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**CASE IH** AGRICULTURE

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## Should you worry about animal welfare regulations?



ANDRÉE JEANSON

Quebec's National Assembly passed Bill 54 last month, by a vote of 109 to 0. The bill creates an entire new category in Quebec's *Civil Code* by declaring animals not as property, but as "sentient beings."

**"Laughter is the sun that drives winter from the human face."**

— Victor Hugo

## QFA's Farm Food Forums

February 26, 2016

Technical advice on improving animal health and nutrition

See page 18 for details.

**Andrew McClelland**  
*Advocate Staff Reporter*

The National Assembly of Quebec has passed a brand-new law about animal welfare, referring to livestock and pets as "sentient beings." And while the agricultural community has always striven to take care of its animals, many are wondering how the new legislation will affect their farms and businesses.

Quebec's minister of agriculture, Pierre Paradis, spearheaded Bill 54, which will see Quebec go from being one of the least-strict provinces for animal welfare to one of the toughest. The bill was passed unanimously at the National Assembly on December 4 in what many observers feel is a move to change Quebec's embarrassing reputation as the "puppy-mill capital" of North America.

But how that move will affect Quebec agricultural producers on a day-to-day basis remains to be seen.

Paradis says that the new law will bring Quebec in-line with Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia, which have some of the most stringent animal welfare laws in the country.

"I think everyone is in agreement that the change we made to the legal status of animals was needed," said the Liberal minister. "We were, as a society, 20 years behind. Animals were formerly considered property or pieces of furniture—now, they are regarded as sentient beings with biological needs."

### The cute factor

While pets receive new protection under the law, which states that they must receive "care that is consistent with

(their) biological needs," farm animals must be treated "in accordance with generally recognized rules," the bill reads.

But what that means is open to interpretation.

"There will definitely be regulations—this is a law," says Nathalie Côté, environment and quality assurance advisor with the Fédération des producteurs de bovins du Québec. "And the minister of agriculture has listed 20 areas where Quebec could introduce regulations, if they see fit. Much of it, of course, is in regards to cats and other pets. But one of those stipulations is a code of practice that could become mandatory should the government want to draw up those regulations."





# On the cover

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The law is unique in Canada. The legislation gives inspectors the right to demand to see an animal if they have “reasonable cause” to suspect a pet is being mistreated. Authorities can also obtain a warrant from a judge to enter a home and seize animals.

And without knowing how any new regulations will be enforced, the consequences could be harsh. First-time offenders against the animal welfare law could face fines as low as \$250 and as high as \$250,000. In some cases, jail time could result.

More inspection coming?

Since June of 2012, the Ministère de l’Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de

l’Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ) has had the right to visit a farm that it believes is mistreating its animals. That change in regulation irked many livestock producers who felt that they were at the mercy of onlookers or neighbours who might be spying on their farm businesses.

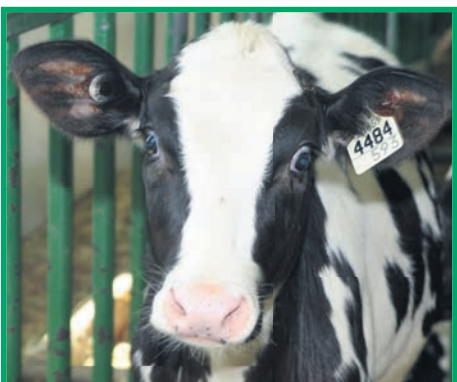
“In the past, we have had producers who received visits about animal mistreatment on their farms,” says Côté. “But it’s very likely that because of this law, we will see more complaints and more inspections. We’re very much in the experimental phase of seeing how it will be handled.”

Representatives of the beef industry are also concerned about the extent to which new regulations will affect other aspects of agriculture. The law suggests that the payment of govern-

ment aid to agricultural producers could be dependent on compliance with the new regulations. Quebec could regulate such matters as how many animals can be fit into the square footage of a farm building. The suggestion is enough to anger many producers, who have always shown respect for the animals they invest in and care for.

Thankfully, beef industry reps are determined to follow the enforcement of regulations and negotiate with the government.

“This is new, totally new,” Côté explains. “It will be new for inspectors, new for the government and new for farmers. In time, we may have to go back to MAPAQ and say, ‘This works, this works, this regulation is reasonable,’ or ‘This doesn’t work.’”



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Quebec could regulate such matters as how many animals can be fit into the square footage of a farm building.



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			Purchase and Sale offers by Stratum					
Centralized Quota Sales System			SALES			PURCHASES		
Fixed Price	\$25,000.00		Number	Quantity in kg b.f./day	Cumulation	Price offered \$/kg b.f./day	Number	Quantity in kg b.f./day
								Cumulation
Total offers to sell	114	686.9	3	6.6		< 25,000.00		
Offers to sell participating in the distribution	114	686.9	111	680.3	686.9	25,000.00 ceiling price	1,073	6,942.9
Successfull offers to sell participating in the distribution	114	684.9						
Net quantity bought by the reserve		2.0						
Total offers to buy	1,073	6,942.9						
Offers to buy participating in the distribution	1,073	6,942.9						
Successfull offers to buy participating in the distribution	1,073	684.9						

The fixed price for January 2016 is the ceiling price for this month. A quota quantity of 686.9 b.f./day was offered for sale at the fixed price.

1st step distribution by iteration = 0.3 kg BF/day • 2nd step distribution by prorata = 5.62% • Portion of quantities satisfied = 9.86%



## Programs

# \$25 million for projects proposed by agricultural associations

Thierry Larivière

On December 7, Ministers Pierre Paradis and Lawrence MacAulay announced a new sector development program, with a budget of nearly \$25 million, to replace the old Programme d'appui financier aux regroupements et aux associations de producteurs désignés (PAFRAPD).

"The new Programme de développement sectoriel (sector development program) gives participants an opportunity to become more competitive through their involvement in various projects. I am pleased that the federal and provincial governments are joining forces to strengthen the agriculture and agri-food sector," stated Lawrence MacAulay, the new federal minister. The program is intended to support projects in which those in the agri-food sector work together to make "large-scale projects" happen.

The program comprises four components: (1) support for joint action, (2) support for development, (3) support for innovation to address priority issues and (4) support for projects by farmers' groups and associations. Component 1 could cover 70 per cent of expenses to a maximum of \$50,000 per year over three years. Component 2 contributes up to \$250,000 for a given project. Component 3 has a ceiling of \$150,000 per year over three years. And finally, component 4 could provide access to \$50,000 per year over two years. Applications must be received by January 18 or March 7, 2016, depending on the component. For research projects under component 3, only organizations included on a list of 13 eligible centres currently supported by the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ) may apply, such as the

CÉROM, Valacta and the Centre ACER.

"The essence of this new program is collaboration between all links of the chain. Working together like this is the best way to drive foundational projects forward to develop the agri-food industry. It's important to remember that this sector is a powerful economic lever with an active role to play in contributing to the vitality of all regions of Quebec," declared Minister Paradis.

## No direct support

The MAPAQ says components 1, 3 and 4 of the new program replace the PAFRAPD. However, the program does not directly support the operation of farmers' associations—only projects proposed by them. Associations may apply for funding for eligible projects, not direct support. Also, the new sector development program does not cover



Research on biomass heating for greenhouses is the kind of project that used to be supported by the PAFRAPD—and which should be included in component 2 of the new program.

administration fees except for component 4, which allows for administration fees totalling up to 15 per cent of the funding granted.

The new program is part of the federal strategic framework *Growing Forward 2* (2013–2018), which had an existing budget of \$293 million over five years. The \$25 million is not new money. Rather, since the PAFRAPD has been suspended, the funds allow this part of the strategic framework to be accessed once again.

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## 2016 – What to expect?

# Income security front and centre for 2016



UPA President Marcel Groleau.

### Thierry Larivière

LONGUEUIL – The future of Quebec farmers' financial safety net will be central to some important debates in the coming year. The changes made to the agricultural risk-management programs at the end of last year are "minor" in the eyes of the Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA); the UPA feels the increase of only \$12.7 million per year, for all types of production, just isn't enough. It continues to call for more muscular improvements.

"The year 2015 was relatively good for the markets, but that was mainly due to the low Canadian dollar. It's a worrisome situation. Without a low Canadian dollar, prices could actually fall below the costs of production for many farmers," stated UPA President Marcel Groleau in a year-end interview with *La Terre de chez nous* on December 16. If the dollar were to bounce back, the grain and meat sectors

would see that the income security or risk-management insurance plans are "insufficient." In response to the recent changes, the president said "there's nothing in there for the regions; there's nothing in there for Agri-Québec."

"We're going to see people mobilizing around these issues in 2016. We were team players when it came to balancing the budget. Now we're hoping to enter into direct discussions, but that means farmers' groups are definitely going to have to act in solidarity and speak with one voice," Groleau stated firmly. For the time being, government authorities don't seem to be lending much of an ear. "We haven't heard much directly from the Financière agricole du Québec (FADQ) or the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation about entering into a real discussion," lamented Marcel Groleau, who says he wonders whether the government's mandate regarding the FADQ is "too

tight" and is preventing Minister Pierre Paradis from holding "real consultation with farmers' groups."

