides, we need alternatives that are economically viable.

It is likely that we can in fact reduce environmental and health risks. But this won't be possible if we don't invest in research, knowledge transfer and professional coaching for farmers. Detection tools are needed to determine whether or not an application is suitable. Developing new solutions also requires that we invest in farmer services. Let's not forget that farmers are the only people who are in a position to make decisions about their farms and to assess the risks associated with alternative methods.

The Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ) has invested scarcely \$3.2 million per year in measures regarding the responsible use of pesticides, has dismantled the funding of the aforementioned advisory clubs and has reduced the amounts allocated to the

Prime-Vert program. The funding for Montérégie's Pôle d'excellence en lutte intégrée (centre of excellence in integrated pest management) is shaky from year to year. Our repeated requests for the renewal of the Plan d'action concerté sur l'agroenvironnement et la cohabitation harmonieuse (joint plan of action on agri-environment and peaceful coexistence), a plan that would be executed in true partnership with farmers, have gone unanswered.

In the wake of Radio-Canada's news story, many people have been quick to blame farmers. In my public dealings, I have pointed out that farmers are not the only people responsible. Farmers act in good faith in protecting their crops, improving their yields and delivering a product that is up to snuff in terms of market standards.

It would be easy to pass the buck, to accuse the “Monsantos of the world” of throwing their weight around or to propose that we unilaterally ban certain products. But that won't fix anything. Farmers are open to alternatives provided they are economically viable. If we are to reshape the collective mindset, farmers and stakeholders in agriculture must work to achieve realistic objectives. This is what I ask of agriculture minister Pierre Paradis and environment minister David Heurtel.

Maintaining buffer zones: A wise move

Denis Lord
Special contribution

ROXTON POND — Maintenance often goes neglected when it comes to riparian buffers, says Isabelle Martineau of the Club Conseil Gestrie-Sol. To remedy this situation and inspire other farmers and municipalities to follow their lead, Gestrie-Sol and the Coalition du Pacte rural de Saint-Joachim-de-Shefford performed maintenance, for the first time, on riparian buffers on four farms in the Haute-Yamaska region this year. The demonstration sites covered five to seven kilometres of riverbanks on which the Coalition did some mowing and weed control, in addition to planting shrubbery. Gestrie-Sol oversees the project.

At Ferme Paccou in Roxton Pond, riparian buffers planted with arrow-

wood, elder, and sweet gale received some TLC from Jean-Luc Landreville. “In the early stages, you have to do the mowing and weeding two to three times a year,” he explains. “The shrubs are established later.” In certain places, metal protectors or sheeting are installed to repel deer to prevent disturbance to the shrubs. “The challenge is to find an effective and economical way to do maintenance,” agronomist Isabelle Martineau points out. She adds that installing and maintaining riparian buffers saves municipalities and farmers a lot of money when it comes to purifying waterways.

The Coalition subsidized the equipment purchase and the publication of a guide on riparian buffer maintenance (forthcoming in 2016). The guide is to be distributed across Quebec and is intend-

ed for farmers, consultants and municipal inspectors. The funding will also allow Gestrie-Sol to design an interactive map that will include various data such as sites of intervention, invasive plants and vulnerable species.

Gestrie-Sol favours a turnkey approach and has installed 20 kilometres' worth of riparian buffers in Haute-Yamaska, including on Ferme Paccou. Owner Brigitte Paccou raises pigs and grows corn and soy. She is highly satisfied with the Coalition and Gestrie-Sol's work, which involves no cost or extra work on her part. “My banks were sinking. This is one less thing I have to worry about, and I'm doing my part for the environment,” says Paccou.

The fruits grown on the banks also bring in some extra income, which farmers gladly welcome.



Yvan Meunier of the Coalition du Pacte rural de Saint-Joachim-de-Shefford plant nursery shows off the newly acquired Billy Goat mower.

QFA News

QFA helps seniors, seeks partners

Dougal Rattray
QFA Executive Director

The Quebec Farmers' Association (QFA) has been working alongside partners for the last year to bring to fruition a project that seeks to improve the lives of our senior citizens. The germ of the project was seeded in the fall of 2015, a grant proposal was submitted on February 16, 2015, and a positive response was received in April, 2015. The Grant awarded amounted to \$6,000. The project, "The Beauty of Therapeutic Horticulture for Seniors," began on May 20, 2015 and encompassed therapeutic gardening at two seniors' residences, Le Manoir and Sully Gardens, both in Wakefield, west Quebec.

Le Pacte Rural is the name of the grant program, and it fosters rural community projects and works with partners to achieve common goals. This grant originated from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Regions and Land Occupancy, and was administered by the CLD des Collines-de-L'Outaouais. QFA has partnered with Canadian Organic Growers as part



Partners were invited to attend the celebratory reception – resident, Eileen Nesbitt, former QFA Executive Director, Ivan Hale, Seniors Gardening Project Coordinator, Adele McKay, QFA Executive Director, Dougal Rattray, Municipal Councillor, Claude Giroux, Rupert Library volunteer, Margaret Nugent, Assistant Director CLD de Collines, Louise Marchildon and QFA President John McCart

of their Seniors Organic Gardening Program for this project. Several local partners, energized by the potential and success of the project, jumped on board after the project was initiated.

Special thanks goes out to Judy Thompson and Margaret Nugent, from Rupert Library, for their generous donation to Sully Gardens.

Seniors participated with the horticultural therapy project coordinator, Adèle McKay, in creating new garden beds and extending existing one. Planting bountiful organic gardens with many varieties of vegetables, herbs, edible flowers, and beautiful flowers has built an attractive area, which seniors can use and which has

given them a sense of ownership, pride and purpose.

The local municipal council was approached for support and the reception has been positive. The QFA is now working towards extension funding to sustain the project into the future. The response from the senior's community has been resoundingly positive. The residents can enjoy their surroundings in a relaxed atmosphere and pick for themselves the fruits of their labour.

A celebratory event was organized for September, before the end of the growing season, and the residents welcomed the QFA, partners and municipal representatives to a fun-filled reception with music and light snacks. A good time was had by all. This is truly a wonderful project that speaks to the richness of collaboration and community. A desire to roll this project out across the province is gestating, and the QFA is seeking potential partners and interested communities to get involved. Interested parties please contact the QFA office to discuss partnerships and opportunities. 450-679-0540 Ext. 8536 or qfa@upa.qc.ca

MAPAQ neglecting agricultural associations

Thierry Larivière

The former "casino" program, which has supported over 70 agricultural associations over the years, was terminated on March 31 and has not been renewed.

"Support programs are being reviewed," stated Alexandre Noël, a spokesperson from the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ) in an interview with *La Terre de chez nous*. The old Programme d'appui financier aux regroupements et aux associations de producteurs désignés (PAFRAPD, or financial support program for designated farmers' groups and associations, known informally as "casino") ended at the end of March. The specifics of the new program are still not known, nor is it known when it will be up and running.

