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"Giving money and power to government is like giving whiskey and car keys to teenage boys."

— P. J. O'Rourke

QFA's Farm Food Forums

Thursday, November 29

Farm transfer and succession planning

See page 19 for details.

TPP signed: Will it hurt?



The Trans-Pacific Partnership reached a final agreement in Atlanta, Georgia, this month. And while supply management isn't axed for Canadian agricultural industries, it certainly isn't any stronger.

Andrew McClelland
Advocate Staff Reporter

Well, it happened.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) reached a final agreement on October 5 in Atlanta, Georgia, and included in the deal are market access concessions on dairy products. In other words, supply management in Canada has been weakened.

Throughout the years-long negotiations for the far-sweeping trade deal, the Conservative government said any deal signed by Canada would "preserve the integrity of the supply management system."

Yet in the final TPP agreement, Canada agreed to allow 3.25 per cent of foreign dairy product imports, 2.3 per cent in eggs, 2.1 per cent for chicken, two per

cent for turkey, and 1.5 per cent for broiler hatching eggs.

It's an agreement that producers in Canada's supply-managed sectors of the agricultural economy are worried about.

Bruno St-Pierre, a dairy producer from Grenville-sur-la-Rouge, participated in a variety of protests against the TPP. For him and his family, the market access granted under the deal might mean a loss of income.

"I have my own dairy herd and my daughter is in agricultural college," explained St-Pierre. "So this is a topic that touches my family. Sure, they say that the access is only 3.25 per cent. But add that to the other two per cent granted in the EU trade deals, and it's up to almost six per cent. That's the total dairy production of Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean!"

However, St-Pierre feels that the dizzying amount of protests organized by the Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA) and others had its effect on the final TPP negotiations.

"At one point, CBC leaked that we might lose 10 per cent in the deal," says St-Pierre. "But we went to Ottawa, organized our tractors and got them on the roads, and told Mr. Harper how we felt. That might have made all the difference."

Other producers' groups in the supply-managed sectors took a diplomatic approach to the news.

"We obviously would have preferred that no additional market access be conceded in the dairy sector," said Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC) President Wally Smith. "However, we recognize that our

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On the cover

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government fought hard against other countries' demands... We have come a long way from the threat of eliminating supply management. The government has clearly understood the importance of supply-managed dairy farms in rural Canada and the economic activities they generate."

What does it mean?

So what does the TPP mean for the average Canadian farmer? First of all, supply management hasn't been "scrapped" under the deal. A better term might be "tampered with" or "weakened."

As Dairy Farmers of Canada points out, the sum total of access granted in the dairy industry is 3.25 per cent. That means "the milk displaced by this agreement will never be produced in Canada, and will result in perpetual lost revenue for our farmers, and for the Canadian economy", writes DFC.

All the 11 other countries involved in the TPP—Australia, Brunei, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States, and

Vietnam—would have duty-free access to 3.25 per cent of Canada's dairy market, along with varying degrees of other markets.

However, the Conservative government said it would set aside \$4.3 billion to protect the Canadian market over the first 15 years of the deal. An investment of \$450,000 will also be made in processors.

New programs to help

The \$4.3 billion will roll out through four new programs. The Income Guarantee Program will keep producers whole by providing 100 per cent income protection to producers for a full ten years from the day TPP comes into force. Income support assistance will continue on a tapered basis for an additional five years, for a total of 15 years. \$2.4 billion is available for this program.

The Quota Value Guarantee Program will protect producers against reduction in quota value when the quota is sold following the implementation of TPP. For this program, which will be in place for ten years, \$1.5 billion has been set aside.

Ottawa also announced the creation of two smaller programs. The \$450 million-

Processor Modernization Program will provide processors in the supply-managed value chain with support to further advance their competitiveness and growth, and the Market Development Initiative will help supply-managed groups in promoting and marketing their products. To support the initiative, \$15 million in new funding will be added to the AgriMarketing Program.

Good news for livestock?

Many livestock producers stood in solidarity with farmers who work in supply-managed sectors in protesting against the TPP. However, many producers' groups showed optimism about a possible increase in livestock exports under the new deal.

The Canadian Cattlemen's Association applauded the deal, saying that the TPP "ensures Canadian beef producers can improve access to Japan and other growing markets in Asia. Under the agreement, Canada could double or triple its annual beef exports to Japan to nearly \$300 million."

The Canadian Pork Council (CPC) was also enthusiastic on October 5: "Based



Dairy farmer Robbie Beck speaks with Pontiac's MP Mathieu Ravnagat at a protest against weakening supply management on September 30.

on what was announced today, the CPC strongly supports Canada participating in the Trans-Pacific Partnership," said Chairman Rick Bergmann, who explained that Canada's pork exports to South Korea fell by 75 per cent after the US signed a trade deal before Canada's was concluded.

The TPP is not yet finalized. Each of the 12 nations involved needs to ratify the preliminary text of the deal. Following that, the matter will come up for review and a possible vote in the House of Commons.



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"Next time, we're blocking the borders"

Martin Ménard

HERDMAN, QC — Roughly 100 farmers travelled to Herdman in Montérégie on September 30 to hold a peaceful protest beside the US customs booth. The farmers vow that if imports of milk proteins and diafiltered milk continue, they're going to up the ante.

"Our tractors and trucks are parked on the roadside today, but local farmers are saying that if nothing changes and we have to come back here to protest, they'll be in the middle of the road. We will block the border; we will block the entry of diafiltered milk into this country," warns Jason Erskine, who owns a farm of 180 lactating cows located near the US border.

Erskine and his neighbours frequently see milk tanker trucks emblazoned with the "100% Canadian milk" logo crossing the border. The trucks bring milk concentrates from the United States to facilities in Ontario and Quebec. Erskine doesn't appreciate the fact that consumers are being fooled and that his milk—which is produced under more stringent standards—is being mixed with

American milk. "Do you see Big Macs being delivered in Tim Hortons trucks? No. I don't like the idea that our processors are importing a product that's being concealed in a truck with our logo on it," he says.

A calf at the border

The farmers brought a calf in a hutch with them and positioned it on the roadside a few metres from the customs booth along with a sign that read "No US milk trucks beyond this point." "The calf was born this morning. It'll be two years before she gives milk. Between now and then, she'll cost me \$3,000 in food and care. If they open the border and I don't have any market for my milk in two years, I won't be keeping my calves around for no reason. I'll have to cut back on the size of my operation. I'll lose out, my children will lose out, and everyone who works directly or indirectly for my operation will lose out," Erskine explained in an interview with *La Terre de chez nous*.

At the end of the protest, the farmers decided to block the lane to the customs booth with a tractor. It was a symbolic gesture—or, rather, a warning...



In a symbolic gesture—or, rather, a warning—farmers from the Montérégie community of Herdman blocked the border for several minutes.

The story in Saint-Armand

Blocking American milk trucks at the border: it's an idea that's starting to appeal to Michelle Soucy, a dairy farmer who's also located near the border, but in Saint-Armand, a village about 100 kilometres east of Herdman. "We're a small operation with 25 cows. We started up not long ago with a loan for 10 kilograms of quota. The drop in milk prices is affecting us. And when we see that truck coming back from the United States, we think it makes no sense: any

milk that's coming in here is milk we won't be producing," declares Soucy, who attended the demonstration on October 1 in Saint-Hyacinthe. The young woman, who was there with her daughter, showed no animosity but says she's had enough and insists that the next step must be taken: blocking the borders. "Farmers are grumbling. I've spoken to lots of them, and we won't have any trouble recruiting people. This is official; it's going to happen," she warns.

LTCN 2015-10-07

Dairy imports causing a stir

Julie Mercier

Dairy farmers are demanding that the federal government address the regulatory gap that currently permits the importation of milk protein concentrates (MPC), also known as diafiltered milk, from infringing on our domestic milk market.

Quebec dairy farmers have been opposing these imports for a long time. The problem goes back to the 1990s. In 1995, during the implementation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement (Uruguay Round), the importation of protein concentrates was restricted by tariff quotas and over-quota tariffs. However, the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) classified a new product, a protein concentrate of over 85 per cent, as being in a tariff line free of customs duties. Subsequently, dairy farmers engaged in a long battle that ended in the adoption of composition standards for cheese. These standards restrict the addition of milk proteins that do not come from fresh milk.

In 2012, the importation of a new protein concentrate, this time in a liquid form,

began. This was diafiltered milk. Once again, the CBSA classified this product in its line of protein concentrates of greater than 85 per cent and made it duty free. This means it can be brought in with no legal ramifications. "Our farmers don't like it. They see the trucks go by, but it's not illegal," explains Alain Bourbeau, executive director of the Producteurs de lait du Québec (PLQ). "It's an appealing product for large processors who deal in high volumes," he explains. The product is cheaper and generates fewer by-products than milk. It is used in certain cheeses as well as in Greek yogurt. "It can't be used in place of all milk, but it replaces the proteins that could be produced, and these imports are causing structural surpluses," Bourbeau continues.