"I'm anticipating major cuts to the FADQ budget in 2016. The reason I say this is because there's been a lack of discussion," the UPA president said. His take on it is that the priority wasn't to create a \$300 million reserve, but rather to make up for the "weakness" of the support programs currently in place, which are unable to prevent a "hecatomb," such as the one seen in the meat sector in 2010-2011. The president noted that the stabilized incomes used in the Farm Income Stabilization Insurance program aren't high enough, which is worrisome to the various groups. "Decisions are being made that could really hurt the agricultural sector in the long run," Groleau added.

### Wanted: Vision

"We've asked to meet with the premier," said the president, adding that

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## 2016 – What to expect?

the Conseil de la transformation alimentaire du Québec lacks a “vision” for the development of Quebec’s agri-food sector. “We have to be able to plan for the future and figure out how to develop this sector to make it competitive with Ontario’s.” If the meeting with Premier Couillard does take place early this year, as is hoped, one of the demands to be voiced would be the inclusion of the agri-food sector in the Quebec government’s economic development strategy.

### Societal demands

The UPA is not overly concerned about the passing of Bill 54 on the legal situation of animals late last year. Some parts of the bill suggested by farmers made their way into the act. However, Groleau wondered: “Will our good practice guides be used in drafting the regulations to go along with the act?” He pointed out that translating guides into regulations might be hard without betraying their original intent.

On the matter of pesticides, “it’s assumed that pesticides are being used incorrectly,” the UPA president points out. He says that the data on the quantities sold don’t indicate that the products are being used improperly. Therefore, the Québec Pesticide Strategy will continue to be questioned in 2016. In the

UPA’s opinion, the requirement that agronomists play a central role in validating farmers’ decisions pertaining to pesticide use doesn’t take into account the fact that “agronomists can include those who work for the companies.”

### Rezoning by government order

The president doesn’t look kindly on the government’s “tangent” in issuing orders to promote logistics development on farmland. “If we start using orders all the time, where does that leave the Commission de protection

the CPTAQ’s “seal” allowed politicians to trivialize presumed conflicts of interest in a province still reeling from the conclusions of the Charbonneau commission.

### The price of land for young farmers

“Access to land is the overriding issue for the next generation of farmers,” stated Groleau. Land is becoming harder to access, even for young farmers in the Coopérative pour l’agriculture de proximité écologique, who told the

for the new generation. “There’s a lot of work to be done in 2016,” said the president about the issue of land access for young farmers—another issue which could lead to farmer mobilization.

### Taxes on the rise

The price of land is a problem for established farmers as well, with municipal taxes sharply increasing. “We’ve been saying for at least ten years that this makes no sense,” the president stated, referring to the increased tax burden farmers are having to shoulder. “The real issue is the discrepancy between the price of land and its agricultural value,” he pointed out. Land is often sold without being financed based on its agricultural value, and too often this land is purchased as an investment rather than for a long-term agricultural purpose.

**“I’m anticipating major cuts to the FADQ budget in 2016.**

**The reason I say this is because there’s been a lack of discussion.”**

**— Marcel Groleau**

du territoire agricole (CPTAQ)?” asks Groleau, who notes that the recent Bill 85 targets hundreds of hectares of farmland for rezoning even though no specific developer or project is associated with these areas. “Protecting farmland is becoming more and more important to society. The government should act in such a way that people can have confidence in the actions being taken,” stated the president, who feels that having

UPA president that often they can’t afford to buy even a few hectares, “not even parcelled land.”

“What’s needed is patient capital,” explained Groleau, who thinks that the 25-year amortization period isn’t enough these days. “Incentives to encourage transactions between relatives are also required,” he added, referring to the need for a “new range of services” to facilitate land transfer

### Trans-Pacific Partnership

Finally, on the federal level, the UPA is planning a meeting “soon” with the new Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lawrence MacAulay. Although the Trans-Pacific Partnership is not likely to be ratified by a sufficient number of countries in 2016, especially with the upcoming US presidential election, “we need to make sure the government meets its commitments.”



The UPA president says there are two issues that could mobilize farmers in 2016: improving the farm income safety net and access to land for young farmers.



## 2016 – What to expect?

# Minister MacAulay to focus on science and commerce

**Thierry Larivière**

During a short interview with *La Terre de chez nous*, Lawrence MacAulay discussed what he hopes to accomplish as Canada's new Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

"I'm really interested in what's happening in Canadian agriculture from a scientific perspective. It's impressive. We're really at the forefront, and that's where we've got to stay," Minister MacAulay says, citing the example of the new seeds for the grain sector. "The implication of my mandate letter is that innovation is crucial," he added. He says he's certain that the money that's been promised for research will be there. Asked whether some of this research money could be decentralized, Minister MacAulay was cautious in his response. "The scientific community does different things in different parts of the country. I think it's up to the community to tell me how these funds should be allocated. I'll certainly be relying on the experts," said the minister.

The other part of his mandate the minister found important had to do with export opportunities for Canadian agri-food products. "We're the leader of the pack. We have the best food products in the world. When you look at the growing middle class in Asia, I wouldn't say that the potential is unlimited, but it is large," Minister MacAulay pointed out.

### Diafiltered milk and growth hormone

The minister intends to fix the problem with border controls for imported products such as diafiltered milk, which is circumventing the supply-management system.

"The government has committed to supporting supply management, and we are certainly aware of the industry's concerns about the importation of diafiltered milk. We are consulting with the industry and working with departmental agencies to ensure our regulations are properly bolstered," stated the minister. As for when exactly concrete action will be taken for this issue, the minister explained that first it's impor-



Canadian Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Lawrence MacAulay at his swearing-in on November 4.

tant to "ensure that all regulations are being followed." "We want to fix this problem," he stated.

*La Terre de chez nous* asked whether the minister would support applying the principle of reciprocal standards for imported American milk products that contain the growth hormone somatotrophin.

"In our country, the standard is that it's not a problem to drink the milk. We don't allow the use of this hormone because

we believe it affects the animals," explains the minister, adding that the same standard can't be applied to imported milk products because "the milk is what's entering the country, not the cattle."

### Agricultural policy

*La Terre de chez nous* also asked the minister whether he was ready to make changes to the policy framework *Growing Forward 2* before the planned deadline of 2018.

"To be honest, I don't know yet. We are beginning consultations on *Growing Forward 3* or whatever we decide to call it. The first thing I'll be doing is meeting with the parties concerned," said Minister MacAulay, who wants to ensure that Canada remains at the front of the pack, that it continues to be a trading nation and even that it increases exports. He explained that this is why trade agreements are important, in his view. He cited the example of legumes and grains, which are an existing large-scale export.

### Trans-Pacific Partnership

"On the Trans-Pacific Partnership, we've stated clearly, as I'm stating now, that we will be holding discussions with the relevant stakeholders, and an open dialogue will take place in the House of Commons before any action is taken," the minister said. Could Canada eventually ask for a renegotiation if the consultations go in that direction? "Maybe, if the consultations are very negative, but I don't think renegotiation would be possible," MacAulay responded.



### 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:

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**Marcel Groleau**  
UPA President

# What does the future hold for family farming?

Markets are becoming segmented. The landscape of farming is changing. And in commodity markets, price is king. The latest technologies and economies of scale are what give farmers a competitive edge. Reference prices are established (partly by speculation) on the stock exchange and are highly volatile. Meats and grains are bought and sold through futures contracts. Individually, farmers hold no sway over the market.

At the same time, some niche markets are highly valued by consumers, and increasing numbers of them are seeking out products that align with their values. Distinction is becoming an important selection criterion—and this area of agriculture is developing its own production techniques: organic products, controlled designations, on-farm processing, etc.

Of the 8,000 farmers under the age of 40 in Quebec, only 58 per cent work on the farm full-time. The situation is even

worse elsewhere in Canada. Many hold down jobs off the farm to supplement their family income—and sometimes even to keep the farm afloat financially. In agriculture, the high costs of the assets required to generate revenue are making it harder for new farmers to get started. This is the case in both niche and mass markets, whether or not they are family farmers. This market development is hurting the family farm. And more and more farmers are farming part-time as a result.

The support for farmers offered by the Quebec and Canadian governments is gradually turning into self-directed risk management. This form of “privatization” is increasing the share of the risk being borne by farmers. Natural risks are unpredictable and include temperature, weather events, animal diseases and crop pests. Crop insurance can help somewhat, but looming in the background is always the increased volatility of market prices in an ever-globalizing economy. The market price of meat actually doubled between 2011 and 2014.

That price could go back down to where it was in 2011 at any moment, without warning.

After making cuts to the assistance for farmers through the Farm Income Stabilization Insurance (FISI) program, which drove thousands of family farmers in the meat sector out of business, the government is now pressuring grain, potato and apple growers to abandon the program in favour of AgriStability, Agri-Québec and AgriInvest programs. We know from experience that these programs are of limited use in a context where market prices have been sitting below cost of production for three years or more at a time, which isn't such a rare occurrence in the farming world.