Certain sources indicate that it will be replaced by the Programme de soutien aux stratégies sectorielles de développement 2 (PSSSD2, or support

program for sectoral development strategies), but no timeline has been offered. Meanwhile, some associations are having to lay off employees while others simply might not survive. Historically, the PAFRAPD has provided \$2 million in funding for agricultural exhibitions, out of its overall budget of about \$6 million. Those responsible for exhibitions have been informed that, unlike the associations, their funding would be renewed.

The MAPAQ provided *La Terre de chez nous* with a list of groups that received contributions under PAFRAPD in 2014–2015; there are 23 associations on the list. Given that there used to be 70 associations, certain groups have presumably received nothing since the previous financial year (2013–2014). The budget cuts made to the MAPAQ this year—to the tune of 14.5 per cent—are probably connected with this drop in support for associations. The MAPAQ was more affected by cuts than any other department.

Total uncertainty

"It's weakening our sector enormously," explains Julien Pagé, president of the Syndicat des producteurs de lapins du Québec, noting that rabbit promotion has been delayed as a result. In past years, approximately one third of the \$66,000 the syndicate received from the PAFRAPD and from purchasers went towards rabbit promotion, not to mention similar amounts contributed by other partners.

This year's lack of funding has thrown a wrench into the works. The other major issue is Canada's animal welfare code for rabbits. The Canadian code, which will be referenced in the new Quebec legislation currently in preparation, is having to be fully funded by producers themselves. Quebec producers can't abandon their colleagues in Ontario and other provinces in the development of these new standards, as they clearly reflect the MAPAQ's role in managing the animal welfare aspects of livestock farming.

Pagé says he can't see why farmers

are being left to flounder in uncertainty. There are rumours flying around saying that the new program might not be retroactive to the beginning of 2015, that funding will be on a per-project rather than a per-year basis and that associations will have to contribute 30 per cent for every project. None of this is officially confirmed, however.

"We really don't know where this is all headed," says Pagé, who is still trying to convince the MAPAQ of the importance of clear communication with the associations. Pagé says his sector is already "highly structured" and that he doesn't understand why certain MAPAQ representatives are citing him the example of other sectors (such as the many horse associations), who could join together to save money.

La Terre attempted to contact Minister Pierre Paradis to discuss the issue. The MAPAQ sent a response saying that the program is "under review."

QFA launches a new season of Farm Food Forums



The QFA's Farm Food Forum videoconferences allow participants from different towns across Quebec to see and hear the same presentation and ask questions of industry experts.

The Quebec Farmers' Association (QFA) is pleased to announce its 2015-2016 fall and winter educational videoconferencing series. Each evening will deal with a topic of interest to Quebec's agricultural and rural community.

"These events provide an opportunity for the rural community to meet together to learn from subject-matter experts and to participate in dialogue which would otherwise not be available to them," said QFA President John McCart in announcing this year's series. "By using videoconference technology everyone can participate without having to travel long distances."

Taking place in English, the Forums will be hosted in Community Learning Centres (CLCs) on the last Thursday of each month from October to April, beginning at 7:30 p.m. and ending by 10:00 p.m. (excluding December).

- January 28, 2016** - Cooking with the *Advocate*: Food, farming and health
- February 26, 2016** - Technical advice on improving animal health and nutrition
- March 24, 2016** - This changing world: Growing food with more unpredictable weather
- April 28, 2016** - "It will never happen to me" This is why: -Understanding safety risk management.

The following are the participating communities:

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Low	819 422-3584
Lachute	450 562-8571, ext. 8449
Ormstown	450 288-5180
Magog	819 238-1285
Richmond	819 826-3702, ext. 24026
Bury	819 872-3771

To reserve, please call the CLC nearest to you. Admission is free. For further information, call 450 679-0540, ext. 8536 or email qfa@upa.qc.ca



Mission

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

Vision

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

Shared Values

Members of the QFA believe in:

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

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



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At Les Serres Synnott, training comes first

GASPÉSIE-LES ÎLES

Geneviève Gélinas

Special contribution

The Gaspésie region is far from any of the institutions that teach horticulture, which makes it hard to scout out recent graduates or train recruits. Yet somehow Les Serres Synnott, located in L'Anse-au-Griffon, has managed to find a way to offer its employees training courses, which it relies on to improve their skills and retain staff.

L'ANSE-AU-GRIFFON — Allen Synnott, one of the owners of Les Serres Synnott, has always taken a proactive approach to learning his craft. In 1989, when he and his wife, Francine Ste-Croix, started their business, Synnott knew he would have to go take a course in ornamental horticulture because he had no formal training in the discipline.

He did have agriculture in his blood, though. "I get it from my mother and from my great-uncle. They were always connected with the land," Synnott says. But learning wasn't just something he

was forced to do. "I've always been an avid learner," he adds.

The two owners of Les Serres Synnott, along with the six people they employ from June to September, work in 15,000 square feet of greenhouses.

"We've always had to train our own employees," explains Synnott. "[Horticulture] labour is hard to find in Gaspésie—and in Quebec in general—because the work is seasonal, but also quite physical and demanding. Employees who work in production are also responsible for giving customers

advice, which is actually the hardest part."

The horticulturist says there's nothing worse than a salesperson who gives their customers any old advice that comes to mind. He's constantly telling his employees that "the best way to tell the truth is to know what you're talking about."

The most important training resources are inside the business itself. Synnott's daughter Édith has a diploma from the Institut de technologie agroalimentaire in La Pocatière. "For anything to do with plants, Édith and I are the ones who train employees on-site," Synnott explains.

Gilbert Bilodeau, an agronomist from the Institut québécois du développement de l'horticulture ornementale (IQDHO), spends the odd day on-site to deliver specific training sessions. He's also been a resource to turn to when problems crop up. "If we have questions, we'll often take pictures and send them to Gilbert. The next day, we'll have an informal meeting," Synnott says.

The employer notes that the best-trained employees are also the most independent ones. "We don't have to be with them all the time, they're better workers, and they're able to tell customers exactly what they need to know.

And if they don't know the answer, they consult with me."

Synnott says training reinforces the sense of belonging to the business and keeps employees around for longer.

Les Serres Synnott is less than 500 metres from the ocean. It's not unheard of for Synnott to hear a whale call as he works. But the beauty of his surroundings comes at a price.

There aren't many courses offered in Gaspésie, and Synnott says this is because there aren't enough farms. He's often travelled as far as Quebec City, Montreal or Saint-Hyacinthe, cities that are 700 to 900 kilometres from his home.