The PLQ estimated imports of protein concentrates at nearly 45 million kilograms' worth of powdered skim milk displaced from the Canadian market in 2014. For the first six months of 2015, this figure was already 25 million kilograms. "We know that processors made more cheese during the first six months of the year, but there is a strong trend," adds Bourbeau.

Solutions

The Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC) blame the current situation on the government's laxness. "Our farmers are really irritated by the fact that processors are importing dairy material from elsewhere that doesn't meet Canadian standards because the government isn't enforcing its border restrictions through its own agencies," states Thérèse Beaulieu, communications manager at DFC. She is specifically referring to American farmers' use of bovine growth hormone, which is prohibited in Canada. "The rules are already there. The government has to ensure they are followed," insists Beaulieu.

A further irritant

The PLQ is also speaking out against another import program: the Duty Referral Program, originally created for the machinery industry and now used by certain dairy processors. The program allows for the duty-free importation of products provided they are re-exported within a few years. This practice raises questions because it applies to perishable commodities such as dairy products. Here again, border control poses a



The importation of milk protein concentrates, commonly known as diafiltered milk, is competing with our domestic milk market.

problem. Bourbeau sums it up as follows: "Our concern is that what comes in actually does go out again."

LTCN 2015-09-23



Marcel Groleau
UPA President

In recent weeks, especially since Canada signed on to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), certain economic commentators have been saying that farmers need to hurry up, adapt, and get competitive. The fact is that farmers are constantly adapting to consumers' ever-increasing requirements, new technologies, international competition, and price fluctuations in global markets.

It's easy enough for commentators or so-called experts to call for adaptation when they're not directly affected by it. But Quebec farmers are perpetually in adaptation mode on a number of fronts, including technology, changing knowledge and markets, and labour scarcity. I challenge anyone to run a farm successfully in today's climate. Adaptation has its limits when it comes to factors beyond farmers' control. In many respects, they have their hands full with North America's most stringent laws and regulations, the expectations of their fellow citizens, market openness, and the lack of competitiveness in government support.

We ask our farmers to put up the massive investments required to bring their businesses in line with ever more

Trans-Pacific Partnership: Adaptation has its limits

stringent environmental standards—and Quebec already has the strictest environmental regulations in all of North America. We ask farmers to adopt practices and adapt buildings based on society's expectations regarding animal welfare. At the same time, we ask them to uphold a model of small-scale farming and family operations. Anything large is treated with suspicion, even though our largest businesses are still small in relation to our American competitors.

The criteria and administration of Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program are becoming more stringent, whereas the United States can rely on an unlimited supply of illegal workers to man its farms and processing facilities. We require that our farmers produce quality products that comply with Quebec standards, yet we put them in competition with imported and often poorly labelled products from countries that permit the use of drugs and pesticides that are banned in Canada. On top of this, we demand that our farmers remain competitive despite the challenges of the cold climate in which they work. Canada has recently signed two international agreements, the TPP and the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with Europe, which offer up our markets and grocery shelves

to foreign products that are highly subsidized.

Meanwhile, the 2015-2016 budgets allotted to Quebec's agricultural sector have been trimmed by 14.5 per cent. In 2013, the Canadian government made cuts of over \$260 million per year to AgriStability and AgriInvest, while budgets in the United States and Europe have been maintained. The rules for farm income stabilization insurance are also being tightened in production sectors that depend on it. For the past 11 years in Quebec, there has been a moratorium on increasing crop acreage. Furthermore, we're being asked to adapt to illegal imports that go uncontrolled by customs.

Recently, the Robillard commission proposed that stabilization insurance programs and farm property tax repayment credits be scrapped. Several commentators in the media have also been salivating at the idea of eventually doing away with supply management altogether. Meanwhile, in 2013, our governments supported the construction of a cement factory in Port-Daniel-Gascons to the tune of \$450 million. That was 50 per cent more than all combined expenses for the Financière agricole du Québec to support the province's 28,000 farm businesses. The aluminum industry, for its part, remains competitive thanks to elec-

tricity rate adjustments even though the cost of these are unknown. When the Kruger plant in Trois-Rivières needed a \$250 million investment for a new paper-making machine, the government fronted \$190 million. Quebec's multimedia industry has benefited from a tax credit designed especially for it. We don't hear a peep from economic commentators about these, other than to say that they are wise investments. For some reason, though, government support is constantly questioned when agriculture is involved. That's a double standard, and it ignores the fact that over 200,000 jobs in Quebec rely on agriculture and food processing.

To return to the TPP and its consequences, it's certain that the compensation packages offered will cover only a portion of the hit that will be taken by supply-managed farmers and by the industry that depends on them. Canadian farmers who export their products think they would benefit from the increased access that has been negotiated only if government support is competitive. As in industry, it's all in the math. In the last ten years, beef and pork production has dropped across the country even though Canada has signed trade agreements and demand for food has risen. You can only adapt so much.

LTCN 2015-10-14

Letter to the editor

Under the bus

So much for the current government's promise to preserve the three pillars of supply management in Canada.

Giving away 3.5 per cent of our market in dairy and poultry to duty-free imports destroys the first pillar of supply management: the control of imports. This giveaway will wreak havoc for dairy and chicken farmers.

The dairy and poultry marketing boards in Canada limit production with a quota system but guarantee farmers a price that covers their cost of production without any government subsidies. Now these farms will have to compete with American and New Zealand farms that do not have the same environmental restrictions on hormone use (i.e. bovine somatotropin) and receive generous government subsidies under acts like the US Farm Bill.

What did we get in return for giving away our domestic market? Nothing concrete, like a 3.5 per cent share of the other countries' markets, just a promise to gradually reduce other countries' import tariff rates and an inadequate compensation plan. We will still have to undercut our competition to win over these other countries' markets if we want to export our products to them.

Pity the poor dairy and chicken farmers who used to receive all their income directly at point of sale, but will now have to fill out multiple bureaucratic forms to receive compensation for their loss of income from this new TPP deal, and pity the poor tax payer who will have to foot the bill for the \$3.9 billion compensation package.

Stop this bus!

Gib Drury, Alcove, QC



QFA Executive Director moving in new directions

The following is a continuation of the interview conducted with QFA Executive Director Dougal Rattray for the September issue of the Advocate. It explains more about where the QFA is headed.

Quebec Farmers' Advocate: You haven't mentioned much about the members. Have you anything you wish to say to them?

Dougal Rattray: I wish to thank them for their ongoing support. Members and supporters are the lifeblood of any organization. Out of around 1,300 farmers, only about 400 actually write a cheque to express their support of activities. Those 400 deserve respect. Looking over past annual reports, it seems that this has been the status quo for many years, and it's the same families who are supporting year after year. So, the minority is carrying the majority. Is that fair? No.

Despite constant messaging, the majority of English-speaking farmers still seem reluctant to part with their \$60. But that money provides unrestricted income that allows us to function better on their behalf. I guess actions speak louder than words, and we can only try to strengthen our resolve and do a better job at convincing the non-subscribers to invest by increasing activities that fit the needs of the community.

Benefits will come into greater focus next year. In December and February, the QFA will be submitting applications to employ a number of interns to help support and expand this crucial area. Those members who have taken advantage of the two-year special offer have still to receive their QFA caps, and this backlog will be reconciled as soon as possible. I thank members for their patience on this issue. In addition, we foresee closer collaboration with UPA regional offices to determine how we can better facilitate provision of information in English.

Do you expect to involve any non-board members in future talks or to ask for people's opinions?

Absolutely. We are always open to feedback, and we are only a phone call away. This is year zero of our five-year strategic plan, and we have been making efforts to get farmers to tell us what they want the QFA to look like in the future. This year, we attempted to conduct a series of focus groups at each of the farm fairs we visited, but we discovered that fairs are not the best places

to conduct a focus group. Instead, we intend on running informal discussions via teleconference towards the end of October or in early November. We will be phoning farmers to invite them to participate. In addition to sending out surveys, we have had an online survey on our website for three years, but no one has ever responded. I know people are very busy, but if we don't hear from people in a constructive manner, how can we be expected to serve them? It's a conundrum plaguing member-based organizations throughout Canada. This is one of the reasons behind moving Andrew McClelland, our long-time managing editor, into the position of director of communications.

The Forums—to be continued or scrapped?