By making cuts to the safety net rather than adapting to the realities of the market and the risks that family farmers may be required to shoulder, the government is encouraging the concentration of financial and physical assets and forcing farmers into contract farming.

It's clear that Minister Paradis and the rest of the government are planning

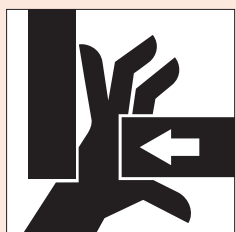
drastic cuts to agricultural supports. In the wake of budget cuts to the Financière agricole du Québec (FADQ) to the tune of \$113 million in 2014 and \$151 million in 2015, that's where things are headed. Rather than paying to improve the safety net and risk-management programs—as unanimously recommended by those who served on the income security working group created by the government—the minister of agriculture instead decided to create a \$300 million reserve with the surplus from the FADQ, even though the programs in question are essentially ineffective.

In 2015, the sagging Canadian dollar and record-setting grain harvests actually drove Quebec to perform economically. But if we want to keep family farms alive in all our regions, if we want them to be passed on to future generations, and if we want agriculture to expand in the future, we're going to have to reconsider this short-term strategy and work to maintain a safety net that works for family farms. Time will tell how 2016 pans out for Quebec's family farms.

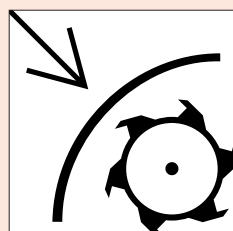
## Symbols for Safety

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.

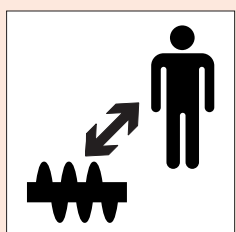
Below, we've reprinted some of the warning signs you might find on farm machinery and equipment. Take a quick look at them and remember what they stand for. It could save your life.



**WARNING:**  
Crush of fingers or hand -  
Force applied from side



**WARNING:**  
Forage harvester cutterhead



**WARNING:**  
Keep safe distance away from auger area

Hazard symbols taken from the Association of Equipment Manufacturers.





## Risk management

# Quebec government expands agricultural risk-management resources

Thierry Larivière

The agricultural risk-management programs Agri-Québec and Agri-Québec Plus will be expanded by \$12.7 million per year, retroactively from January 1, 2015. The changes, which are to take place at a number of levels, were announced on December 9, ten months after the Groupe de travail sur la sécurité du revenu en agriculture au Québec (Quebec farm income security working group) submitted its report.

For the Agri-Québec program, the percentage to be received on adjusted net worth of farm businesses will rise from 3 per cent to 3.2 per cent. Agri-Québec payments for aquaculturists will go from 3.6 per cent to 3.9 per cent, given that it is the only program for which they are eligible.

When it comes to Agri-Québec Plus, Minister Paradis's decision will offset the cuts made by the former federal government by bringing the level of coverage to 85 per cent of the reference margin, up from its current level of 80 per cent. The Quebec government is also changing the threshold of net profit beyond which the program no longer applies. This figure currently sits at \$10,000; it will be raised to \$50,000. This

means farmers will receive compensation for decreases in profit margins of over 15 per cent, even if the farm profits were up to \$50,000.

For operations whose farm income (as opposed to net income) is \$100,000 or less, the government's Agri-Québec contribution will be 1 per cent higher than for farmers eligible for the program, i.e. 4.2 per cent.

### Choosing between FISI and the Agri programs

One important part of these changes is the collective choice that farmers will have to make, sector by sector, between Farm Income Stabilization Insurance (FISI) and the expanded Agri programs. "The decision will be up to individual production sectors," explains Jean-François Brouard, vice-president of insurance at the Financière agricole du Québec (FADQ). It's not clear yet whether these choices will be made by referendum or by another form of consultation. In Brouard's opinion, the choice is "neutral" for farmers if seen from a long-term perspective of 15 years.

The FADQ also plans to compensate farmers covered under FISI who didn't receive Agri-Québec payments in the last two years. These farmers will receive a retroactive payment for two years, which is not included in the calculated \$12.7 million per year. The amount paid could be much higher if more sectors under FISI opt for the Agri programs rather than FISI.

### A \$150,000 loan

The minister's announcement calls for the creation of a new loan of \$150,000 over five years, covering a maximum of three per cent interest. This component is open to all production sectors, even those that fall under supply management and under FISI. The component could be accompanied by other programs such as the diversification program.

"In light of the recommendations of the Quebec farm income security working group, the proposed enhancements and adjustments are intended to address the needs of farm business owners by giving them access to efficient and competitive programs," stated Minister Paradis in a press release.

### UPA partly satisfied

"When it comes to small businesses,



PASCAL RATTHE

Through the changes announced to various risk-management programs and the adoption of new measures, Minister Pierre Paradis says he wants to make them more "efficient and competitive."

we're happy. We got what we asked for," said Marcel Groleau, president of the Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA). He also approves of the 3.2 per cent expansion, even if this contribution is considered "recycling the money the Quebec government paid into AgriInvest" previously.

into the future. "It's a risky choice. Farmers know there are still major risks ahead," the president said, referring to the important role FISI plays during relatively difficult periods.

As for the \$150,000 loan component, "it's a step in the right direction, but we had recommended a more size-

**One important part of these changes is the collective choice that farmers will have to make, sector by sector, between Farm Income Stabilization Insurance (FISI) and the expanded Agri programs.**

Groleau is more critical when it comes to the decision farmers are being forced to make between FISI and the Agri programs. "Producers don't really have a choice," the president says, noting that FISI hasn't been active for quite some time in certain sectors. He also notes that the deduction of the amounts received through the Agri programs from FISI payments means that, for some sectors, this insurance has no chance of being used until several years

able investment program," adds Marcel Groleau. The UPA has been pushing for an investment program of \$50 million per year, including a component specifically for regions outside central Quebec.

The UPA also points out that the deductions farmers pay for promotion and research were not included in the calculation of production costs, even though the FADQ board of directors has been claiming this since 2010.



ARCHIVESTON

President of the Union des producteurs agricoles, Marcel Groleau, globally approved the changes, but mentioned there's much to do for the future.



# Quebec Farmers' Health Insurance Plan

Across Canada, a growing number of individuals find themselves working under circumstances where they either do not have access to benefit plans or the access is limited. Members of associations such as the QFA have typically been restricted in accessing benefits. The need for affordable benefits is increasing with the changing government plans, aging population and new expensive medical and drug treatments.

Without access to affordable health protection many employees and self-employed individuals do not get the care they need to maintain their health. For the Quebec Farmers' Association and their employees this can mean lost productivity and high costs associated with sick time and training replacement workers.

Without access to affordable health and dental protection our members have an exposure to financial burdens that could be lessened or eliminated with health protection.

COMPARATIVE RATES FOR 2015-2016				
Monthly Cost Benefit	Monthly Premium Single Coverage		Monthly Premium Family coverage	
	2015 Rates	2016 Rates *	2015 Rates	2016 Rates *
Basic Life Insurance	\$6.78	\$8.16	\$6.78	\$8.16
Basic Accidental Death & Dismemberment	\$0.68	\$0.70	\$0.68	\$0.70
Dependent Life	\$2.94 (if applicable)	\$3.44 (if applicable)	\$2.94	\$3.44
Extended Health Benefits	\$101.37	\$115.99	\$259.04	\$296.38
Dental Benefits	\$54.75	\$48.42	\$113.82	\$100.65
Total Monthly Cost**	\$166.52	\$176.71	\$383.26	\$409.33

\* New Rates as of January 1, 2016  
\*\* Quebec and Ontario charge a sales tax that varies depending on the province of residence (9% for Quebec and 8% for Ontario). This amount is not included in the above premiums.

Once again, we wish to remind members that QFA has a Voluntary Group Insurance Program.

The plan includes Basic Life Insurance, Accidental Death & Dismemberment, Dependent Life Insurance, Extended Health Benefits and Dental Benefits. January 1, 2016, saw our group insurance policy renewed for another year with Manulife Financial. At this time we would like to provide you with an update.

Since launching our program, every effort has been made to ensure that high levels of coverage are maintained at competitive rates. The good news is that members who have signed up for our health program report that they are very satisfied with the customer service and level of coverage.

These benefits are outlined on our website, under Tab/ Membership/Health insurance plan/ Summary of benefits.

Due to the claim pattern over the past 12 months, Manulife Financial has requested an overall increase of 7 per cent for premiums this year. We are pleased to report that no modifications are being made to the plan's coverage for 2016. It

is recommended that the use of generic drugs over brand name drugs be continued. Generic drugs are the same quality as brand name drugs at a cost of as much as 40 per cent less.

We will continue to ensure that QFA receives the most favourable rates and coverage. At the same time, we encourage your participation and support to control costs.

For further information, call the plan administrator, Warren Yaffy of Bene-flex Quebec at 514 940-5292 or Karly Beaudry at 514 937-9303 ext 202.