When a training opportunity arises in Gaspésie, Synnott jumps at the chance. A few years ago, a demonstration on hemp crops took place in Capucins, 230 kilometres from Les Serres Synnott. That didn't stop him: "We filled the van with employees and drove there."

At 59 years of age, Synnott is thinking about slowing down. He also makes sure to pass his knowledge on to his children. "I made sure the three children who could take over the business attended a pesticide course. I invited my son Patrick to attend a garlic-growing course with me," he illustrates.



Allen Synnott, one of the owners of Les Serres Synnott, trains his employees personally, in addition to doing business with external resources.

Bœuf Gaspésie: A source of pride

GASPÉSIE

Émélie Bernier

Special correspondent

About a hundred Gaspé beef farmers were invited to a meeting in 2008. The aim was to come together and imagine a kind of niche product that would give their meat an edge at the grocery store—and be eaten by consumers in Gaspé.

BAIE-DES-CHALEURS – “There were 13 farmers who came forward. At the first meeting, there were 11 of us. When we each had to front \$500 to set up the co-op, that number fell to 7. But we had a vision for the future,” recalls Marc Cyr, who farms and works as Bœuf Gaspésie’s marketing officer. Today, 60 per cent of his production is sold under the Bœuf Gaspésie label. The label is associated with a set of specifications developed with the help of the UPA and the Ministère de l’Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l’Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ). “I found that we spent a lot of time deliberating, but without that solid foundation, we might not still be going today. We needed a well-thought-out business plan and development plan. We also needed specifications that set our beef apart. But we also knew they couldn’t be too restrictive or hard to follow or else the farmers wouldn’t be on board. We got lots of support on both sides!” he exclaims.

Hormone-free, but not organic

The specifications mainly have to do with animal feed, weight, aging, and so on. “Bœuf Gaspésie products aren’t treated with hormones or antibiotics. They aren’t organic, but they are ecological. And we don’t push weight gain. Just like on traditional farms, the calves spend 200 days with their mothers. In a feedlot, it’s standard for cattle to gain 3.5 to 4 pounds per day. We keep it to 2 or 3 pounds, and the animals never go in a lot. We want to avoid that stress for them,” explains Cyr.

The animals go to slaughter in Luceville, and then the meat is left to age for two weeks on the hook. “The beef loses about three per cent of its mass, whereas in typical establishments the



Ferme Belgi-M.A.G. is nestled among the green valleys of Chaleur Bay.

meat ages inside the packaging, with no evaporation,” Cyr explains. What’s the result? Quality meat that is both rich and flavourful.

Tough times

Since 2011, an average of 225 animals per year have received Bœuf Gaspésie certification. But with the price of conventional beef soaring, times are difficult for specialty beef farmers. “All over the province, niche beef is a tough business because it’s getting less profitable. When we first started, our products sold for 20 per cent more than conventional beef because we had higher production costs and less volume. But since conventional beef started coming up in price, that margin has gone down to 11 per cent, where it is right now. We’re surviving because the farmers didn’t put all their eggs in the same basket. They kept some of their production in conventional beef,” explains Cyr.

Marketing is paramount. “Our beef sold in three days!” Cyr explains. “With media attention, it was new and shiny. But statistically, the proportion of people interested in niche meat is between five to ten per cent, and Gaspé’s not that big a place. We had to get into the urban market, and now we have to make sure we survive long term. That’s part of my mandate.”

For Cyr, formerly the president of the Syndicat des producteurs de bovins de la Gaspésie–Les Îles, the Bœuf Gaspésie venture is still worthwhile. “We started the co-op to improve living conditions for farmers. We didn’t think it made sense that locals couldn’t eat our beef.

Maybe it wasn’t the easiest route to take, but it did create a sense of pride because now we’re no longer at the mercy of the conventional beef market. Where we’re at right now, it’s not about the money—it’s about pride!” says Cyr, who is proud to hold the Bœuf Gaspésie torch high.

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From the field to the shelf

LAURENTIDES

Valérie Maynard

Special contribution

Since mid-September, consumers have been able to buy Aux Cassis d'Argenteuil products at Metro grocery stores. The company is one of a dozen agri-food businesses in the Laurentians region chosen to be part of Metro's local purchasing policy. "It's a great opportunity, but it also comes with pressure," say the owners. Join us on a short trip behind the grocery display.

SAINT-ANDRÉ-D'ARGENTEUIL — Carole Valiquette and Paul Hébert started their agri-food business in 2000. It was something Hébert had dreamed of as a teenager. "I get it from my father, who was an epicure and an autodidact. He grew all kinds of fruits and vegetables in our yard. He even made his own wine and dreamed of owning a plant nursery. Personally, I wanted something more along the lines of a farm," explains the owner, whose operation has over 10,000 blackcurrant plants of different cultivars.

He uses the blackcurrant as a primary ingredient in three kinds of alcohol (aperitif wine, port-style fortified wine, and crème de cassis) and in a number of non-alcoholic products too; by far the most popular are syrup, vinegar, vinaigrette and jelly.

Aux Cassis d'Argenteuil opened its doors to the public in 2007. Five years later, the couple built a bistro with a patio to accommodate their customers more comfortably. The customer base is mostly people passing by, plus some regulars who have become blackcurrant

devotees. "Our products make wonderful gifts," says Hébert. In fact, fully half of sales are made at Christmas markets (Rosemère and Gatineau). The other half are made on-site, at their boutique, at farmers' markets (Mont-Tremblant, Saint-Eustache, Val-David and Lachute), at a few gourmet food stores in the region and, for the last few months, at the IGA in Lachute.

Coping with the new demand

When Valiquette and Hébert got wind of Metro's proposal to have a display devoted to agri-food businesses in the region, they jumped at the opportunity—then they rolled up their sleeves. "We had to ramp up production quickly. Now we have to figure out how to cope with the new demand," they say. Their first delivery included five cases of 12 bottles (blackcurrant syrup, vinegar, vinaigrette and jelly) for each of the ten first participating Metro stores. Six other Metros will be added, which will increase demand in proportion.

Each of the 12 farm businesses participating in the program is required to get its own products to market, and Aux Cassis d'Argenteuil is no exception. This means the couple is responsible for



Paul Hébert pictured at his blackcurrant operation in Saint-André-d'Argenteuil.

ensuring a steady supply to each of the grocery stores, from Saint-Eustache to Mont-Laurier. "It's a major predicament for us at the moment," admits Hébert.

The good news is that even though the program has been up and running in the Laurentians for just a few weeks, the participating farmers are already organizing to help each other ensure display shelves stay well-stocked with products from the region. "We're trying to organize ourselves to avoid unnecessary trips," they explain.

Outside the Laurentians, this program to promote regional products is active in six other regions: Centre-du-Québec, Lanaudière, Chaudière-Appalaches, Estrie, Bas-Saint-Laurent and Outaouais.