The Forums will continue, but with a much higher quality connection using newly available software that we assessed back in April. Testing and training to improve the system is ongoing, and we expect it to go live either in October or November. We have also switched from using the Huntingdon Community Learning Centre (CLC) in Chateauguay to the Ormstown CLC. I am also excited about being able to offer this service to farmers in the Gaspé this year and will be talking about that with Jennifer Hayes, our director over there, over the coming weeks. We have some very knowledgeable and interesting speakers lined up for the forthcoming season and sincerely hope people take much greater advantage of this opportunity. This program may become endangered if it is not used.

And what about fairs, translations, and farm safety, which have all appeared as core activities in recent years?

Visits to farm fairs have been a positive step for the organization. It allows staff to engage first-hand with the people we serve, and the QFA board is looking forward to even greater collaboration.

The QFA is in the unique position of being a conduit through which agricultural-based information can pass between Quebec and the rest of Canada. Recognizing this more (and with it the opportunity for growth), we have appointed a new director of translation services, Scott Irving, who will help position the QFA as Canada's number one go-to service for agricultural translations. We want to develop capacity for

other languages, particularly Spanish, to take into account Canada's burgeoning immigrant workforce.

Farm safety will remain a bedrock of what we do, and we are currently working on an event for Pontiac farmers later this year. Depending on the success of this event, we may be in the position to introduce farm-safety events across the province. If people express interest, we can make things happen, but they need to speak to us and be willing to share ideas.

So, what do you think farmers want?

Farmers are overburdened with paperwork, which is why we are exploring building a team of vetted service providers and advisors who farmers can approach for trustworthy support. The forums help us screen and evaluate potential service providers. Farm businesses need a degree of stability in order to make better, more informed decisions. This is one of the reasons why the QFA involves itself with the UPA and helps, albeit in a small way, with the vital and complex behind-the-scenes work that some people don't see, understand, or appreciate. The latest announcements around TPP negotiations are a testament to that. If unions and collective bargaining did not exist, one wonders what the landscape might look like. I am a firm believer in "stronger together."

Wow! It sounds like there's a lot happening. We haven't got a lot of room left. Is there anything else you want to add?

Having gone out and met with farmers over the last three years in each of the three larger English-speaking agricultural heartlands – Outaouais-Laurentides, Chateauguay/Montérégie, and the Eastern Townships – we know that recalibrating the organization can do no harm. So, what does that mean?



QFA Executive Director Dougal Rattray is passionate about getting farming and non-farming rural residents to support one another. "Agriculture is at the heart of the rural community, and the challenge for the QFA is how to better look after that heart, to make sure it is pumping strongly to sustain future life."

It means being more present in our Anglophone community. It means being more attentive to community needs. It requires networking and facilitating know-how on leveraging the right combination of resources to fulfill those needs. It means internal capacity building so we can do more for our community as a whole.

Agriculture is at the heart of the rural community, and the challenge for the QFA is how to better look after that heart, to make sure it is pumping strongly to sustain future life.

Have your say.

The Advocate is always happy to print letters to the editor. Feel free to write us an e-mail, mail us a letter—or even leave a lengthy message on our answering machine that we'll transcribe for you!

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News

TransCanada and Quebec's unique situation

Thierry Larivière

TransCanada hasn't completely ruled out compensation in the form of an annual rental payment for farmers affected by its Energy East Pipeline. However, the company is reticent to go through with it because it would view this as creating an exception in North America.

"The annual rental payment is part of our discussions. Our starting point is that that's not how it works in the industry," stated TransCanada spokesperson Tim Duboyce in an interview with *La Terre de chez nous*. In Duboyce's view, agreeing to the UPA's request for annual payments would constitute a "major detour" that could well change the rules of the game in the industry.

For the time being, TransCanada is planning "occasional" compensation payments based on demonstrated loss of income. The pipeline developer Energy East is accustomed to paying compensation for property visits in the pre-construction phase, for the lost season during the construction, and for more modest harvests in subsequent years if "the farmer demonstrates that their harvest is lower."

TransCanada usually negotiates with farmers on an individual basis. "The situation is somewhat unique in Quebec because the UPA speaks on behalf of

all farmers," the Calgary business's spokesperson explains.

"One or two meetings have been held with a view to establishing benchmarks for the agreement. The next one is set for the end of October," states UPA Vice President Pierre Lemieux. He points out that his organization opposes the construction of the pipeline in the province of Quebec, but still agrees to negotiate a baseline agreement with the developer in order to protect the farmers' financial and social interests in the event that Ottawa and the National Energy Board (NEB) ultimately push the pipeline through. "There's no way you can tell me that farmers will put up the money for lawyers to make sure they aren't being had by the fine print in the contracts," Lemieux explains.

Contingency planning

"We pay for everything," says Tim Duboyce, referring to the fees incurred in the event of a spillage or accident. For example, TransCanada would cover drinking water supply for farms as well as depollution equipment. Municipalities would be responsible only for first responders and setting up a safety perimeter. Federal law stipulates that the company must demonstrate its financial capacity to pay up to \$1 billion if oil should be leaked into the environment. The contingency plan will be



For the time being, TransCanada is planning "occasional" compensation payments based on demonstrated loss of income.

made public before 2020, the year the pipeline is to be commissioned.

Duboyce adds that his company works every day to reach its goal of zero accidents. He also affirms that leaks in the company's Keystone 1 pipeline, mainly in the United States, were "small" and all occurred on TransCanada property. However, a 500-barrel leak took place in North Dakota in 2011. A farmer who lives near that leak says that he was the one who notified TransCanada, while the company claims that its electronic surveillance system was responsible.

The UPA is not satisfied by the concept of "financial capacity" to cover the

expenses in the event of a disaster. "We want these to be separate funds," insists the vice president, who goes on to say that the UPA also wants the pipeline to be removed from the soil at the end of its useful life in order to avoid collapse and that it's uncertain whether TransCanada will still be solvent in 20 or 30 years. TransCanada says it is aware that the NEB could insist on removal of the pipes when the structure is decommissioned. "If that happens, we will be responsible for it," concedes Duboyce.

LTCN 2015-10-07

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Great speakers lined up for QFA meeting!

Andrew McClelland
Advocate Staff Reporter

The QFA's annual general meeting will be held on Friday, November 13, this year. The fun- and info-filled event will be held at its usual location at Macdonald Campus, and the QFA has two exciting speakers lined up for the morning's information session.

Dr. Joe!

Dr. Joe Schwarcz, award-winning chemist and host of CJAD radio's "The Dr. Joe Show," will be the keynote speaker at the event. Schwarcz is famous for being an entertaining speaker who cleverly and wittily debunks many of the myths about science. As director of McGill University's "Office for Science and Society," Schwarcz has appeared on countless television shows, radio programs, and lectures all over the world. He is also an amateur conjurer who likes to spice up his presentations with a little magic from time to time!

Schwarcz will speak about agricultural myths and facts. Terms like pesticides, fungicides, herbicides, hormones, antibiotics, and GMOs appear commonly in media accounts, often in a context that raises fears.

There are some legitimate concerns, but that doesn't mean these substances cannot be used in a safe fashion. Indeed, without the proper use of agrochemicals we have no hope of feeding the Earth's increasing population. We need to guide the public on a path traced out by evidence-based science instead of emotion and hearsay.

New Dean at Mac

The QFA will also have the pleasure of hosting Professor Anja Geitmann, Macdonald Campus's newly-appointed Dean of the Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences and Associate Vice-Principal.

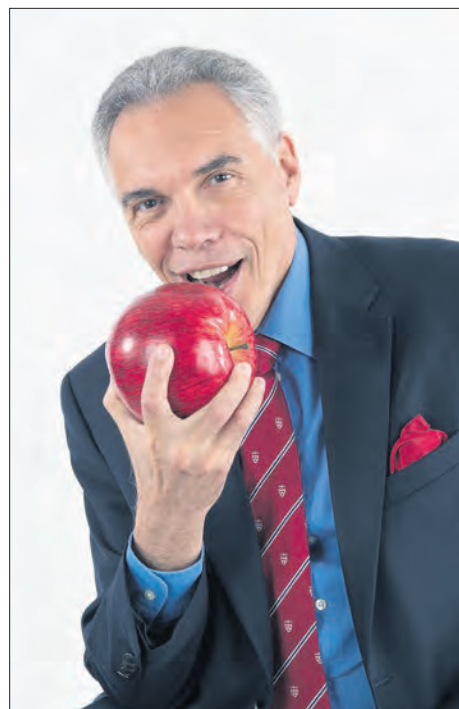
Geitmann is president of both the Microscopical Society of Canada and the Canadian Society of Plant Biologists. She has conducted research the world over and worked at the Institut de recherche en biologie végétale, where

she led a team of cell biologists and mechanical engineers through a program focusing on the biomechanical principles governing plant development and reproduction.