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## Climate of change



**Mitchell Beer**  
President, Smarter Shift

# Ottawa is looking for climate solutions: Does agriculture hold one of the keys?

If you were watching the flurry of scientific reports in the weeks leading up to the United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference in Paris, you could have been forgiven for thinking it was just about game over for a stable climate and the human civilization that depends on it.

But there's hope on the horizon. The landmark global agreement at the UN climate summit in Paris was a milestone on the road to a low-carbon future. And farm producers could play an important role, with a set of carbon-reduction techniques that are good for business but sometimes get short shrift in the push to decarbonize our energy system.

### Scoping the problem

We're all living under a tight deadline

to get carbon pollution under control. Conventional wisdom says we have to limit average global warming to 2°C (3.6°F) over pre-industrial levels to avoid the worst effects of climate change. Last year, a UN panel called for a 1.5°C limit to protect the world's most vulnerable regions.

"If we get to a 2°C world, then forget the Marshall Islands," Steven Guilbeault, co-founder of Montreal-based Équiterre, told a pre-Paris media briefing. "Forget large parts of Bangladesh. Forget parts of the US and Canada coastline."

To put that in perspective, the widely respected UK Met Office reported the same day that average global warming now exceeds 1°C. Additional warming already loaded into the slow-moving global climate system means we'd be on track for 1.5°C, even if we stopped burn-

ing all fossil fuels today. And that isn't going to happen.

Which is why climate specialists like Australia's Tim Flannery are so interested in finding practical, affordable and achievable ways to suck some of that carbon out of the atmosphere.

### Digging for solutions

Carbon capture and storage (CCS) is an area where adjectives like "practical" and "affordable" are in short supply. But many of the most promising options involve mimicking or magnifying the earth's natural regenerative cycles. That's where the conversation pivots back to agriculture.

"More than a mere alternative strategy, regenerative agriculture represents a fundamental shift in our culture's relationship to nature," wrote Charles

Eisenstein, an author and self-described "degrowth activist," in a summary for *The Guardian*. The approach "comprises an array of techniques that rebuild soil and, in the process, sequester carbon," he explained. "Typically, it uses cover crops and perennials so that bare soil is never exposed, and grazes animals in ways that mimic animals in nature. It also offers ecological benefits far beyond carbon storage: it stops soil erosion, remineralizes soil, protects the purity of groundwater and reduces damaging pesticide and fertilizer runoff."

The approach holds the potential to boost yields, curtail chemical inputs and offset up to 40 per cent of global carbon emissions on cultivated land, plus another 71 per cent on pasture, Eisenstein said. All with a cluster of techniques that "seek to mimic nature, not dominate it."







Farm producers could play an important role, with a set of carbon-reduction techniques that are good for business but sometimes get short shrift in the push to decarbonize our energy system.

Not just any CCS

In contrast to Eisenstein’s thinking, the more prominent CCS schemes look like a hideously expensive Rube Goldberg design gone bad. CCS plants routinely run past their construction deadlines and over budget. Canada’s only operational CCS plant, in

Saskatchewan, is performing so poorly that the province had to pay a performance penalty to project partner Cenovus Energy. That loud “whoosh” you hear is the sound of tax dollars exiting farmers’ pockets in a province that needs and deserves better. So, we have a pretty good idea of what to do. We just haven’t been

doing it yet. The new federal government is committed to completing a pan-Canadian climate framework within 90 days of Paris, and it owes much of its electoral success to Quebec. Is this the moment for the province’s farm operators to step up as an integral part of Canada’s response to climate change?

*Mitchell Beer is president of Smarter Shift in Ottawa and curator of The Energy Mix, a thrice-weekly e-digest on climate change, energy, and the low-carbon transition. Last month, he was in Paris as an accredited observer at the United Nations climate change summit.*

# Keep it in the family

## Let's tell the story of family farms

Feeding the world is not just a big responsibility, it's big business – with a world population over 7.3 billion, it has to be. However, many consumers don't associate large-scale business

with family business, even though 98% of Canadian farms are family-owned and operated. As a result, many consumers don't trust their food supply. We need to make sure the

story of the family farm is being told, and that “big” doesn't mean “bad.” We all have stories we can share, whether you grew up on a family farm,

or you work in an industry that serves farm families. Look for opportunities to tell the real story of Canadian agriculture, whether it be online, in the grocery store or at the dinner table.

### Here are some talking points to get you started:

**98% of Canadian farms are family farms**  
Almost all of the farms in Canada are family-owned and operated, and producing healthy, sustainable food is their first priority. Remember, farmers feed their own families the food they produce.

**Family farms have evolved**  
They look different today than they did 50 years ago. But that doesn't mean our food supply isn't safe and

healthy anymore. New technology has allowed farmers to do more with less, making agriculture more sustainable today. Farmers protect the environment because they want to pass their business on to the next generation.

**Farming is a complex business**  
Families must manage food safety and traceability, detailed budgets and accounting, marketing, employees, ever-changing technology, and more.

Modern farms must be run as a business, and it makes good business sense for many family farms to incorporate. As a company, farms can minimize taxes. Plus, family members can own shares in the company, making it easier to pass the farm from generation to generation. But their business structure doesn't change the fact that family members work side by side every day, bringing to life their shared passion and dedication for producing safe, healthy food.

### We're in this together

Everyone in the industry needs to work together to help improve perceptions. By being open and proactively communicating with the public about how we grow food and why we operate in the ways we do, we can maintain consumer trust and continue to produce high-quality, nutritious food in ways that are efficient and sustainable. 🍁





# Spirit of giving lasts the whole year for 4-H

Lorelei Muller

Community involvement is such an important part of 4-H that the organization's pledge includes a commitment of "hands to larger service." 4-H clubs in several communities fulfilled that promise during the holiday season, culminating a year of service in 2015.

Members of the Hatley and Lachute 4-H turned their talents to Christmas carolling at their respective local seniors' residences while the Richmond club chose square dancing as their form of entertainment. Ormstown 4-H's contributions to a food bank were supplemental to donations already made in March. Clubs in Howick and Shawville decorated floats and braved the cold for local Christmas parades.

Throughout the year, 4-H'ers enhance community vitality by participating in parades, such as the Lachute Fair or Canada Day celebrations in Hatley and Shawville. Each year, the Richmond 4-H club enters a float in the town's Saint Patrick's Day parade.

The March event is another example of the many initiatives that earned the Richmond club the award for Outstanding Achievement in Community Involvement at the Quebec 4-H Annual General Meeting on November 21, 2015. In April, members of the cooking project collaborated for the Simply Supper at the United Church. The club was able to give a night off to the regular volunteers who, once a month, provide a nutritious meal to those in need. According to cooking leader Tammi McGee, "Those kids aren't afraid of hard work. It was

great to see them having fun while making an impact on their community. The biggest impact on me was how receptive and happy the diners were to see the

kids in action." Quilting project members worked throughout the winter and spring to create a quilt, which was later raffled off to support the new community



Howick 4-H celebrates the season in their community Christmas parade.



Richmond 4-H in their holiday finest danced to entertain at the Wales Home.

## Social starters

The importance of family is something everyone can understand and relate to, whether you're in ag or not. It's common ground that can start a conversation.

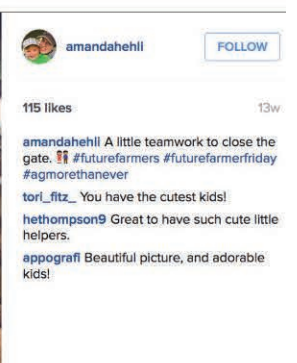
Visit [AgMoreThanEver.ca/resources](http://AgMoreThanEver.ca/resources) to find a collection of photos that you can easily share on social media to start or support conversations about family farming.



Or, even better, share your own pictures and make your story personal.



(photo by Jerri Judd)





art room at Richmond Regional High School. During September's Richmond Fair, poultry project members auctioned off their birds with a portion of the income going to the Centre hospitalier universitaire de Sherbrooke (CHUS) along with a matching contribution from the club. Club leader Maria

Enright reflects: "When we give back, we become a true part of our community, and it thrives! Often the 4-H members want to give to their school or their clubs, and this is great! They are thinking about what would make their immediate community a better place, and it does! What the Simply Supper did was

open the boundaries of our 4-H members' community. They saw a new aspect of their community, opening their eyes, their hearts and their minds."

The Hatley 4-H club conducts their own turkey auction at the Ayer's Cliff Fair each year. In August, the auction raised \$3,000 to benefit the Children's Wish Foundation, a cause the club also supports by hosting a petting zoo at an annual community music festival in June. Hatley and fellow Eastern Townships club Sawyerville 4-H each gave financial donations to their respective agricultural associations in 2015. Sawyerville member and Quebec 4-H president Matthew Burns said, "The Cookshire Fair has helped out our club many times over

the years and never charged us a penny. Since the fair had terrible weather in 2014, everyone agreed that we should do something to help out. We decided to donate all of the proceeds from our annual dance to the fair."

Club efforts extended to care for the environment. Shawville 4-H assisted at an event for the Mill Dam Park Revitalization Party in July. Members of the Brome 4-H Club turned their attention to collecting recycling during Brome Fair in September.