Local honeyberry being sold at Avril health food stores

Denis Lord

Special contribution

Although the harvest wasn't as abundant as expected, 2015 was still an excellent year for Serge and Manuel Gosselin, who grow honeyberries in Sainte-Cécile-de-Milton.

SAINTE-CÉCILE-DE-MILTON — The father-son team began distributing their frozen honeyberries in four Avril health food stores. The owners of Les Petits Fruits du Clocher created the Indigo Super Fruit brand. They deliver their honeyberries about once a month. Sales are modest at the moment. "People most-

ly buy fresh fruit in the summer, plus honeyberries are on the pricey side," says Serge, who used to be a dairy farmer.

But with superfoods so popular these days, optimism prevails. "Honeyberries are the best of the emerging fruits," Manuel says. "They're sweet and kids love them. They don't have seeds, which makes processing easier. It won't be long before they're a household name. That will bring prices down to the level of other berries."

A mechanical engineer by trade, Manuel quit his job to devote himself full time to what was originally just a "weekend project." Earlier this year, he received the Bourse de la relève agricole de la MRC de la Haute-Yamaska, valued at \$10,000. "That's allowed us to advance our business plan by two years," he says.

Honeyberry bushes were planted at Les Petits Fruits du Clocher each year from 2011 to 2015. There are now 11,000 bushes in total. Manuel designed a machine that

harvests fruits at three times the rate of hand-picking. In July, they harvested the 2,000 honeyberry bushes that were planted in 2011. "We got 1.5 pounds of fruit per plant, but we were expecting twice that," says Serge. To make up the difference for their frozen products, Serge and Manuel bought more fruit—not without difficulty—from a few producers in their region and from Lac-Saint-Jean.

The best is yet to come, it seems. On the one hand, the bushes at Les Petits Fruits du Clocher will reach their peak productivity five or six years from now. On the other hand, even if Quebec is supposedly North America's best honeyberry habitat, there's still much to be learned when it comes to soil fertilization in honeyberry operations, for instance.

Looking ahead, the 2016 season will likely be a big one for Serge and Manuel. They may be able to start distributing through another grocery chain, and they still haven't decided whether or not to



Serge and Manuel Gosselin at their honeyberry orchard in Sainte-Cécile-de-Milton. Manuel has made improvements to the harvester, which has greatly increased the speed of operations.

add more plants to their orchard. New cultivars, such as Boreal Beauty and Boreal Blizzard, will soon be available on the market, and the berries of these cultivars reportedly often weigh over three grams.

One thing's for certain: pick-your-own will continue in Sainte-Cécile-de-Milton. "It's a safe bet; that's where a third of our harvest is," says Manuel Gosselin. "We can sell the berries for a lower price than in grocery stores because it doesn't involve any storage or cleaning expenses."

Dairy quota sales increasing sharply

Julie Mercier

After months of milk quota scarcity, the centralized quota sales system is starting to see more activity. Farmers' fears surrounding falling milk prices and the future of quota are nothing new.

The centralized quota sales system has been significantly more active since May. Since that time, quota purchases and sales have more than tripled, and sales for the month of September weren't yet finished at the time of writing. "We've seen a major upswing," notes François Dumontier, public and government relations consultant at Les producteurs de lait du Québec.

Word on the street

Various auctioneers contacted by *La Terre de chez nous* have noted an increase in dairy farm sales, and multiple factors are at play. "What's hitting many farmers hardest over the short term is the drop in milk prices," notes Johanne Boulet of Encans Boulet, an auctioneering service. "Farmers are being asked to do more work for less money. They're making \$5,000 less per month. That's \$40,000 to \$50,000 less this year," says Luc Breton, an auctioneer based in the Centre-du-Québec region. He calculates that his sales volume has jumped by 30



Several auctioneers contacted by *La Terre de chez nous* have noted an increase in the number of dairy farms for sale.

per cent since the end of July. "Auctions are taking place like never before. One to two herds are being bought every day—especially since we heard that supply management might be in peril."

Rumours surrounding the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations and Canada's potential concessions regarding access to its dairy market have left a lot of dairy farmers shaken

up, says Boulet. Farmers whose children don't want to take over the farm or whose successors aren't exactly itching to take over are more vulnerable. "Rather than waiting one or two years to sell, they'd rather not take a chance," says Bertrand Pelletier, an auctioneer based in Bas-Saint-Laurent.

Auctioneer Daniel Paul-Hus agrees. "People are selling their quota to protect themselves. In the last three months, sales have gone up more than usual, with the rumours and uncertainty over supply management. There's apprehension in the market, and it's affecting people of all ages," he says.

Paul-Hus observes that farmers aren't distinguishing between rumours and facts. He's been trying to calm people's fears. "We don't know how the arrival of European cheeses has impacted us, even though it's been two years since the agreement with the European Union was signed. It's the same thing with the TPP. I've told lots of farmers: 'Don't worry about your supply management over the short term.' There won't be any sudden changes. But if the agreement is signed, people will definitely be getting out of the business, especially in the 50 and older age group," the auctioneer predicts.

The benefits of paying your children

Marc St-Roch, CPA, CA, M. Fisc.
UPA accounting and tax services network

In Quebec and in Canada, our tax system is progressive for individuals: as income increases, the tax rate also increases. Generally, individuals don't pay any taxes if their revenue is less than their basic personal exemption, which is about \$11,000.

Business owners are permitted to pay their minor children a reasonable amount if they do work for the business. This expenditure lowers the business owner's taxable income. Most kids could use a bit of pocket money, so why not pay them a little and lower the family's taxes in the process?

In addition to reducing the business owner's tax payable amount (the owner benefits from lower tax rates for each family member), paying children improves access to certain personal credits and social programs that are determined on the basis of



Paying your children lowers your business's taxable income.

the couple's net income. Examples include the Canada child tax benefit, the GST credit, the solidarity tax credit, the child assistance payment and the working bonus.

To illustrate the taxes you can save and the other benefits you can obtain by paying your minor children, take the example of a couple with a family income of about \$50,000 from the farm

business. Assume the couple has two children aged 14 and 16 who have no other source of income. After consulting with their accountant, the parents decide to pay each of their children an annual salary of \$3,000 for their help with the farm work. In any case, this is the same expense that the parents would incur for their children's needs after taxes.

Paying the children a total of \$6,000 reduces the farm business income and lowers the parents' income by the same amount. The income from personal credits and social programs, together with the reduction in taxes and contributions the parents have to pay from having paid their children, will yield additional tax savings of about \$3,500. That means the \$6,000 the parents pay their children will effectively cost them only \$2,500 after taxes.

Clearly, in this situation as in many others, the calculation is worth the effort!