The annual meeting will be run a little differently this year. In keeping with tradition, the information session during the morning—where Schwarcz and Geitmann will speak—will be held in the Centennial Centre ballroom. However, the lunch will be served in

the Tadjia Hall Faculty Club, a charming building located on Lac-Saint-Louis, where the annual meeting of members and wine-and-cheese reception will also take place.

The QFA's annual general meeting will take place on Friday, November 13, at Macdonald Campus. There are a limited number of places available for lunch. Reservations are recommended. To reserve please call 450-679-0540 ext. 8536 or send an email: qfa@upa.qc.ca



Dr. Joe Schwarcz, the famous science popularizer and science "myth-debunker" will be the keynote speaker for the day.



Anja Geitmann, the newly-appointed Dean of the Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at Macdonald Campus, will speak to attendees at the QFA's annual general meeting on November 13.

CONTEST

OUTSTANDING YOUNG FARMERS OF CANADA CONTEST Quebec Section

TOP WINNERS 2015

THANK YOU TO ALL PARTICIPANTS

The 34th edition of Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers (Quebec section) held on September 2nd at Best Western Plus Hotel Universel in Drummondville. Once again the event was a great success with participation of nearly 400 people.

Mr. Christian Bilodeau and Mrs. Annie Sirois
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Saint-Odilon de Cranbourne
DAIRY PRODUCTION

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News

UPA fears personification of animals

Pierre-Yvon Bégin

The mistreatment of animals is unacceptable in the eyes of the Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA). The organization is concerned that personification of livestock may compromise farm profitability.

UPA second Vice President Martin Caron stated that the days of farmers seeing their animals as "movable property" are long gone. He spoke yesterday in a parliamentary committee on Bill 54, which deals with improving the legal situation of animals. The bill proposes that animals be considered "sensitive beings" rather than movable property under the Civil Code of Quebec.

"The legislator could have chosen to strengthen protection for animals based on existing laws," stated Caron.

Minister of Agriculture Pierre Paradis stated early on that the UPA was one

of the first organizations to speak in favour of the bill. In his opinion, this speaks to farmers' concerns for treating their animals properly. He also referred to Quebec's standing among advanced societies in the world, stating that "the livestock sector isn't dragging us down."

"People here are starting to notice that you're not trailing behind the rest of the world, but actually on the cutting edge," stated Paradis.

These statements seemed to reassure the UPA representatives, who have expressed their opposition to the devolution of animal health protection responsibilities to municipal authorities.

Good practices

Through this bill, the minister also intends to incorporate the codes of practice into his future regulations. The UPA notes that these codes or guidelines were originally conceived and written to improve the care

and well-being of livestock. In the UPA's opinion, they cannot be used to write statutory instruments or press charges. Martin Caron called for cooperation in addressing the issue, as well as for a transition period.

"If we move too quickly, we're going to lose businesses," he cautioned.

The Association québécoise des industries de nutrition animale et céréalière (AQINAC) also endorses this approach. The association's CEO, Yvan Lacroix, stated that the codes involve major investments, which will make businesses less competitive.

Pierre Paradis was reassuring in promising that "we will not regulate if there are codes."

Public hearings continue this week with the Éleveurs de volailles du Québec, the Producteurs de lait du Québec, and the Fédération des producteurs de bovins on Wednesday.

LTCN 2015-09-23



Martin Caron, UPA second vice president, reminded the members of a parliamentary committee that codes of practice aren't issued to become regulations.

EN RÉGION
LaTerre
DE CHEZ NOUS

Quebec Regional News

First "social worker" to be in place soon

LAURENTIDES

Valérie Maynard
Special collaboration

An effort to hire a rural social worker, or "social worker," has been under way for the last few weeks. With 20 applications already received, there appears to be plenty of interest. If all goes as planned, the first social worker will start traversing the Laurentians region in October. Bernard Laurin, spokesperson for Écoute agricole des Laurentides, an organization that set the ball rolling, explains.

MIRABEL — Implemented in January with a view to offering psychological support to farmers in the region, Écoute agricole des Laurentides is preparing to get its first social worker program up and running. "We were inspired by what was already going on across Quebec, especially in the Matapédia Valley, which has had its social worker for two years," Laurin explains.

In Saint-Hyacinthe, an organization called Au cœur des familles agricoles has been providing a farmer help service for 15 years and receives over 1,000 calls a year.

Psychological distress

In 2014, during the creation of the Mirabel Plan de développement de la zone agricole (PDZA), the idea of founding an

organization devoted to farmer wellness was born. "There was talk of a vibrant and healthy region. I said to myself that if we were going to achieve that, then first we had to have healthy farmers," explains Laurin, himself a dairy farmer.

A committee has been formed since that time. The members include Bernard Laurin, Sophie Bélisle, Réal Brière, Thérèse Lavoie, and Jean-Marie Proulx, as well as Danielle Dion, a worker from the Centre intégré de santé et services sociaux (CISSS) des Laurentides. The group also established ties with other organizations, including the Centre local de développement (CLD) de Mirabel and the Centre de prévention suicide le Faubourg. "In farming, there's a lot of solitude and long hours. Sometimes this leads to psychological distress," notes Laurin.



Bernard Laurin, president of Écoute agricole des Laurentides; his vice president, Sophie Bélisle; and the president of the Société d'agriculture Mirabel Deux-Montagnes, Réal Brière. Absent from the photo is Normand Bourgon, secretary-treasurer.

Members of the Outaouais-Laurentides UPA Federation, excited by the idea of having a social worker in their own region, are fully in support. "Mental health problems are a taboo that needs to be broken," says Kevin Bilodeau, the Federation's spokesperson, "and psychological distress is part of the reality in farming."

Funding

Currently, Écoute agricole des Laurentides has enough funding to remain viable over the short term. The Ville de Mirabel alone injects \$45,000 into the organization out of its Pacte rural budget allowance. "For the first year, we'll be asking the social work-

er to focus on farms within Mirabel," explains Laurin. This request would not prevent the worker from handling calls from elsewhere in the Laurentians region, however.

There are 1,262 registered farm businesses in the Laurentians, including 336 in Mirabel and a total of 708 (56 per cent) in the Basses-Laurentides (the MRCs of Mirabel, Deux-Montagnes, and Thérèse-De Blainville).

As for the other MRCs, Antoine-Labelle has 224 such businesses, Argenteuil has 183, Des Laurentides has 88, La Rivière-du-Nord has 51, and Les Pays-d'en-Haut has 8.

Gilles Denis: Model grocer

ESTRIE

Serge Denis
Special contributor

Buying local is “in” these days. While most grocers are content to simply put up a display for local products at the end of an aisle, Gilles Denis of Cookshire-Eaton gives them their rightful place.

COOKSHIRE-EATON — That’s how the grocery store owner came to be honoured by the UPA du Haut-Saint-François local syndicate on August 4, at an event in his own store. In attendance were Ghislain Lefebvre, director of the Conseil de l’industrie bioalimentaire de l’Estrie; Robert Roy, acting MRC warden; Lynne Martel-Bégin, syndicate president; and a number of local farmers.

“We’ve surveyed our members, and it has come to light that one of the most important challenges is getting their products on the market,” says Lynne Martel-Bégin, a dairy and forestry producer located in Bury. “That’s why we wanted to recognize Mr. Denis’s contribution—because he’s a model, and we want his success to set an example for others to follow.”

The storekeeper, who is affiliated with the IGA banner, doesn’t promote local products in his displays to garner praise or to make himself feel better, but because he firmly believes in the advantages it brings to the local economy. Also, it makes his store more profitable. “When we don’t support our agriculture, we allow rural areas to become depleted. And that’s not good for anybody. The only solution is

buying local,” he insisted upon receiving the honour.

“Take our local cheeses, for instance. It’s time people were familiar with them; they deserve a place of honour before we get inundated by cheeses from abroad,” he continued. “Consumers don’t realize how much power they have over the economy. I tell them, ‘Open your eyes: you’re the ones who decide!’”

A forerunner

Denis is quick to admit that while he may have been the one to take the initiative of promoting local farmers, it’s his customers who made him successful. “My background is in the cooperative sector in the Plateau Mont-Royal. Organic’s nothing new there. But when I arrived in Cookshire in 1988, I wanted to continue in that direction, and we were the first IGA store to sell organic vegetables,” he proudly remembers.