The Quebec 4-H Association is continuing a group initiative to collect drink can tabs for donation to the Ronald McDonald House of Montreal. The aluminum is sold to recyclers to support the institution's work to provide housing to families during hospital stays of their sick children. In May, after more than 50 pounds of tabs were amassed, Richmond 4-H member Katie Grandsire-Mastine, who collected nearly half the total, visited the facility to deliver the aluminum and tour the site.

As 4-H'ers across Quebec start their new club year, they will be busy planning performances, fundraisers and more for another year of giving in 2016.



Ormstown 4-H during one of their contributions to the local food bank.



Shawville 4-H warms a chilly December evening with the spirit of Christmas and community.

What are others saying?

"My farm is a family farm. It is 100% owned by myself, my husband and his two parents. We love everything about agriculture with a fierce passion. We have never, ever, sold a product that we wouldn't happily serve to our children. Every decision on the farm takes more than just finances into consideration. Our number one goal is to leave a farm to our children that is both environmentally and economically viable."

- Adrienne Ivey, Saskatchewan rancher

"Agriculture is a fast-growing business, and it has to be run as a business. It involves family, of course, but we're always looking at the latest research, we're looking at what practices are evolving in other countries, and we're adapting those practices so we can become more efficient to get our product into the marketplace."

- John Thwaites, Ontario fruit and vegetable grower



# Macdonald

## Reports



## New year, new programs, new books, new ideas

### Helping students develop knowledge and skills to become successful entrepreneurs

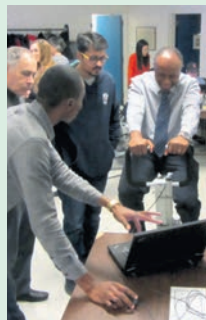
Students, professors and staff from Macdonald are engaged in entrepreneurial and socially innovative projects that cross boundaries between academic disciplines and industry sectors. In the fall of 2015, the Entrepreneurship and Innovation (E&I) Program at Macdonald shifted into high gear. The E&I Program integrates academic training with hands-on work and real-world experiences.

Students are connected with entrepreneurs and innovators and have the opportunity, through start-up competitions, to take the seed of an idea and make it grow into an award-winning product

or service. As part of the program, students can take a Minor in Agribusiness Entrepreneurship, which will help them develop the skills to start up or manage and grow an existing venture.

### Mac students putting a spin on innovation

Who says students can't teach professors new things, especially when it involves physical work? Retrofitting an old stationary exercise bicycle with sensors and electronic devices, Bioresource Engineering students Jérémie Messerli, Jean Delatour, Mohit Jain and Christopher Nzediegwu developed a prototype capable of maintaining a constant cycling speed autonomously by electronically varying the load to the system depending on the speed the cyclist exerts. Using open-source software, coupled with an RPM sensor and a load cell mounted on the bike connected to a microcontroller, the microcontroller signal adjusts the RPM by increasing or decreasing the friction on the flywheel with a linear actuator.



While the system is running, real-time data is displayed on a visual interface. This system has potential applications in large combustion engines to determine, test and validate their performance capacities and limits.

In addition to Jérémie, Jean, Mohit and Christopher, other classmates were busy showing off their innovative designs to a crowd full of curious thinkers, professors and students at Instrumentation and Control (BREE 504) Demo Day. Congratulations to all teams on your efforts! The Instrument and Control course is offered by the Department of Bioresource Engineering and is taught by Professor Viacheslav Adamchuk.

## Looking for more?

Watch *The power of shared values* webinar featuring Charlie Arnot, CEO of the Center for Food Integrity, who shares three simple steps to gain consumers' trust by tapping into the power of shared values. Charlie helps bridge the divide between science and consumer perception and offers great insight into creating messages that are proven to resonate with consumers.

Visit [AgMoreThanEver.ca/tag/webinar](http://AgMoreThanEver.ca/tag/webinar).



*The power of shared values*



## AGvocate Challenge

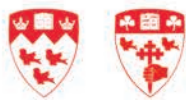
There are 2.1 million Canadians working in agriculture and agri-food. Imagine the impact we could make if we all made a commitment to improve perceptions of agriculture. There are simple ways you can start being an advocate today. Just choose to do one of the following:

1. Search the hashtags **#FutureFarmer**, **#AgMoreThanEver**, or **#Farm365** and find a positive post to retweet.
2. When you overhear a misleading or inaccurate conversation about farming, find an appropriate time to share your story.
3. Dedicate one day to volunteer at an event that promotes agriculture such as **Open Farm Days** or **Ag Literacy Week**.
4. Tell a friend or co-worker about the need to speak up, and ask them to take the advocate challenge.



# Macdonald

## Reports



The E&I Program has already mentored several early stage start-ups, including Falamus Instant Mix, a high-protein flour blend that when mixed with water allows consumers to transform the product into hummus and falafel (first-place winner, Developing Solutions for Developing Countries Competition, Institute of Food Technologists & MARS Product Competition, 2015); FlueTRU, which purifies smoke exhaust from biomass heating systems to increase greenhouse plant yields (recipient of the McGill Grit Prize for outstanding dedication to entrepreneurship, McGill Dobson Cup Entrepreneurship Competition, 2015); Groundit, which combines waste coffee grounds from Montreal coffee shops to produce premium compost (fourth-place winner, Small to Medium Size Enterprise track, McGill Dobson Cup Entrepreneurship Competition, 2015); and TiraVerde, a healthy avocado-based dessert inspired by the indulgent Italian dessert Tiramisu (first-place winner, Food Product Innovation Institute of Food Technologists & MARS Product Competition, 2015; second place at the Chinese Institute of Food Technology and Institute of Food Technologists Food Summit; featured at the Montreal International's Contact MTL event, 2015).

The E&I Program has been energizing the way students approach entrepreneurship and innovation in new niches. As an agribusiness entrepreneur, you, too, can be at the forefront of innovation by mentoring or sponsoring a student or group. Contact Eduardo Ganem-Cuenca (514-398-8779; [Eduardo.gamencuenca@mcgill.ca](mailto:Eduardo.gamencuenca@mcgill.ca)) about how you can get involved!



### Identifying mineral deficiencies in herbs

Horticultural specialist David Wees, agr., faculty lecturer in the Farm Management and Technology Program and in the Department of Plant Science, recently launched a new book entitled *Carences minérales des fines herbes - Identification, prévention et solutions* (Mineral deficiencies in herbs - Identification, prevention and solutions).

Mineral deficiencies in herbs can not only reduce yields, but they also affect their aroma and taste, two important criteria in culinary herbs. This guide describes the symptoms of various mineral deficiencies in several species of herbs, supplemented

by supporting photos. In some cases, the reader will be able to identify the missing mineral element through careful observation of the deficient plants, while in other cases, soil, nutrient and even foliar analyses will greatly assist in the diagnosis. The book also examines the factors to be monitored in order to prevent deficiencies and suggests some preventive and corrective measures.

The booklet is published by the Centre de référence en agriculture et agroalimentaire du Québec (CRAAQ) and is available in print or electronic format through their website ([www.craaq.qc.ca/Publications-du-CRAAQ/carences-minerales-des-fines-herbes/p/PCUA0103](http://www.craaq.qc.ca/Publications-du-CRAAQ/carences-minerales-des-fines-herbes/p/PCUA0103)).

## We all share the same table. Pull up a chair.



"The natural environment is critical to farmers - we depend on soil and water for the production of food. But we also live on our farms, so it's essential that we act as responsible stewards."

- Doug Chorney, Manitoba

"We take pride in knowing we would feel safe consuming any of the crops we sell. If we would not use it ourselves, it does not go to market."

- Katelyn Duncan, Saskatchewan



"The welfare of my animals is one of my highest priorities. If I don't give my cows a high quality of life, they won't grow up to be great cows."

- Andrew Campbell, Ontario

Safe food; animal welfare; sustainability; people care deeply about these things when they make food choices. And all of us in the agriculture industry care deeply about them too. But sometimes the general public doesn't see it that way. Why? Because, for the most part, we're not telling them our story and, too often, someone outside the industry is.

The journey from farm to table is a conversation we need to make sure we're a part of. So let's talk about it, together.

Visit [AgMoreThanEver.ca](http://AgMoreThanEver.ca) to discover how you can help improve and create realistic perceptions of Canadian ag.





# Yew theft outbreak in private forests

Martin Ménard

The Sûreté du Québec and the Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs (MFFP) report having received complaints about Canada yew being stolen from private forests. "There has been an upswing in illegal yew harvesting, and many private forest owners have reported thefts," stated Catherine Thibeault, MFFP communications officer for the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region.

Last October, *La Terre de chez nous* published a piece investigating the illegal harvesting of Canada yew in public forests, a worrisome trend that's affecting multiple regions of Quebec. Since that article was published and further communications from the MFFP have been received, unauthorized collectors—numbering an estimated 350 in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean alone—have apparently relocated some of their activities to private forests to escape government surveillance, which is focused on public forests.