Macdonald



Reports



Visualization of Lifetime Profitability: A Decision Making Tool

Dairy farm managers, like other business owners, need to manage their assets efficiently in order to maximize profits. A lot of data is available that can help farm managers improve profitability but this data is not in a useful or easily understood format. For a farm manager, efficient dairy production depends to a great extent on proper decisions made at different production stages. Computerized information systems can potentially help to deal with the increased complexity of decision-making and availability of information in dairy farming, but there is a need for easier interpretation and analyses of the increasing amount of information a herd manager is exposed to, given the limited time available and need for rapid decision making.

This prompted PhD candidate Hector Delgado, under the supervision of Animal Science professors Kevin Wade and Roger Cue, to develop a way to make better use of the available data by using information visualization techniques that allow for the interpretation and understanding of the information by using simple graphs.

A merged dataset extracted from two databases — Valacta's and the Animal Health Files' (DSA) — was used for this project. The objective was to use a reliable source of information to analyze the effects of factors such as health problems or multiple breeding services on lifetime profitability and to develop a visualization tool to help farm managers in the process of decision-making.

The visualization tool prototype created is a simple, but precise way to identify and visualize factors affecting profitability at both the herd and individual level, and to monitor the effect of past decisions on profit.

At the herd level, multiple comparisons allow herd managers to assess the overall results of the herd compared to other herds in the region, to evaluate the evolution over time of the individual profit of cows in the herd compared to mean results and also to rank their profit performance within the herd. It allows them to visualize how factors such as health events, breeding-services or age at first calving affect the expected profitability.

At the individual level, the

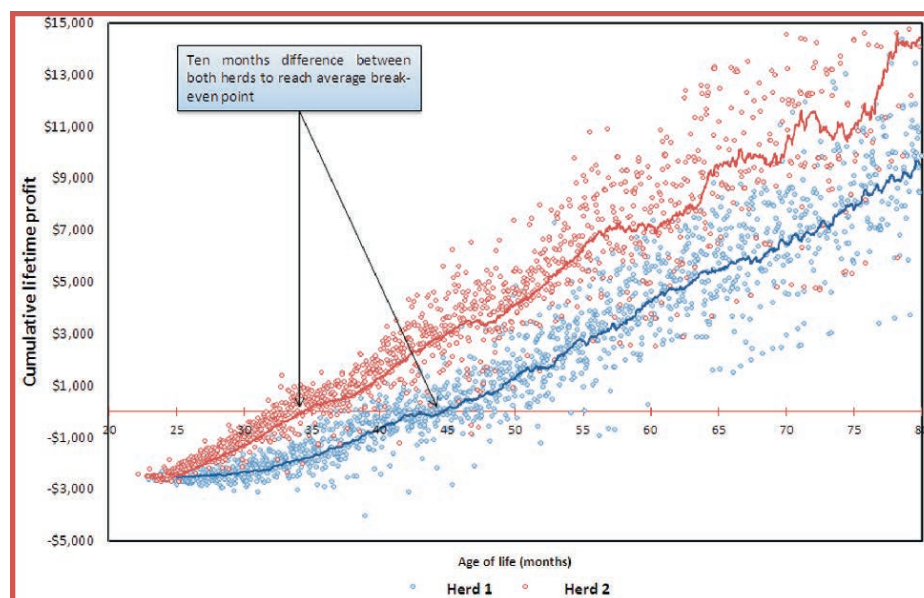


Figure 1. Comparison of the cumulative lifetime profit for two herds with similar management characteristics by days of life (expressed in months). Each point represents an individual cow on an individual test-day, e.g. at 25 months of age, 33 months, 47, etc., in one of two herds. There is a 10-month difference between the two herds in the age at which cows begin to break-even.

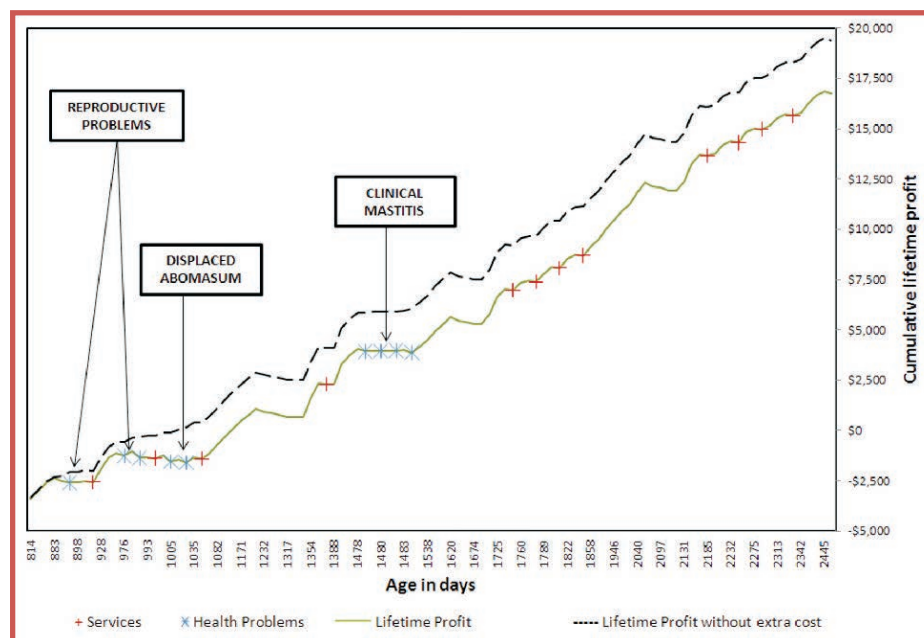


Figure 2. Cumulative Lifetime Profit and cumulative profit without avoidable losses for an individual cow. Here we are able to visualize the cumulative impact of several repeat breedings (services) and health events (mastitis, displaced abomasum and reproductive problems) on cumulative lifetime profit of a cow. Over the lifetime it results in a foregone profit of 3000\$ (19,500\$ vs 16,500\$).

visualization of different profitability curves allows herd managers to make decisions based not only on final profit, but also to consider factors such as the cost of the heifer at the moment of first calving, the cumulative cost of feed and the milk value as well as individual marginal contribution to profit of the herd and profitability ranking among all the animals in the herd. The herd manager can monitor the cumulative

profit performance of any selected animal by day of lifetime and compare the result with the respective herd. This benchmark can help herd managers in the decision-making process regarding which animals should stay or leave the herd based on their profit performance. Visualization can also be used to observe the impact of the costs of health events and repeated breeding services on cumulative lifetime profit of an

individual animal that would otherwise not be as evident given the length of the productive cycles of the cows. For example, if the first three breeding-services after calving have failed should the animal be inseminated again? What has been the impact of these multiple inseminations on lifetime profit? Or, regarding health problems, although the milk revenues of the selected animal may be normal, if the cow has presented various cases of clinical mastitis in different lactations, then what is the impact of the cost of these health events on the profit performance of the animal?