The leap from organic to local products wasn’t a big one, especially considering that Denis arrived in a region that already had many and diverse agri-food resources. “I know that other grocers found it a nuisance to buy local and organic. I think it’s our way to make a difference. We made some mistakes with products that didn’t sell, of

course, but the experiences were mostly positive in the long run. Sometimes, it’s the marketing alone that makes the difference. We’ve tried to sell rhubarb in the past and it hasn’t worked. This year, we included recipes with them and it worked fairly well,” he happily reports.

The Cookshire grocer has applied this local and environmental approach to all facets of his business, in everything from recovering construction materials

to choosing lighting and ceramic flooring. Denis also opted for a carbon dioxide refrigeration system, making him the first person in the world to use such a system in a grocery store. The refrigeration system generates 4,000 times less greenhouse gas than conventional equipment.

“Think globally, act locally” is the call of the anti-globalization movement. That’s something Gilles Denis has understood all along!

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“When we don’t support our agriculture, we allow rural areas to become depleted. And that’s not good for anybody. The only solution is buying local,” says Cookshire-Eaton grocer Gilles Denis, whose open attitude to local products was recognized by the UPA du Haut-Saint-François local syndicate on August 4.



Marcel Groleau
UPA President

Organic agriculture: Investing for development

Every year in September, a full week is devoted to celebrating the production and consumption of Canadian organic products (the 2015 edition ran from September 19 to 27). From marginal beginnings, the demand for these products has been climbing steadily. Once available only in specialty stores, organic products can now be found in supermarkets across the country. All the major chains have an organic aisle, and the organic market segment enjoys the best outlook in terms of return and growth.

Last week, the Conseil de la transformation alimentaire du Québec held an event called *Stratégie d'affaires en distribution alimentaire* (business strategies in food distribution). The keynote speaker was none other than John Mackey, co-founder of the Whole Foods chain. Specializing in organic and natural products, the chain has seen remarkable growth and has a presence in the US, the UK, and Canada. The biggest challenge for Whole Foods is finding a supply of natural and

organic products. Mackey pointed out that global demand for organic products grew from \$23 billion in 2002 to \$71 billion in 2012. This figure is expected to reach \$188 billion by 2019—although barely 1 per cent of land under cultivation is certified organic. Currently, about 66 per cent of the Canadian organic market is imported. There are 1,020 organic farmers in the province of Quebec. The UPA, in collaboration with the Filière biologique du Québec, created the Table de développement de la production biologique (TDPB) in an effort to increase production of organics in Quebec and tap into this growing market. We hired a provincial coordinator to oversee the functioning of the TDPB and to guide members in various projects designed to increase organic production. We had been hoping for some financial backing from the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ), but Minister Pierre Paradis refused.

Farm businesses in the organic sector don't have much in the way of research, risk-sharing, or crop insurance that's tailored to their needs, although changes to

crop insurance programs are now finally in the works. But, as they say in the business, "we do it because we believe in it"!

Transitioning to organic production is the riskiest stage for businesses, and risk-sharing programs still generally fall short of the mark for farmers who are going organic. The MAPAQ's Programme d'appui pour la conversion à l'agriculture biologique (support program for transitioning to organic farming) gives farmers financial assistance to offset losses resulting from pre-certification based on production type. The program's renewal comes as welcome news, but much more needs to be done.

At the TDPB meeting last June, the members asked various levels of government to create an organic production cost-sharing program, similar to existing programs in the US and other countries, to ensure our businesses stay competitive not only during pre-certification but also after this key period. The American program covers 75 per cent of the yearly certification costs for our neighbours to the south. Some small businesses for which certification is too expensive don't market their products as organic,

even if they produced them according to the standards. The committee on income security headed up jointly by the MAPAQ, the UPA, and La Financière agricole du Québec has also formulated recommendations to support the development of organic farming.

Published in April 2014, the *Stratégie collective de développement du secteur biologique québécois* (collective development strategy for the Quebec organic sector) is a plan to increase the area under organic cultivation by 30 per cent by 2018. Many farm businesses in Quebec are ready to go organic but lack the professional and technical guidance they need. Now is the time to invest and conquer this growing market—and the budget of \$3 million per year over three years definitely won't be enough to reach our goals.

In order to keep developing, the organic sector needs programs that reflect its unique issues, and those programs need adequate budgets. It must be noted, however, that the minister of agriculture did make organic production one of his two major priorities for 2015-2016.

LTCN 2015-09-23



Quebec Regional News

The power of a marketing plan

Patricia Claveau, Agronomist
Specialized consultant in agri-food development

As a farmer, you have to act as a manager, plan your crops, and take care of your animals. You're busy seeding, tilling, treating, monitoring, and harvesting—or perhaps milking, feeding, calving, cleaning, and managing. The to-do list is even longer for farmers who choose to take on their own marketing. Self-marketers have loads of extra challenges to deal with: not only must they produce high-quality products that meet standards and turn a profit, but they also have to make sure those products get marketed and sold.

The Réseau Agriconseils gives you access to professional services to help you design and develop your marketing plan, even if you already sell your own products. You can create a marketing

plan during the start-up phase to pinpoint how and where to sell your goods, how much to sell them for, how to promote them, and so on. You can update your plan if you want to make changes, expand your business, or rethink your strategies. Marketing plans open eyes and doors. For farmers, they're an eye-opening tool because farmers work at the centre of their businesses and don't always get the perspective they need to properly analyze their situations or spot solutions and market opportunities. And marketing plans open doors because they are generally a requirement for grants through the Programme Proximité run by the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ).

Recently, a Réseau Agriconseils client who runs a vineyard made some informed marketing choices thanks to his marketing plan. In addition to

operating a wine cellar boutique, he was selling at three farmers' markets and targeting restaurants. With help from his advisor, he examined his options and chose sales locations that were appropriate for his production volume and the time he could devote to selling. Together, they evaluated the most suitable options, worked on the selling points, and eventually eliminated two farmers' markets. This greatly cut down on the farmer's workload and increased his income.

Another example is a market gardener who sold at his farm gate stand, a farmers' market, and a handful of grocery stores. The point of the marketing plan was to review his approaches with a view to making more money. After some analysis, the farmer decided to keep all his sales locations but to increase the value of the purchases per client at the farm gate and at the farmers' market using a series of marketing techniques.



A marketing plan can help clarify and improve marketing strategies.

To reach out to an advisor for help, ask the director of your local Réseau Agriconseils. Call 1-866-680-1858 toll-free or visit www.agriconseils.qc.ca.

Come to QFA's annual general meeting and information day!



Friday, November 13
Centennial Centre Ballroom, Macdonald Campus

9:00 a.m. - Registration, meet-and-greet with refreshments
10:15 a.m. - Speech from Anja Geitmann, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences
11:00 a.m. - Dr. Joe Schwarcz – Agricultural Myths and Facts
12:00 p.m. - Awards followed by adjournment to Tadjia Hall

Recipients of honorary QFA memberships and Warren Grapes Funds will be awarded between and after speeches, with attendees being invited to lunch in the Macdonald Faculty Club.

Lunch cost is as per previous years: \$25 members / \$30 non-members

Registration is advised. Write to qfa@upa.qc.ca

Business will continue in the afternoon in the main Tadjia Hall Conference Room, starting as close to 2 p.m. as possible, to finish no later than 3:30 p.m., with a wine-and-cheese reception afterwards.

Free parking will be available on campus with parking passes to be picked up from security.

Economics

Corn season is here and price bases have fallen!

Martin Ménard

The price of bases has fallen by half since September 18, causing the price of corn to fall from \$250 per tonne to roughly \$206 on October 2 at one of the buyers we contacted. That buyer was offering \$199 per tonne for corn that had to be delivered on October 5, a sign that prices are falling as the "real" harvest approaches. Note that the transition period between the old crop and the new crop results in significant price fluctuations, but this year the effect is even more pronounced. Major fluctuations are being seen from day to day, and also between grain centres in the same region. *La Terre de chez nous* contacted four buyers in Montérégie and one in Centre-du-Québec, and found that prices ranged from \$225 to \$206 per tonne for grain delivered on October 2.

Price bases have fallen

The very high price bases seen at the beginning of September were mainly driven by the shortage of corn in Quebec and the low Canadian dollar. The beginning of the corn harvest eased the situation and brought the crop's value down. In fact, farmers south of Montreal have already harvested some of their fields—

even though the grain was a little on the moist side (30–31 per cent moisture)—in order to take advantage of high prices for immediate sale. One grain centre reported having purchased nearly 6,000 tonnes of new-harvest corn last week.