## The loophole

Harvesting Canada yew is prohibited on Crown land, but it is permitted in private forests. Yew purchasing stations have sprung up in various parts of



Canada yew is highly sought-after by large numbers of unauthorized harvesters in public forests—and increasingly in private forests, too.

Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean. It is claimed that these stations deal only in branches harvested from private forests. Even if that is true, those who operate the stations would be required to contact the Syndicat des producteurs de bois du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean if they wish to purchase yew in private forests, which is not the case. "We have issued a formal notice to the purchasing stations," stated Jacques Tremblay, marketing officer for the Syndicat. He admits that the Canada

yew issue is a tricky one, as unauthorized collectors and purchasing stations deal in cash; in Tremblay's words, it's "a black market that attracts a clientele that is unusual to say the least."

## Slapped with fines

MFFP inspectors have intercepted harvesters without permits, who will each receive minimum fines of \$450. Four of them have already pleaded guilty, while others are still awaiting court proceed-

ings. The numerous cash transactions taking place are also of interest to Revenu Québec, which processes the tax returns of the accused harvesters. The MFFP and the Syndicat plan to continue intervening on the ground in 2016 and to keep a close eye on the purchasing stations. In addition to holding back the development of a yew processing industry in Quebec, illegal harvesting of yew and its delivery outside of Quebec threaten the future of the resource.

# Partnership between Réseaux Agriconseils and Quebec Farmers' Association

Five of the Réseaux Agriconseils corresponding to the linguistic minority of Quebec are partnering with the Quebec Farmers' Association (QFA) in support of its 2015-16 Farm Food Forum.

The QFA's Farm Food Forum is a videoconference series that brings English-speaking farmers together to listen to experts give presentations and answer questions on a topic of interest to Quebec's agricultural and rural community. This year, the Réseaux Agriconseils of Outaouais, Montérégie-Ouest, l'Estrie, Les Îles and Laurentides have taken an important step in strengthening their relationship with the QFA by offering a financial partnership to support the Farm Food Forums. "This conference series will allow the producers to improve performance and economic viability and to discuss issues with other entrepreneurs from their area," explains Gaston Palerme, president of Réseaux Agriconseils Outaouais and a farmer in Aylmer, Gatineau.

Established as a non-profit organization in 2006, Réseaux Agriconseils are present across 14 regions of Quebec. Their mandate is to support Quebec farms and agri-food businesses by facilitating access to bilingual advisory services on various aspects of production and processing. In addition to connecting farmers with advisors, the Réseaux provide financial support. "Agribusinesses can benefit from financial assistance to cover 50 per cent to 75 per cent of the cost of advisory services. All they have to do is contact us, and we will help them assess their needs and identify the challenges they face on a daily basis," explains Pierre Desrosiers, director of the Réseau Agriconseils Montérégie-Ouest in Sainte-Martine.

Now the Réseau is extending its financial assistance to the QFA's Farm Food Forums. "By this financial partnership, we are hoping that the English community will learn more about our mandate," says Gaston Palerme. The QFA echoes

the Réseau's enthusiasm about the partnership. "We are delighted that the Réseau recognizes the linguistic minority and sees benefit in investing in it," states QFA Executive Director Dougal Rattray.

This new partnership between the Réseaux Agriconseils and the QFA is another positive development in the range of services available to Quebec farmers, and Rattray hopes that farmers take full advantage of the support offered to them, pointing out that "if money is made available to a group within society and then that resource is not fully utilized, oftentimes the money is reallocated." In short, if you don't use it, you lose it. "I challenge each and every producer to call their local Réseau to find out what services are available," Rattray urges. What's more, if a service is not available, farmers ought to inquire about having it made available. As the new partnership between the QFA and the Réseaux Agriconseils proves, there

are constantly steps being taken to provide Quebec farmers with the support they need; all farmers have to do is take advantage of them.

For more information, please call the toll-free number (1 866 680-1858) or phone the regional coordinator directly: Ann Lévesque, Réseau Agriconseils Outaouais : 819 281-7832  
Pierre Desrosiers, Réseau Agriconseils Montérégie-Ouest : 450 427-2000, ext. 5130  
Sylvie Tardif, Réseau Agriconseils de l'Estrie : 819 829-0641  
Sara McInnes, Réseau Agriconseils Gaspésie – Les Îles : 418 388-2324  
Louise Rougeau, Réseau Agriconseils Laurentides : 450 472-0440, ext. 299

**réseau  
agriconseils**





# Townshipper wins Warren Grapes award

**Andrew McClelland**  
Advocate Staff Reporter

*This year's Annual General Meeting and Information Day held at Macdonald Campus on November 13 included the time-honoured tradition of presenting the QFA's Warren Grapes awards. The awards provide bursaries to agricultural students enrolled at English-language institutions of higher learning.*

*This year, the QFA awarded Matthew Burns, Shaina Hayes, Shimon Israly and Andrea Soesbergen—all Macdonald Campus students—scholarships for their outstanding applications to the program. We'll feature articles on each of these gifted students and aspiring farmers over the course of the next few issues of the Advocate. This month, we spoke with Townshipper Andrea Soesbergen about her hopes for farming and the future.*

**At 21 years of age, this Dundee native already knows what she wants to do in the agricultural world.**

Talking to Andrea Soesbergen is kind of like standing in the sun. She's positive, full of energy and determination, and there's a goodness that radiates from this young farmer that is just contagious.

"I want to work in agriculture because it boils down to the fact that I care," Soesbergen told attendees at the QFA's recent Annual General Meeting. "I care that everyone on this planet has abundant and nutritious food; I care about the environment, that the practices that we use today will influence agriculture for generations to come, and I want that to have a positive impact."

At 21 years of age, this Dundee native already knows what she wants to do in the agricultural world. At least, for starters. Currently enrolled in Agro-Environmental Sciences specializing in Plant Production and Professional Agrology, Soesbergen hopes to work as an agrologist focusing on plant production. "I always knew that farm manage-

ment wasn't where I wanted to be," Soesbergen explains. "And I have so many older brothers and cousins that it seemed a natural fit for them to want to take over the farm. And I've always been a bit more of a science nerd as well, so doing agricultural sciences was a nice fit to bridge my interests together."

## A proud tradition

Soesbergen's family farm supports an array of young farmers. A dairy operation in the Eastern Townships community of Dundee, her father and uncle currently milk a herd of 70 Holsteins. They recently expanded, building a new barn that will accommodate up to 114 head in the future.

Being in a dairy family from day one has given Soesbergen an insider's view on supply management and how its

possible disappearance would affect the industry.

"There was a lot of talk around the dinner table about supply management when this past election was happening," recalls Soesbergen. "I definitely think that supply management has been hugely important to our industry. It's a scary thought to not have it around."

## Other worlds

The summer of 2015 saw Soesbergen selected to attend the Global Youth Ag-Summit in Australia, where she met with 99 other passionate young minds to discuss the future of agriculture and its changing and persistent challenges. But, as she relates, explaining her passion for agriculture to her friends who don't come from a farming background can be tough.

"My main non-farm friends are friends I've had throughout high school. Many of them grew up in the country, but not on a farm itself. A lot of them have just learned to dismiss me when I get really



ANDREW MCCLELLAND

Dundee native Andrea Soesbergen was one of four students to win a Warren Grapes scholarship from the QFA. The awards provide bursaries to agricultural students enrolled at English-language institutions of higher learning.

enthusiastic about farming! I won my trip to Australia, and I was telling them how excited I am, going through all the details, and they'd say: 'Oh, so it's another one of your cow things?'"

## Challenges for young farmers

Soesbergen is determined to pursue her passion in agriculture. But she knows that getting started in agriculture can be difficult for young farmers of all stripes.

"I think getting started in agriculture is different depending on your background," she explains. "If you're someone who has no ties to agriculture, then getting in the game can be quite tough. There are a lot of barriers to entry. It can be hard to produce something in enough quantity while earning enough revenue to be able to justify compet-

ing with these big guys who have been around for generations. It's very different in a supply-managed area. But then you have to have enough money to buy quota, which is an expense all on its own."

Nonetheless, Soesbergen definitely has the pluck to make it in farming, no matter what the challenge. Going to Macdonald College, located in Montreal's suburban West Island, has introduced her to more than a few novel ideas for earning a living with farming.

"I actually have one friend who's tried to get around the game by starting an organic catnip business!" she laughs. "He's got an acre, and this is his 'test year.' So in having non-farm friends, you get to see all these outside-the-box ideas to make money in agriculture!"



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

Vol. 36, No. 1: 2016

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

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

**Editor-in-Chief** Dougal Ratray / qfa@upa.qc.ca **Managing Editor** Andrew McClelland / qfa\_advocate@upa.qc.ca **Production Manager** La Terre de chez nous  
**Sales Director** Pierre Leroux / pleroux@laterre.ca / 450 679-8483 ext. 7290 **Sales Representatives** Daniel Lamoureux (National Sales Representative) / Sylvain Joubert / Marc Mancini

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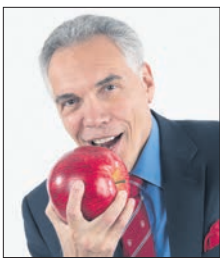


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## Separating sense from nonsense



**Dr. Joe Schwarcz**  
Scientist and author

I don't think Einstein had chemical anxiety or the number of chemicals in our urine in mind when he famously stated, "Not everything that counts can be counted and not everything that can be counted counts." But I think the quote has great relevance given that scarcely a day goes by without some concerned group clamouring about our exposure to "untested" chemicals and lamenting the "fact" that we have become a nation of "unwitting guinea pigs."