An additional feature of the visualization tool prototype is that it offers the decision-maker options to select benchmarks related to the herd management characteristics (region, housing, milking equipment, feeding system, herd size), allowing more specific comparisons with other herds with similar characteristics. For instance, it might be of more interest to compare the herd profit performance or health costs with results obtained by herds with the same milking system (milking robot, milking parlor or milkline). These specific comparisons will also give decision makers the opportunity to set realistic goals, based on specific criteria, such as the region where the herd is located, or the milking equipment in current use.

Although at this moment this tool is at the prototype level, it is hoped to continue to the next stage of the process (pilot project) and in the medium term that Dairy Herd Improvement agencies can adapt and adopt parts of it as useful profitability reports. The software will also help dairy farmers to visually assess more precisely the impact of health and reproductive events on the profitability of individual cows across a herd or clusters of farms, and help make better decisions to improve the overall profitability of their herds.

This project was funded through a FRQNT-Novalait/MAPAQ/AAFC project. Collaborators: R. Cue (Principal Investigator, McGill University), K. Wade (McGill University), D. Lefebvre and R. Lacroix (Valacta), J. Dubuc and E. Bouchard (Faculté de médecine vétérinaire, Université de Montréal), A. Sewalem (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada); Hector Delgado (PhD student, McGill University), Denis Haine (PhD student, Université de Montréal).

VALACTA – Dairy Production Centre of Expertise



A most instructive fall season

Necessity is the mother of invention

René Roy, agr.
Agro-economist, R&D, Valacta

Jean Brisson, agr.
Dairy Production Expert, R&D, Valacta

Fall was fast and furious for dairy producers this year: caught between TPP negotiations and a drop in milk prices, the dairy industry is facing new constraints. So what can we do? Valacta held close to a hundred discussion groups throughout Quebec this fall. Producers responded quickly and in large numbers, with more than 1,000 participants attending the meetings. Our goal was simple: take a few hours to discuss possible short-term solutions to cope with the impacts of the drop in the price of milk. The meetings proved to be a fantastic opportunity to share ideas and demonstrate our resourcefulness.

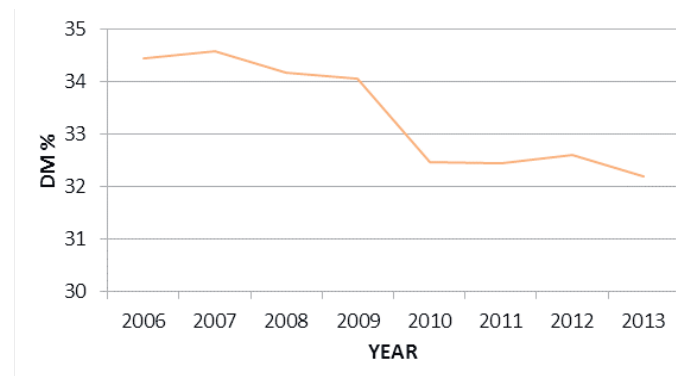
Lessons learned

History shows that some difficult situations have brought about some very positive changes. Think back to 2008 and 2009, when too much rain produced mediocre forages.

But 2010 proved to be an exceptional year for both yields and harvesting conditions, delivering forages of outstanding quality. No two years are the same, and we learn to adapt to the challenges while learning from past experiences. Most producers have improved their harvesting methods and are now able to harvest better quality forages, even when the weather is uncooperative.

Collectively, producers are harvesting younger forages (lower ADF percentage), resulting in a higher forage intake and a greater contribution to energy intake (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Evolution of the ADF content of legume silages harvested in Quebec in 2014



The impact in the barn is indisputable. The milk-to-concentrate ratio jumped from 2.72 to 3.10 (Figure 2) and has been increasing ever since.

Figure 2 - Milk-to-concentrate ratio of herds enrolled in Valacta's advisory service for feeding



In 2009, a farm that shipped 1,500 L of milk per day used 209 t of concentrates; today, however, the same production would require only 171 t. That represents a saving of 38 t—at \$450/t! Such a margin can certainly help when market conditions are challenging.

The milk-to-concentrate ratio speaks volumes...

Is the ration being well used? Are you wasting feed? Are you getting your money's worth from your cows? The advantage of the milk-to-concentrate ratio is that it is easy to calculate by dividing the quantity of milk shipped daily by the quantity of concentrates fed per day to dry and lactating cows. Remember to convert high-moisture grain corn to its equivalent dry-corn weight.

What is the ratio we should be aiming for? A 2:1 ratio is bad under any circumstances. A 4.5:1 ratio is excellent when herd productivity is high and body condition is stable. On the other hand, a farm with a ratio of 6:1 could be in bad shape...

... but the milk-to-concentrate ratio doesn't tell the whole story

Table 1 was shown during Valacta's discussion groups. Although very useful, the milk-to-concentrate ratio alone is not sufficient as we would only be looking at one side of the equation—that is, the money going out. The margin gives us a more complete picture by representing the difference between the money coming in and the money going out. Ultimately, the goal is to improve profitability.

The data presented in Table 1 also shows how variable the results are from one farm to the next. For example, to earn the same income, Farm C spends

over \$5,000 more than Farm E. This is almost double, and it underlines why such information is crucial.

TABLE 1 - TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC PARAMETERS OF A FEW QUEBEC FARMS						
Farm	A	B	C	D	E	Valacta average ¹
Milk-to-concentrate ratio	2.16	2.88	2.27	4.57	3.74	3.3
Concentrate cost (\$/hL)	18.50	15.88	22.09	15.59	12.53	13.29
Concentrate cost (\$/t)	399	459	502	686	455	446
Tonnes per month for 1,500 L/day	22	16	21	10	12	
Concentrate cost (\$/month)	8 800	7 350	10 550	6 900	5 460	
Milk payment after deductions (\$/month)	35 000					

¹ Herds with the advisory service for feeding, September 2014 to August 2015

Some avenues for improvement

• Forage quality

Quality is crucial. It can be costly to compensate to maintain production. The target: 30 per cent ADF for hay and grass silages.

• Forage dry matter intake

The two-per-cent-of-body-weight rule that was taught is outdated as potential intake is in fact much higher (around 2.5 per cent of body weight or more). To reach that goal, you must:

- adjust concentrate intake accordingly and
- ensure that forage is always available in the feed bunk.

• Grain texture

When cows are consuming a great deal, the feed transits too quickly through the digestive system and can result in higher milk-urea levels than expected. Protein is wasted, so there will be less left for production, and milk-protein levels will be lower.

• Cow grouping

The needs of a cow producing 50 kg of milk differ greatly from those of a cow producing 25 kg. For TMR herds, a two-group system is recommended, and the groups should include more or less the same number of cows rather than an 80-20 split.