An average corn harvest for 2015

The Statistics Canada report issued on October 2 estimates that this year's corn harvest in Quebec will be about 3.3 million tonnes. That is 6 per cent higher than in 2014 but 14 per cent lower than in 2013—essentially the average over the last 10 years. The federal agency estimates local corn consumption at 3.4 million tonnes, which puts the province in a slight deficit. This is good news for farmers, since this will have a positive effect on price bases. Étienne Lafrance, a market reporter, is cautious in interpreting this figure. "The ball will be in the buyers' court. If they're getting insufficient volume, they may be tempted to send for grain ships from abroad to avoid the corn shortage we had with the 2014 harvest," he points out.

Also, Statistics Canada is raising its estimates for the soy harvest, which is expected to reach an all-time record in Quebec with total production of 933,500 tonnes.



Farmers south of Montreal have been harvesting some of their fields to take advantage of high prices for immediate sale. This is a good move because price bases have gone down in the meantime.

Bumper crops

The first farmers to harvest their corn reported excellent yields, at least in Montérégie. In Richelieu, Sylvain Beaudry, one of the farmers who was busy harvesting last week, got a yield of 11.5 tonnes per hectare, which is 10 to 15 per cent higher than his average over the last 2 years. "And those weren't my best fields," he adds. One farmer who started harvesting on October 2 got 12 tonnes per hectare, compared to an average of 10 tonnes per hectare, with

a moisture content of 23 per cent. One thing's for sure: there are lots of people looking forward to a bumper year for corn.

Rosy price predictions

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is forecasting average grain corn prices of between \$175 and \$200 per tonne for the 2015 harvest. These figures are higher than the \$172 per tonne that the federal department predicted for the 2014 season. LTCN 2015-10-07

Harvest time at PranaSens

MAURICIE

Pierre Saint-Yves
Special contributor

Last July, Johanne Barrette and Stéphane Allaire celebrated the fifth anniversary of their love affair... with their farm.

SAINTE-GENEVIÈVE-DE-BATISCAN — From an abandoned farm and some fallow fields, the couple started PranaSens, a business that grows aromatic plants and produces organic essential oils and floral waters.

Five years later, the owners report that they've risen to the challenge with smashing success—so much so that they've been able to hire a few employees, including two of their children: their son Pierre-Luc works in the fields and their daughter Marie-Michèle handles sales.

Getting ready for HRM

In 2014, long before hiring their first employees, the two owners did some research on how best to tackle human resource management (HRM): "We didn't want to make a mistake," explains Barrette, who has been an herbalist for over 20 years. "Hiring employees and organizing HRM are important jobs that have an impact on the bottom line, and we wanted to get it right."

This led them to reach out to Martine Paris, an HRM consultant at the Centre d'emploi agricole (CEA) in Mauricie.



The owners with young employee Paméla Guay Tremblay and their children, Marie-Michèle and Pierre-Luc, behind.

Today, Paris is fond of saying that they put the cart before the horse—they had their HRM policy before they had staff. "It guaranteed we would get off to a good start, with good management in place," she explains.



PranaSens taps into the essence of plants.

After a number of months and several meetings with Paris, the couple had completed their employee handbook, which features a description of the business's values, policies, tasks, and pay scales. The owners give a copy of the handbook to all newly hired employees.

Managing growth

With their new HRM code in hand, the couple feels prepared to launch their business into a new development phase by commercializing new products and developing new markets abroad, such as in the United States and Europe. "We really feel that everyone knows the task ahead," says Allaire.

This development coincided with the launch of a new line of phytocosmetics—eight different skin products—on top of the therapeutic and aromatherapy diffusion mixes already on offer. These items are all united under the Orée brand. "Phytocosmetics are secondary processing, which is high value," Allaire explains.

The company had already been manufacturing a line of organic essential oils and floral waters made by distilling plants harvested from the wild (mainly in the forest) as well as plants grown on four of their nine hectares, including English lavender, cornflower, and Roman chamomile.

With an expansion, international market development, and research activities all in the works, the owners doubt that the next five years will be very relaxing—but they should be stimulating.

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To all agricultural and forestry producers
To partners in the agri-food sector
To stakeholders from government circles

We cordially invite you to attend the 91th General Congress of the *Union des producteurs agricoles*, which will be held on December 1, 2, and 3, 2015, at the Quebec City Convention Centre, located at 900 René-Lévesque Boulevard East.

Delegate registration will take place on December 1, 2015, starting at 8:30 a.m. The first working session will begin at 10 a.m. the same day.

Please note that amendments are likely to be made to the UPA's General by-law and to the Regulation regarding the contribution assessment of the UPA federations and specialized syndicates.

We look forward to seeing a great many of you there.

Sincerely,

Guylaine Gosselin
Director-General

UPA POUVOIR NOURRIR
POUVOIR GRANDIR
L'Union des producteurs agricoles

Picking the perfect apple

Cynthia Gunn, Advocate Food Writer

It would be indecent of me not to talk about apples in mid-October. The discussion of pork I said I would continue with after September's column can and should wait until November. After a pretty good apple season, then, what are you doing with the windfall?

Our family was invited to a Thanksgiving meal, and I offered an apple custard tart, which I hadn't made in years. Because it was to be served warm, I didn't make it until shortly before we were to depart. This would have worked just fine—if I had thought for more than two seconds about a decision to make it in a flan pan with a removable bottom. Let me caution you: Do not make a custard dish in a flan pan. The minute I poured in the custard it began oozing out. I lost half the custard, and the cleanup included much scraping and scrubbing. Thankfully, my daughter and I had just finished making a batch of apple-sauce the night before, so I quickly turned to my trusted apple-sauce cake recipe (See the October 2013 issue) and arrived with a warm, aromatic cake just 20 minutes late. I was forgiven.

Now, I simply used the apples I had on hand. This time it was McIntosh from Bristol, Quebec; sometimes it's an unknown, literal windfall from local trees. According to the Institute of Food Research (IFR) in the UK, I should be more precise in my choice if I'm after perfection. The balance of sugars and malic acid in each variety is paramount. The more malic acid and fewer sugars present, the stronger the flavour and the greater the likelihood of that strong flavour being retained when the apple is cooked. Also, eating varieties of apples contain up to 20 per cent more dry matter than cooking apples, which means the cooking apples give a moist and airy "melt-in-the-mouth" texture when cooked, but cooked eating apples have a chewy, dissatisfying texture. Hmmm, like potatoes, it helps to know the qualities of the different varieties in order to choose the best one for your recipe.

The IFR notes that to conform to grading criteria, apple growers have to produce fruit matching required standards of size, colour, shape, and freedom from skin blemishes. There are no criteria for smell and flavour. No surprise there. Similarly, Leahy Orchards Inc. of Quebec began its foray into processing as a reaction to the exacting requirements of the fresh fruit retail trade. Today, the company processes an average of 225,000 kilograms of fruit and vegetables each day, including apples for its "Applesnax" applesauce. Most of the apples are purchased from Canadian producers. If you run out of your own, it's handy to know you can buy Quebec-made applesauce.

Cynthia has many years of experience in the environment, heritage and tourism fields. After a decade in Banff, Alberta, she worked for two years at an environmental firm in Ottawa. She then wrote research reports for the Heritage Canada Foundation. In the last decade she has been raising her family and running a small catering business in Western Quebec. She holds a MA in Geography.

Cookin' with the Advocate



Apple Custard Tart



Ingredients

3 apples, about 1 pound
2 TBSP butter

Custard Filling

2 eggs
1 egg yolk
¾ cup whole milk
¼ cup heavy cream (18% or 35%)
¼ cup sugar
1 TBSP flour
½ tsp. vanilla

Pastry Bottom

1 cup flour
½ cup sugar
½ cup butter

Peel and slice apples. Melt butter in a non-reactive pan over medium heat. Sauté apples about 4 minutes, or until beginning to brown. Process all ingredients for the bottom in a Cuisinart or similar. Alternatively, use a pastry cutter or two knives to create a crumbly mixture. Press into bottom of a lightly greased pie plate. Bake at 350°F for 18 minutes. To make custard, whisk eggs and egg yolk until well mixed. Whisk in sugar and flour, and then whisk in the milk, cream, and vanilla.

Arrange apple slices over baked pastry bottom. Pour on custard filling. Sprinkle with cinnamon and bake 35 minutes or until custard is set. Serve warm.



VALACTA – Dairy Production Centre of Expertise

Foot Health

One step forward

The Development Team of the 2016 Practical Training on Foot Health *

How we got here

It wasn't until the 1980s that dairy producers began to take an interest in the feet of their dairy cattle. Numerous factors contributed to this shift in attitude, one of which was the gradual increase in the proportion of cows permanently housed in stalls. This meant less time in pasture for cows to remedy the foot and leg problems that appeared during the previous winter.