Our exposure to chemicals is indeed extensive. Eat a bowl of chicken soup and hundreds of chemicals will flood your bloodstream. They include such delights as benzene, methanol, acetaldehyde and hydrogen sulfide, all of which are potentially "highly toxic." Of course they are not toxic in the dose found in the soup. But should you look for them in the urine, thanks to our sophisticated analytical techniques, you

# Knowing when to worry!

will find them. Nobody bothers to look, because these chemicals are not deemed important — after all they are "natural," and nobody has a political interest in banning chicken soup. But the story is different when it comes to synthetic compounds, especially those that have been deemed to be endocrine disruptors.

Critics who target one class of substances are unaware of the chemical complexity of life. Let's try an analogy. Suppose you're listening to a symphony orchestra and one string on a violin

A recent study by the Silent Spring Institute, a non-profit research organization, is a case in point. Researchers enlisted 20 people who volunteered to have the amount of bisphenol A and phthalates in their urine measured before and after a change in their diet. For three days, they agreed to avoid all canned and packaged products and to build their diet around fresh, organic food. And guess what? After three days, bisphenol A levels and phthalate levels in the subjects' urine decreased by

chance, but does it matter? Doubling a very small number still leaves you with a very small number. Similarly, what does a 65 per cent decrease mean if it is a decrease from a number that was tiny in the first place? And the amounts of bpa and phthalates were tiny. Way, way less than any regulatory limits. So what is the big deal about such a decrease?

In fact, what the results actually show is that these chemicals are cleared quickly from the body. But fear of these chemicals is not cleared quite so quickly. The stress caused by the constant harangue takes a toll on health, even though it cannot be measured the same way that levels of the chemicals in question can be measured in the urine.

Award winning chemist, Schwarcz is famous for debunking many of the myths about science and is director of McGill University's Office for Science and Society. This is an extract from his latest book *Monkeys, Myths and Molecules: Separating fact from fiction, and the science of everyday life*. The book can be ordered by sending a check for \$22 to the following address: Joe Schwarcz PhD, Director, McGill University Office for Science and Society, 801 Sherbrooke St. West, Montreal, QC, Canada. H3A 0B8. 514-398-6238

***It's so easy to play with numbers. Want to increase your chance of winning the lottery by 100 percent? Sounds good? Just buy two tickets! Statistically you've doubled your chance, but does it matter?***

breaks. Do you think anyone would notice a difference in the sound? I doubt it. Similarly, removing one compound from the thousands and thousands to which we are exposed is unlikely to have a significant effect on life. Unlikely, but not impossible. Basically, both sides of the endocrine disruptor debate imply that they know more than they actually know, or indeed, what can be known.

roughly 65 and 55 per cent respectively. Wow! Looks like you can decrease these "toxic" chemicals in your body dramatically after just three days by avoiding processed foods!

But wait a minute. It's so easy to play with numbers. Want to increase your chance of winning the lottery by 100 per cent? Sounds good? Just buy two tickets! Statistically you've doubled your



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# David's departure

**Cynthia Gunn**

*QFA's Food Writer*

David Bowie is not a name commonly associated with a food column. But on this Monday morning, when news of the death of this monumentally important figure in the music and arts world took over the radio and Internet waves, it is difficult not to contemplate his life, his work, and ultimately what it means for us all.

There are many readers among you who will have memories associated with David Bowie's music, or perhaps one of his many other talents, such as narrating the introduction to the beautiful children's Christmas tale, *The Snowman*. My own most enduring memory is an image of my best friend's sister, hairbrush poised as a microphone, pleading for her big sister to play just one more David Bowie song. She would have sung a hundred songs if her wishes were indulged.

After listening to the tributes and musings all day, what emerges is a portrait of an extremely hard working, determined, smart, kind, private, gentlemanly person who was engaged with the world and took an interest in the individuals that came into his life. He then graciously guided his own departure from this world. It was all these qualities that accounted for his vast talent having such far reaching effects, such that tributes poured in from the likes of the British prime minister and even the German government. However you may feel about the music, or even if the persona Bowie put forward in his many transformations was a bit much for your sensibilities, one can't help but be a little daunted by such a prolific life, and finally inspired by it.



I haven't a clue what David Bowie's favourite foods were. So let's just imagine what comforting food a travelling musician might order. I've got it: chicken pot pie.

A Canadian was one of the lucky few given the opportunity to interview David Bowie six times over the course of his career and life. Granting interviews was apparently something Bowie wasn't generally given to doing. When asked what she would remember most about her first nervous meeting with Bowie, then interviewer laughed and said that he ate a grilled cheese.

I can't leave you with a recipe for grilled cheese. And I haven't a clue what David Bowie's favourite foods were. So let's just imagine what other comforting food a travelling musician might order. I've got it: chicken pot pie. That's the ticket.

And what does David Bowie's legacy mean to us all? Well, it reminds us of what we all know, that we should cultivate belief, faith, honesty and decency in and to oneself and others, work hard, be curious and creative, and have some fun along the way.

*Cynthia is a researcher and writer, covering issues related to environment, heritage, tourism and food. She runs a small catering business and lives in Western Quebec with her two daughters and husband. She holds a MA in Geography.*

## Chicken Pot Pie



### INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups cooked, diced chicken
- 3 cups chicken broth
- 3 carrots, cut in thick slices
- 2 large ribs celery, cut in thick pieces
- 1 cup green or yellow wax beans, cut in one-inch pieces
- 1 lb. red skin or other waxy potato, cut in chunks
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- ¼ cup butter
- ¼ cup flour
- ¼ tsp. nutmeg
- ¼ tsp. thyme
- ¼ cup chopped parsley
- 1 tsp. salt (adjust if broth contains salt)

For the filling: Simmer carrots, celery and potato in broth until tender. In another small saucepan, simmer beans until tender. Remove vegetables from broth and place in a large bowl along with drained beans. Meanwhile, heat butter in a heavy bottomed pot until foamy. Add onion and cook on medium-low heat until translucent and soft. Add flour and cook 2 minutes. Add warm broth in a steady stream, whisking all the while. Add thyme, nutmeg and salt to stock and continue whisking until it thickens, 2-4 minutes.

Add chicken and parsley to the bowl with vegetables and mix gently with the thickened stock. Put filling in an ovenproof casserole so that it reaches just below the top. Cover with pastry, making sure to drape it over the sides of the dish and to cut a hole in the pastry to let the steam escape. Brush with milk or an egg wash (optional). Bake at 350°F for 30-40 minutes, or until top is golden brown and filling is bubbling.





## The Tree Doctor



**Leilak Anderson**  
Certified Arborist  
Advocate Arboriculture Columnist

As generous as a mature tree is, giving us oxygen and hosting a myriad of wildlife, a declining tree transitions into a significant new habitat that often houses more life when it is dead than when it was alive.

When a mature tree declines, it becomes a "snag"; the inner heartwood rots and softens. "Hard snags" are nesting sites to a variety of excavation bird species including the pileated woodpecker, the largest and most striking woodpecker in Canada. This bird's impressive size, black-and-white facial stripes, and deep-red crest make it easy to spot—that is, if you don't hear it drumming first. These birds prefer to make their own cavity in

# Leave them dead trees alone!

a tree rather than using an existing one, and this in turn creates prime real estate for non-excavating bird species like wood ducks and goldeneyes, as well as mammals and reptiles.

As the tree continues to decline, its loosening bark acts as thermal cover for insects, frogs and some bats. Dead limbs serve as vital roosting locations, and also as perches with unobstructed views for hunting. And as the log loses density, becoming a "soft snag," it becomes easier for small mammals to burrow inside. A fallen log continues to create new homes and lookouts for ground-dwelling animals and birds.

Finally, as a log begins to break down (still offering dust baths to birds and homes to insects), the decompositions are transported underground to very important types of fungi called mycorrhizae. This amazing symbiotic fungal web

interacts with root cells of living plants to deliver nutrients to surrounding flora while also adding resistance to diseases; in turn, the fungi receive moisture and carbohydrates from plants.

It is a shame when, unknowingly, people "clean up" their property from dead-standing and fallen logs. Specifically, dead trees in riparian zones, near water, or at the edge of a field have a lot of value. If hazards to foot traffic are a concern, dead trees can be topped or pruned back to reduce the risk while still offering a crucial habitat to a waiting list of animals!

*Leilak is five-time Quebec tree-climbing champion, and proudly represents Quebec in the international arborist scene. Leilak runs a tree-care company in the Outaouais and National Capital Region. When he's not climbing trees, he's a volunteer firefighter. You can read more of his articles at [www.leilak.info](http://www.leilak.info)*



Woodpeckers hard at work!