• Transition period

The Transition Cow Index (TCI) is an excellent measuring tool. The cow that starts with a TCI of -1,400 is not off to a good start. It would be justifiable if that cow gave birth to twins ten days before her due date. Otherwise, quick action is required.

Other avenues

It would take far too long to review all of the solutions suggested during the discussion groups. Nonetheless, it was a tremendous opportunity for collective reflection involving producers and many of their partners. When we take the time to stop and think, solutions emerge.

Conclusion

This article offers no new solutions, nor did any arise during the discussion groups. Instead, producers will need to be creative in adapting the solutions to the realities of their operations. Gains are possible, and different options can be considered to achieve those gains. So what are your goals for 2016? How will you achieve them? Why not consider getting your advisors involved?

Farm Safety

What causes a farm accident?

Canadian Agricultural Safety Association

Farming isn't easy work. Farming isn't for the faint of heart, the easily defeated or the undetermined. A successful farmer is an optimist and a realist at the same time. A farmer knows his land, his equipment, his livestock and his operation inside out. This determination and wisdom often translates into prosperous farms and thriving farming communities. Another part of a successful farming operation is understanding what causes farm accidents and how to prevent them.

Accidents often seem to "just happen." Things seem to be going just fine one minute, and then catastrophe strikes. An entanglement, a rollover, a crush or an engulfment happens. What contributes to a farm accident (incident)? More importantly, what can be done to prevent the incident, or at the very minimum, what can be done to reduce the severity?

There can be as many as 20 factors that contribute to a serious incident. Shortcuts, overconfidence, lack of training, poor housekeeping, distractions,

physical conditions and disregard for safe work procedures are all examples of factors that contribute to farm injuries and fatalities. Sometimes these factors can combine to create a particularly dangerous situation. For example, a tired, hungry farmer hooks up a power take-off (PTO) that's missing the guard—the danger factor of an unguarded PTO is compounded by the farmer's physical state.

When we are exposed to a hazard day after day, we often overlook the risk associated with that hazard. We become numb to the potential danger. We say things to ourselves like, "Nobody has been hurt yet" or "I know it is a problem, so I'll be OK." Being complacent about the hazards on the farm is also a major contributing factor to farm incidents.

None of this is new information—in fact, some people might even call it common sense. "Of course I know that's dangerous!" they might say. But incidents keep happening. According to new Canadian Agricultural Injury Reporting (CAIR) data, from 2002-2012 there was an average of 85 ag-related deaths per year. It cannot be overstated that farming is a hazardous occupation and

there are ways to prevent these deaths. When an incident or even a close-call happens, it's easy to see in hindsight the details and factors that contributed to it. Sometimes, when there's been a fatality or injury on the farm we ask, "What were they thinking?" or "How did they not see that coming?" Of course, it's easy to say that in retrospect. We have the benefit of being able to see the whole picture. However, there is hope.

The smallest of actions or the tiniest of changes can make a difference when it comes to preventing an injury. Taking a ten-minute nap, walking around the tractor to check for hazards, replacing engineering devices like guards, accessing proper training, talking about farm safety, asking questions, taking your time and using the proper equipment for the job are all things that can be done to prevent an incident. There isn't a one-solution-fits-all approach to farm safety. Farming is dynamic and ever-shifting—so are the hazards and, therefore, so are the safety approaches.

The key to prevention is to see the factors that contribute to an incident and address them before an injury or fatality occurs. Using a critical eye, developing a farm-safety plan and being proactive are all really great ways to make your farm a safe farm. Sometimes it's not easy to ask yourself the hard questions about the safety on your farm. Sometimes improving safety on your farm isn't cheap or even very fun, but it's integral to your farm operation. A solid farm-safety plan that controls the hazards can prevent farm incidents from occurring or at the very least can reduce their impact.

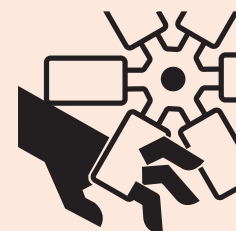
For more information about the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association and farm safety, please visit casa-acsa.ca.



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:
Cutting/severing of fingers or hand – Fan



WARNING:
Cutting/severing of toes or foot – Blade

Hazard symbols taken from the Association of Equipment Manufacturers.



Les Producteurs de lait du Québec

ATTENTION: Change to the SCVQ

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

Centralized Quota Sales System NOVEMBER 2015

Centralized Quota Sales System	Fixed Price	\$25,000.00
	Number	Quantity in kg b.f./day
Total offers to sell	123	649.6
Offers to sell participating in the distribution	123	649.6
Successful offers to sell participating in the distribution	123	649.6
Net quantity sold by the reserve		2.3
Total offers to buy	1,104	6,778.0
Offers to buy participating in the distribution	1,104	6,778.0
Successful offers to buy participating in the distribution	1,104	651.6

SALES			PURCHASES		
Number	Quantity in kg b.f./day	Cumulation	Price offered \$/kg b.f./day	Number	Quantity in kg b.f./day
2	0.4		< 25,000.00		
1,002	649.2	649.6	25,000.00 ceiling price	1,104	6,778.0

The fixed price for November is the ceiling price for this month. A quota quantity of 649.6 b.f./day was offered for sale at the fixed price. Of this quantity, an amount of 1.2 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 = 0.3 kg BF/day • 2nd step distribution by prorata = 5.07% • Portion of quantities satisfied = 9.61%
177941



Confessions of a mushroom lover

Cynthia Gunn, Advocate Food Writer

There is no middle ground when it comes to mushrooms. You love them, crave them, or you are like the children who hunt out any tiny speck of unlucky mushroom and pick it out of their food with disgusted faces. My children are amongst the latter group, though how that happened, when their favourite meal when they were tiny was mushrooms in cream on toast, remains a baffling mystery. The sad result is that I am now the sole mushroom lover in our household.

The upshot of being marooned alone on my mushroom-lover's island is that on occasion I feel the need to at least peruse my cookbooks for mushroom dishes, longingly reading the recipe for mushroom ragu, or gazing at the photo of mushroom and four cheese lasagna. Usually I end up turning to the trusted Hungarian mushroom soup. Forty years ago, Mollie Katzen handwrote and illustrated the *Moosewood Cookbook*, a classic listed as one of the top ten best-selling cookbooks by *The New York Times*. And people actually cook from it, as opposed to just reading the recipes and gazing at glossy pictures and thinking, one day... It is just possible, therefore, that you have supped on Katzen's Hungarian mushroom soup, and if you haven't, you have a pleasure awaiting you. I decided to force myself to pass on this old standby and try for a blended mushroom soup.