Cow anatomy also changed, with genetic selection leading to heavier and larger cows. Unfortunately, the barn environment didn't keep up with the changes. Since then, veterinarians have been called upon regularly to treat foot problems.

Additionally, changes in feed production and dairy-herd feeding made it possible to maximize the production capacity of the cows, sometimes at the cost of metabolic problems associated with foot health.

For all these reasons, producers are now more concerned with managing foot health and the various conditions that can affect the feet of their dairy cows.

Hoof trimming is now required on a growing number of farms, and foot-care professionals have become more commonplace. Since the main goal of hoof trimming now exceeds the initial preoccupation of maintaining a normal hoof shape, foot-care professionals have been trained to tailor hoof trimming to the needs of modern dairy operations.

In fact, since 2014, a training and certification program has been available to hoof trimmers in Quebec.

Changes along the way

Other more recent changes have led the dairy industry to focus more on foot and leg problems.

Both the demands of the quota system and the expanding herd sizes have increased the number of new cows introduced into herds, with no corresponding adaptation of biosafety protocols. Under these circumstances, digital dermatitis, an infection unknown in Quebec prior to the 1990s, has often been "bought and paid for."

Likewise, consumers are increasingly concerned about the well-being of the animals that contribute to their daily diet and are now demanding products that are not only healthy and of good quality, but that also come from farms where

animals are comfortable and healthy and where drug use is limited.

Concerns about cow lameness, now the third most important reason for culling in Quebec, cannot be ignored by the dairy industry. After implementing the Canadian Quality Milk (CQM) program on their farms, producers are now engaged in the proAction Initiative, a program aimed at, among other goals, ensuring the health and welfare of dairy cows for consumers.

There is more to be done

Despite our accomplishments to date, there remains much to do about foot health. In 2008, a study of 204 Ontario dairy herds revealed that 46 per cent of cows housed in free-stall barns and 26 per cent of those kept in tie-stall barns had foot lesions, which were detected during hoof trimming. Digital dermatitis was by far the most frequently encountered problem. More recently, 5,637 cows from 141 herds housed in free-stall barns in Quebec, Ontario, and Alberta were assessed for lameness using a scoring grid. Overall, 21 per cent of those cows exhibited obvious signs of lameness. Moreover, it was found that the prob-

lems increased with age, with third- and fourth-lactation cows being three to four times more affected than first-lactation cows.

As is the case for reproduction and udder health, foot health depends on the herd management decisions and actions taken by dairy producers. Veterinarians, professional hoof trimmers, and dairy production advisors are key partners in helping you prevent and handle problems. It is certainly in your interest to tap into these resources and use them to your benefit by first getting a better understanding of the nature of lameness and the control measures that can be implemented to prevent such problems.

You also need to be able to correctly assess the situation in your herd. It is important to observe your cows and identify those with abnormal mobility or behaviour so you can convey that information to the hoof trimmer.

Finally, depending on your herd's situation, you will need to implement measures to control and prevent any risk factors associated with foot problems. Research studies on lameness have shown that, in all cases, improving cow comfort is paramount.

In the long run

Although foot-health problems are relatively common in most herds, some producers manage to establish conditions that minimize the incidence and negative impact of such problems and find that the benefits are certainly worth the effort. Every step in the right direction will improve productivity and cow longevity, leading to a more profitable dairy operation.

* DEVELOPMENT TEAM

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In collaboration with

Dr Jean Durocher M.Sc., D.V.M., Dairy Herd Health Coordinator, Valacta

Let's take another step forward

To ensure even better foot health in our dairy cattle, Valacta and the Association des médecins vétérinaires praticiens du Québec are offering a training session tailored to the needs of Quebec's dairy herds.

This training course is designed to help you acquire the knowledge needed to play a key role in collaborating with your team of experts, managing foot health in your herd, and achieving cost-effective and lasting results.

This training session was developed by a team of experts in collaboration with various partners working in foot health. It will be presented throughout Quebec as of 2016. To register or learn more about the training, contact your Valacta representative or your veterinarian. Call 1-800-266-5248 or visit www.valacta.com.

A STEP AHEAD...



PRESENTED BY



Association des
Médecins Vétérinaires
Praticiens du Québec

valacta

What do labels tell you?

Canadian Agricultural Safety Association

Labels, labels everywhere. Labels are on a wide range of products, in fact on almost everything you buy. You see labels on things like milk jugs and chocolate bar wrappers to household cleaners, veterinary medicines, and pesticides. Often ignored, these labels are full of information. Labels tell you how to use the product safely and effectively, saving you time, money, and a potential injury or illness.

We use chemicals in our daily lives often without thinking about the potential hazards. When is the last time you read the label on a simple household cleaner? It's not something that we often think of doing when we are cleaning a window or mopping a floor, but it's an important step in understanding how the product works, how it should be stored, what precautions we should take, and, in the case of accidental exposure, what to do.

How often have you seen the words "New" or "Improved"? And what does it mean? Products are continually being evaluated. Labels are reevaluated based on research. Even if you've bought the same product for years, things change. Laundry detergent is a great example of these kinds of adjustments. Sometimes you'll see that a jug of laundry detergent can do 110 loads, but if you count, you may have only washed 80 loads before running out of soap. Why is that? It's because often, people don't read

the label and continue to add as much detergent as they always have even if the soap has become more concentrated. This means that, along with the dirt and oil, you've just washed away hard-earned money down the drain.

The same can be said for agricultural chemicals – reading and following the label will give you the best bang for your buck. Remember - when purchasing and prior to using a pesticide product - it is essential that you read and understand all portions of the pesticide product label. Just like with household cleaners, even if you're very familiar with a product, it's important to remember that pesticide product labels undergo scheduled reevaluations and can be changed at anytime due to new research or regulatory requirements.

Product labelling is governed through strict regulations; in fact, the label is the law. You are legally obligated to follow the instructions and requirements on the label. Remember to take the time to carefully review the signal word (Danger and Warning), precautionary statements, personal protective equipment requirements, entry restriction statements, emergency first aid measures, and directions for use.

Something else to keep in mind is that not only is information regarding the product revised, so are the personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements. Review these requirements each time you purchase an agricultural chemical. Also, remember to review the instructions that accompany the PPE. Read the instructions carefully



Reading and following the label will give you the best bang for your buck.

every time you purchase the PPE, even if you've purchased the same brand and model before.

Veterinary medicines are also frequently found on the farm. These products are expensive and essential to many farm operations to keep livestock healthy. The labels on these products are just as important as any labels found on pesticides. Labels on these medicines will tell the user how to achieve the optimum benefit by following the instructions. Inserts are also printed by the manufacturer that give more

information than can be found on the product's label. Ask for these inserts and read them carefully.

Reading labels is a good investment of time. These few words provide the information needed to handle agricultural products safely. These labels can save you time and money when read, understood, and followed. Most importantly, a properly followed label protects the health and safety of those using and exposed to the product.

For more information on farm safety, please visit casa-acsa.ca.



**QFA annual
general meeting!**
Friday, November 13
Macdonald Campus

The Tree Doctor



Leilak Anderson
Certified Arborist

Advocate Arboriculture Columnist

Come autumn, my backyard transforms into rolling hills of gold, amber, and scarlet. But this year the colours seem to have hit the snooze button. Where is that famous fire-engine red?

Two factors primarily affect fall colours: temperature and moisture. A series of warm, sunny days and cool but not freezing nights produce the most spectacular fall colours; a series of drought negatively affects the colours.

Chlorophyll, a green pigment, starts to drain from the leaves at the end of the summer, leaving behind yellow and orange pigments called xanthophylls and carotenoids. These colours seem to be consistent from year to year. But the



The leaves around Wakefield, Quebec weren't as colourful this Thanksgiving weekend. Could a lack of red-pigment-producing anthocyanins be to blame?

famous red pigments are due to anthocyanins that are produced at the end of the growing season—though scientists don't know exactly why the tree produces these pigments. It could be a warning signal to insects, or to protect the leaves from light damage as the tree withdraws

nutrients to store for next season.

Climate change seems to be playing a big part in drab fall colours. Vivid pigments need cool weather to keep sugars in the leaf, which explains why longer, hotter seasons delay the colours. Autumn now comes a few days later than it did

20 years ago. Drought and changes in precipitation patterns, also due to climate change, are affecting the brilliance of fall colours. Every year is different, but as the planet continues to change, we will also see a difference in our seasonal cues. Enjoy them while they last!