When climbing trees, I often find existing cavities high out of human eyesight and reach. These cavities are great burrows and nesting sites for birds and mammals.

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Crack-ups

Three morons go a-hunting

Three idiots decide to go hunting. The first one says he's going to get a buck. He goes out and indeed comes back with a buck. The other two hunters ask how he did it. He says, "I see tracks. I follow tracks. I get buck." So the second hunter says that he's going to get a doe. And he

does. They ask him how he did it, and he says, "I see tracks. I follow tracks. I get doe." So the third hunter says, "I'm just gonna shoot at anything I see." So he goes out and comes back half a day later all beaten, bruised, bloody and totally trashed. The other two hunters ask him what happened, and he

says, "I see tracks. I follow tracks. I get hit by train!"

Champion dog

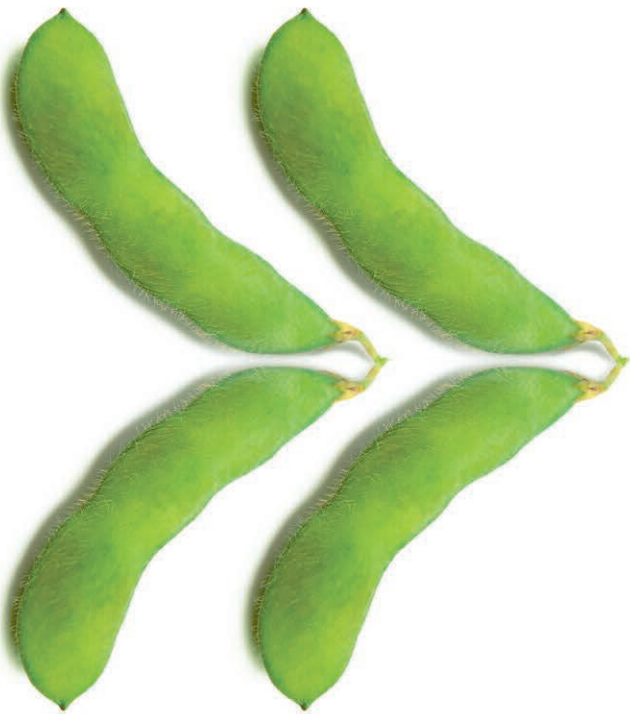
A man walks into a bar and sits down at a booth. No sooner has he had his first drink than he and another man get into an argument about whose dog could whoop the other dog.



The first man says, "Let's have ourselves a good old-fashioned dogfight out back."

"You're on," says the other. The second man brings his German shepherd out back. The first man opens up a small

suitcase and brings out a 12-inch-long yellow dog. The little yellow dog proceeds to clobber the German shepherd—and then whoop every other dog in town. "Where did you get that dog?" the man asks. The first man says, "Well, before I cut its tail off and painted it yellow, it was an alligator."



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## Rural Community Better Together



#### EASTERN TOWNSHIPS:

##### Richmond 4-H Dance

Music by Slightly Haggard.

When: March 26, 9:00 p.m.

Where: Salle Ste. Famille, Richmond

Tickets available in advance from Devin Keenan (819-826-1377), Carly Morin ([cm\\_6768@hotmail.com](mailto:cm_6768@hotmail.com)) or at the door

##### Hatley 4-H Club Fundraising Dance

Open to the general public, including youth under 18 (accompanied by an adult). Music by Slightly Haggard. Refreshments available. When: April 9, 9:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.

Where: Salle Burrough's Falls (Stanstead East)

Cost: \$5 in advance, \$7 at the door. Advance tickets available from Hatley 4-H members. Or, contact Wyatt Johnston ([wyatt.johnston@mail.mcgill.ca](mailto:wyatt.johnston@mail.mcgill.ca)).

#### MONTÉRÉGIE:

##### Ormstown 4-H Square Dance Competition

Music by the Neil MacKay Band. Participation in the competition is open to 4-H members. When: April 9, 7:30 p.m.

Where: Recreation Centre, Ormstown

Cost: General public admission fee is \$6 for ages 9+, \$3 for 8 years or younger.

For more information, contact Janice Barr ([barrneal26@outlook.com](mailto:barrneal26@outlook.com))

#### QUEBEC 4-H ASSOCIATION

##### Provincial Square Dance Competition

Hosted by MAC/JAC 4-H in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue. Open to all members, family and friends.

When: Sunday, February 14. Competition starts at 1:00 p.m.

Where: Centennial Hall, Macdonald Campus, Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue

All 4-H'ers are invited to participate. Prizes for teams, callers and couples. Spectators welcome. Open dancing for all after the competition finishes.

For more information, contact Chelsea ([agliaison@quebec4-h.com](mailto:agliaison@quebec4-h.com)).

##### Innovative Ag Tour

Open to 4-H members aged 12-25 and juniors from the host club.

When: March 18-20

Where: Hosted by Howick 4-H in Montérégie region

Cost: \$60 Register by: February 20, 2016

Tour the various farms and agribusinesses of the host region, learn about best business practices and innovations, and gain a firsthand understanding of the successes and challenges faced by producers in the agriculture and agri-food industry.

For more information, visit [quebec4-h.com/innovative-ag-tour](http://quebec4-h.com/innovative-ag-tour) or contact Chelsea ([agliaison@quebec4-h.com](mailto:agliaison@quebec4-h.com)).

#### 4-H CANADA

##### National Volunteer Leader of the Year

Club leaders are the glue that holds 4-H together. Show them how much you appreciate them by nominating them for the National Volunteer Leader of the Year Award!

Deadline: January 31, 2016

For information, visit [apply.4-h-canada.ca](http://apply.4-h-canada.ca).

#### Careers on the Grow

Take advantage of a variety of opportunities within companies, on farms and in communities across the country.

Open to 4-H members and alumni, ages 18-25.

When: Upcoming placements are available between May and August, 2016.

Where: HELP International Center for Ecology Research & Training (Saskatchewan) or FoodShare Toronto (Ontario)

Apply by: January 31, 2016 at [apply.4-h-canada.ca](http://apply.4-h-canada.ca).

For more information, visit [4-h-canada.ca/careers-grow-0](http://4-h-canada.ca/careers-grow-0)

#### Merial 4-H Boxback Program

Value: \$10 for each Ivomec® and Eprinex®

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Deadline: February 29, 2016

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For more information, visit [ivomec-4h.com](http://ivomec-4h.com).

#### To reach us:

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# BENEFIT PROGRAM



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If you have any questions, if you need help with your online application, or if you are a farmer without a UPA membership but still wish to obtain your UPA benefit program card, give us a call at 1-844-521-6757.

UPA is pleased to bring you its new UPA benefit program. The program is designed to serve all Quebec farmers (both members and non-members of the UPA) to support them in their ambitions and projects.

## WHAT IS THE UPA BENEFIT PROGRAM?

The UPA benefit program brings you special privileges from leading partners and retailers. These privileges include discounts, cash back, packages and other exclusive benefits for farmers.

The current partners of the UPA benefit program are **AgriCard**, **Hewitt Equipment/CAT** and **Chrysler Group**. The program is constantly evolving; we invite you to check the *Partners* section on a regular basis to find out about new offers.

For more information, visit [benefitprogram.upa.qc.ca](http://benefitprogram.upa.qc.ca).

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### HEWITT EQUIPMENT/CAT

- Applies to purchases or financing of heavy equipment
- Savings of up to \$2,500 on new CAT equipment
- Discounts on a wide variety of models
- UPA benefit program discounts can be paired with existing offers at Hewitt Equipment
- To take advantage of the UPA benefit program, visit any participating dealer



### CHRYSLER GROUP

- Applies to purchases of new cars and trucks
- Savings of \$750 to \$14,500 on 2016 Fiat, Chrysler, Dodge, Ram and Jeep vehicles
- To take advantage of the UPA benefit program, visit any participating dealer

Promotion code: N5085



CHRYSLER

DODGE



Jeep



SRT





# INTRODUCING NEW T7.290 & T7.315



## A SMOOTH, CUSHIONED RIDE

- ➔ Standard Comfort Ride™ cab suspension
- ➔ Added stability and ride comfort with new heavy-duty suspended front axle
- ➔ Advanced seating options with new cushion and suspension systems
- ➔ Auto Comfort™ seat with active climate control to extract humidity



## POWER, EFFICIENCY & CONTROL

- ➔ EcoBlue™ HI-eSCR engine technology that optimizes power, combustion, torque and fuel economy
- ➔ Precise speed control with Auto Command™ CVT



## PRECISION CONTROL & TECHNOLOGY

- ➔ SideWinder II armrest with easy access to controls
- ➔ IntelliView IV large color touchscreen display
- ➔ Fully integrated auto guidance
- ➔ Accuracy as precise as sub inch
- ➔ PLM implement control options for ISOBUS & non-ISOBUS implements
- ➔ PLM Connect compatibility with wireless data transfer



**MACHINE  
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