I came across another vegetarian cookbook, *The Greens Cookbook*, beautifully and respectfully written, and, like the *Moosewood Cookbook*, relying on the words themselves rather than glossy photos to pull the reader in. Its heredity is more upscale, its roots stemming not from a small, homey co-operative restaurant, but rather a fancy establishment in San Francisco, so a little more time is required for many of the recipes. For *The Greens's* mushroom soup, they begin with a stock specifically made for the soup. I'm a believer in stocks, so I tried adding some dried mushrooms to the stock as they suggested. If you do ever find yourself in a restaurant supply shop, or a store such as Costco, see if you can find yourself a big one-pound container of dried mixed mushrooms, making sure that at least ten per cent of the mix is that immensely flavourful porcini mushroom. The container will last for years, and unlike the extremely pricey little packages you find in retail shops, it is very affordable. Until you stock your shelves with this staple, like with all soups, adjust it both to taste and to what you have available. And don't forget to serve with some wonderful crusty bread.

Mushroom Soup



Ingredients

- 6 cups vegetable or beef stock
- 1 ounce mixed dried mushrooms
- 1 lb fresh button or cremini (brown) mushrooms, sliced
- 2 TBSP butter
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 small potato, peeled and diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ cup sherry or white wine

Pour boiling water over dried mushrooms and soak for 30 minutes. Strain (there may be some grit or residue). Add soaked mushrooms and liquid to stock and simmer for 30 minutes. Strain out the mushrooms.

Brush loose dirt off fresh mushrooms with a damp paper towel and slice. Heat butter and add onion and salt. Cook, stirring frequently, until soft and translucent. Add garlic, and cook 2 minutes. Pour in sherry or wine and simmer 3 minutes. Add mushrooms and cook with onions over medium-low heat for 6-7 minutes. Add potatoes and stock, and simmer about 20 minutes, or until potato is soft.

Cool slightly and blend to desired consistency. Add cream and more salt if you like. Serve with freshly ground pepper and crusty bread.



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FOR SALE: Registered Purebred Black Angus Bulls. 3 bulls (4 ½ to 2 ½ years). Ben Ball 450-292-0999. Pierre Robillard 819-993-4309. ben@challacombefarm.com www.challacombefarm.com (1/1)

OLD BARN NEEDED

Fairbairn House Heritage Centre is on the hunt for an old barn to move to our heritage homestead in Wakefield (West Quebec) -- for agricultural displays, workshop space, storage and barn dances!

Do you have or know of a small surplus barn in the Outaouais that might be donated? We will make arrangements and cover all costs to take down and move it. Contact Michael Cooper at 819-459-2787 or info@fairbairn.ca.

Until Dec. 11, you can donate to support the project at <http://bit.ly/203F0Y9> (1/3)

READING MATERIAL

DIG IN! *Dear Tomato: An International Crop of Food and Agriculture Poems*. Illustrated with b/w photos. For kids 8+. Order for \$12.57 from www.amazon.ca or \$10 (+ shipping) from Carol-Ann Hoyte carol_ann_hoyte@hotmail.com (1/3)

QFA MEMBER BENEFITS

HEALTH INSURANCE – There is strength in numbers, and the QFA has negotiated a competitively priced comprehensive group insurance plan for its members. Cost dropped by 12% at the beginning of the year. Call the

plan administrator toll free for further information: 1-800-268-6195.

\$100 OFF Farm Credit Canada (FCC) management software – AgExpert Analyst and Field Manager – contact your local FCC office for details!

3 FREE QFA CLASSIFIEDS – for all your machinery & livestock sales, auctions and other announcements.

10% DISCOUNT ON MARK'S WORK WEARHOUSE SELECT ITEMS – The discount card is sent with your welcome pack on receipt of your

membership payment. Items eligible for discount include: Dakota work shirts and pants, cover-alls, overalls and coats; All Carhartt merchandise; DH Merchandise – jeans, shirts, knits and polar fleece wear and coats; All WR coats – winter underwear and all CSA approved footwear.

DO YOU NEED SOMETHING TRANSLATED? Translate English to French or French to English. No job is too big or too small! QFA members automatically get a 10% discount with additional rebates available to return customers. Call us at 450-679-0540, Ext. 8536 or

e-mail us: qfa_translation@upa.qc.ca

QFA ACCOUNTING BOOKS, bilingual, easy to use, \$25 for QFA members. \$30 for non-members. Call the QFA office to order your copy. 450-679-0540, Ext. 8536.

QFA MERCHANDISE

QFA sign and pin combo: \$7
QFA pins: \$3 each
Dessert Cookbooks: \$12
Vests: \$40 Caps: \$15
While supplies last!
For more information or to order contact the QFA office – qfa@upa.qc.ca

Are you a QFA member?



QFA membership recognition

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

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

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

services; 7.5% discount on Via Rail travel; and 3 free classified advertisements for the *Advocate*. Taking advantage of these benefits more than pays for the membership cost and so essentially, membership is free. A list of new and recently returning members appears below. To join, simply complete and return the membership application found inside the paper.

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

Kent Lowry

David McKay

Francois Papineau

John and Darlene McCart

Ben and Annie Nichols

Bradley Standish

Raymond and Donna
McConnell

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

Every Set of Lost Keys Has a Story

"I want to thank the person who found my keys and called the number on the back of my War Amps key tag. The War Amps returned them to me by courier, free of charge, and saved me hundreds of dollars in replacement costs!" – Alex



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QFA Cracks up

Pa won't Like It

A farm boy accidentally overturned his wagonload of corn. A farmer who lived nearby heard the noise and yelled over to the boy, "Hey, Willis, forget your troubles. Come in and visit with us. I'll help you get the wagon up later."
"That's mighty nice of you," Willis answered, "but I don't think Pa would like me to."



"Aw, come on, boy," the farmer insisted. "Well, OK," the boy finally agreed, and added, "but Pa won't like it." After a hearty dinner, Willis thanked his host. "I feel a lot better now, but I know Pa is going to be real upset."
"Don't be foolish!" the neighbour said with a smile. "By the way, where is your dad anyway?"
"Under the wagon."

Cat got your door?

Two church members were going door to door, and knocked on the door of a woman who was not happy to see them. She told them in no uncertain terms that she did not want to hear their message and slammed the door in their faces. To her surprise, however, the door did not close and, in fact, bounced back open.



She tried again, really put her back into it, and slammed the door again with the same result—the door bounced back open. Convinced these rude young people were sticking their foot in the door, she reared back to give it a slam that would teach them a lesson, when one of them said, "Ma'am, before you do that again, you need to move your cat."



Thanks a million (well 5.2 million, actually)

Thanks to the generosity of our partners and community volunteers, there are fewer empty plates in Canada.

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- The largest cutterhead in the industry with prawn chevron knife design and HydroLoc™ technology assures constant chop length.
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- Variflow™ system allows you to change blower position to match crop in 5 minutes without tools.
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