The QFA's Farm Food Forums

Great talks about agriculture
through videoconferencing

See details on page 19

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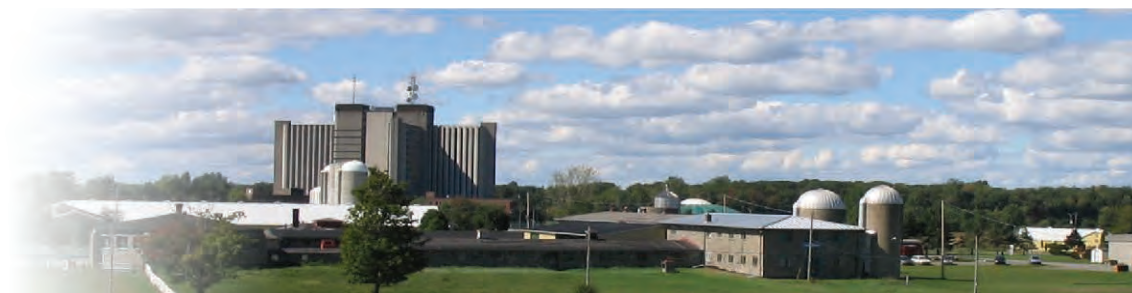




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Macdonald

Reports



Learning straight from the source

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

Each October, over the course of three days and approximately 1,500 km on the road, graduating students in the Farm Management and Technology (FMT) program participate in the southwestern Ontario trip in their Entrepreneurship 2 course. Between October 6 and 8, 25 students and five staff members visited seven businesses that specialize in a variety of industries.

The purpose of the trip is to expose students to successful entrepreneurs and different management styles, and help them recognize the strengths and weaknesses of different business models.

The group started the tour with a visit to Forman Farms in Seeley's Bay, a diverse operation including organic and conventional crop production, greenhouses with plants and vegetables, custom work services, and a pellet mill. The success of this business has been to diversify, but also to realize when changes are needed, and to buy or sell at opportune times.

The second farm visited was down in Milton, past Toronto. Chudleigh's started as an apple orchard and over time has developed into one of the largest agro-tourism farms in the GTA. With an entrance fee, food services, party services, a petting zoo, and other entertainment in addition to the store, visitors can do a lot more than just pick their own apples. Expansion in recent years to a bakery factory allows them access domestic and foreign markets with their products.

In the evening, students heard from Mark Andrew Junkin, a consultant who specializes in farm succession planning and crisis mediation. He spoke about the culture of agriculture and the importance of communication in directing where the business is going in the future.

On the second day, the first visit was to Beverly Greenhouses Ltd. in Waterdown. This third-generation farm produces over 20 acres of English cucumbers in greenhouses, and is currently run by two brothers. Cucumbers are picked and packed the same day, resulting in a fresher product for consumers. Innovation in pest control, water filtration and the packing process gave



Top: Class photo of the group that participated in the southwestern Ontario trip as a part of the course Entrepreneurship 2.

Bottom L-R: Tom Chudleigh speaks to students at Chudleigh's Entertainment Farm in Milton, ON; Dale VanderHout, co-owner of Beverly Greenhouses, describes their growing practices and yield; Year 3 FMT students learn about the wine-making process and the finer details of aging wine in oak barrels.

future greenhouse operators in the class a great sense of what can be achieved if you put your mind to it.

This visit was followed by a tour of Joe Loewith and Sons' dairy farm, with the prefix Summitholm Holsteins. The Loewith family milks 450 cows in a free-stall dairy, and the farm is well-recognized for its strong management practices that contribute to a productive farm and a positive, motivated workforce. The farm is also a good example of an alternative succession plan to pass on the business from one generation to the next.

The third visit of the day brought students to Simcoe County, to Sheldon Creek Dairy, run by the den Haan family. The on-site dairy transforms the milk from their farm into a variety of non-homogenized dairy products that are sold at the shop and throughout the region. The plant has only been in operation for a few years, so the growth potential and the niche market aspects of the business appeal to future dairy

farmers.

On the last day, the bus headed to Sandbanks Estate Winery in Prince Edward County, which is a start-up that has grown to be one of the most popular VQA Ontario wine producers. The group wine-tasted, visited the vineyard, and toured the production facility.

The last stop was Wendy's Country Market in Lyndhurst. Another diverse start-up operation, Wendy runs a store providing local foods of all kinds, in addition to supplying meals for school programs, and delivering local food to homes and restaurants. She acts as a buyer and distributor for the region, helping farmers to get better access to markets and assisting restaurants to buy local.

Feedback from students

According to student Thomas Kuipers, "visiting these farms was a real eye opener for most of us students. We are used to visiting farms and focusing on

production-related questions because that is naturally what everyone wants: higher production. However, on this trip we talked about management, and that is something that always seems to get left out because people are too uncomfortable to talk about the numbers or strategies that run the business.

"This trip gave us the opportunity to talk to some of the most intelligent managers in the agricultural industry. They showed us the importance of management and how to manage the costs behind the production, and they showed us that great farm managers manage all aspects of the enterprise."

For Alana Mckinven, "these visits were definitely worthwhile, and seeing the passion that each one of these farmers had truly inspired me to push my way through and keep going for the goals that I have set myself, because no matter how high you set your goals there's never a limit if you set your mind to it."

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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 pro-

duction of the *Advocate* and other services.

If you become a member, not only does your money go directly towards production of the newspaper, you are eligible to receive exclusive benefits such as: competitively priced health

insurance; considerably reduced prices on Farm Credit Canada management software; discount cards for Carhart work wear; discounted QFA translation services; 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.

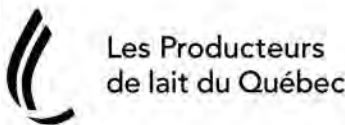
If you have recently paid for membership but have received another notice, please accept our sincere apologies and disregard the renewal notice. Occasionally, there are delays in processing. A membership package will be delivered in due course.

Truman Clark
Fairbairn House Heritage Centre
Ross Godin
Laird and Gayle Graham
William Hadley

George Hayes
Whitney Hodge
Brady Hodgson
James Kucharik
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John and Christine Robinson
Anne Standish
Thomas and Barbara Steiner
Lee Thompson

TOGETHER WE SUSTAIN QUEBEC'S ENGLISH-SPEAKING RURAL COMMUNITY



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 OCTOBER 2015

Centralized Quota Sales System		
Fixed Price	\$25,000.00	
	Number	Quantity in kg b.f./day
Total offers to sell	162	1,902.3
Offers to sell participating in the distribution	162	1,902.3
Successful offers to sell participating in the distribution	162	1,902.3
Net quantity bought by the reserve		1.1
Total offers to buy	1,178	7,059.5
Offers to buy participating in the distribution	1,178	7,059.5
Successful offers to buy participating in the distribution	1,178	1,901.2

Purchase and Sale offers by Stratum						
SALES				PURCHASES		
Number	Quantity in kg b.f./day	Cumulation	Price offered \$/kg b.f./day	Number	Quantity in kg b.f./day	Cumulation
71	489.4		< 25,000.00			
91	1,412.9	1,902.3	25,000.00 ceiling price	1,178	7,059.5	7,059.5

The fixed price for October is the ceiling price for this month. A quota quantity of 1,902.3 b.f./day was offered for sale at the fixed price. Of this quantity, an amount of 2.0 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 = 0.8 kg BF/day • 2nd step distribution by prorata = 16.24% • Portion of quantities satisfied = 26.93%

177940

The QFA's Farm Food Forums



Great talks about agriculture through videoconferencing

Thursday, November 26, 2015 – Precision agriculture in practice - how you can make use of it too

Thursday, January 28, 2016 – *Cooking with the Advocate.* Food, farming and health

Thursday, February 25, 2016 – Technical advice on improving animal health and nutrition

Thursday, March 24, 2016 – *This changing world.* Growing food with more unpredictable weather

Thursday April 28, 2016 – *"It will never happen to me"* This is why! Understanding safety risk management

Begins at 19 h 30 - ends at 22 h 00

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The Quebec Farmers' Association – representing Quebec's Anglophone agricultural and rural community since 1957

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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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Mark Boyd, Wakefield / **Ken Brooks**, Executive Member, Franklin / **Andrew Hickey**, 4-H representative / **Wendall Conner**, Executive Member, Canton de Hatley / **Roy Copeland**, Lachute / **Gib Drury**, Executive Member, Alcove / **Chris Judd**, Past President, Shawville / **Patricia Keenan**, Brompton / **Walter Last**, Poltimore / **John McCart**, President, Grenville-sur-la-Rouge / **Ben Nichols**, Compton / **Armin Ruf**, Executive Member, Stanstead / **Andrew Simms**, Shawville / **Jennifer Hayes**, Gaspésie

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- voting privileges at the QFA Annual General Meeting

Quebec Farmers' Association
555 boul. Roland Therrien, office 255
Longueuil, Quebec J4H 4E7

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

Signature



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

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