

Quebec Farmers' Advocate



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"We need a real and meaningful dialogue to address the fallout from Bill 96, its effect on Quebec's reputation, and its harmful consequences on business, foreign investment and the economy."

– Sylvia Martin-Laforge, executive director of the Quebec Community Groups Network, in a statement to Quebec Finance Minister Eric Girard during a pre-budget consultations Jan. 17 in Quebec City.



PHOTO COURTESY OF FERME D'HIVER

Yves Daoust (RIGHT) goes over greenhouse plans with Quebec Agriculture Minister André Lamontagne. Ferme d'Hiver has secured \$32 million in grants from the provincial government to expand operations.

Quebec firm aims to launch greenhouse revolution

Artificial intelligence will change way vegetables are grown in Canada all year long

Daniel Sucar
The Advocate

"We have a unique, singular chance to elevate Canada's position on an international level. We're already feeding the world when it comes to products like wheat; but why stop there? Somebody has to find interesting, innovative ways to feed people in the future. Why not us?"

This is how Yves Daoust described the reason his company, Ferme d'Hiver, purchased a greenhouse operation in Vaudreuil-Dorion last month. He wants to expand his burgeoning startup company that uses artificial intelligence to grow produce without pesticides throughout the year. And possibly change the way vegetables and strawberries are grown in Canada.

Daoust is an electrical engineer at

the centre of Ferme d'Hiver, a company with big ambitions that has captured the attention of agricultural stakeholders. He is also the son of the farmer who once owned the land his company has recently purchased in Vaudreuil-Dorion, just west of the island of Montreal.

The farm in the Vaudreuil-Soulanges area is well known among the residents of the area, as it operated a popular shop that sold the fresh produce grown in its greenhouses, along with a long list of prepared meals made on location.

Before 1982, however, the farm had been in Daoust's family for centuries, with the engineer noting he has deeds and land ownership documents dating back to the 18th century.

Shocked at grocery prices? You're not alone

Brenda O'Farrell
The Advocate

If you have found yourself shaking your head when you see the price of lettuce in the grocery store, you are not alone. Or, maybe it's the price of celery, meat, frozen french fries, sausages, breakfast cereal – and the list goes on.

The price of just about everything at the supermarket probably has you reacting with a slight sense of disbelief. Inflation at food stores is outpacing inflation just about everywhere else. And it is not just here.

According to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization, global food prices in 2022 were the highest on record.

The organization's Food Price Index, which tracks the changes in international prices of food commodities on a monthly basis, said prices last year rose 14 per cent above the average recorded in 2021.

Putting that in perspective, the UN's Food Price Index hit its highest level since it started recording data in 1961. This was not a blip.

It is a development that has caught the attention of consumers and political leaders around the world. The COVID-19 pandemic's interruption of global supply chains, followed by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which hampered exports of wheat, sunflower oil and other food commodities, have contributed to the upward pressure on food prices. In addition, increases in the price of fuel and fertilizer have added to the cost to agricultural producers further pushing costs higher. But that is just part of the story. Now, the focus is quickly turning to the role grocery retailers are playing. How much are they fuelling food inflation?

See GROCERIES, Page 5

See GREENHOUSES, Page 7



Just the facts

-9.3%

The change in the amount of 'urban greenness' recorded for Montreal from 2000-2004 to 2018-2022.

An urban centre's 'greenness,' described as the area's overall colour of summertime satellite images, was the subject of study by the federal government. The results were released by Statistics Canada in November.

Montreal lost the least amount of greenness over the 20-year span compared to four other of Canada's biggest urban centres: Calgary, which lost 16.5 per cent; Vancouver, which lost 14.2 per cent; Edmonton, which lost 11.8 per cent; and Toronto, which lost 11.7 per cent.

Source: Statistics Canada

No. 2

Quebec is the second largest cranberry producer in the world.

Every year, the province's

cranberry growers harvest about 225 million pounds of cranberries.

Source: Aliment du Québec

62.2 million

Number of hectares covered by farms across Canada in 2020. This figure represents only 6.3 per cent of the country's land mass.

Source: Government of Canada's Overview of the Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food sector 2022.

\$76.9 billion

Total farm market receipts generated by Canadian farmers in 2021. This figure represents farmers' revenues from the sale of agricultural commodities.

Source: Government of Canada's Overview of the Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food sector 2022.

C'EST L'HIVER



IAN GRANT, THE ADVOCATE

This handsome horse was enjoying the fresh snow as it frolicked in the paddock in St. Lazare. It helped that temperatures were mild. There is nothing like a picture-perfect winter day to allow everyone to kick up their heels. Or, in this case, hooves. When you have no place to go, let it snow, let it snow, let it snow.



Mission

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

Vision

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

Shared Values

Members of the QFA believe in:

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

Board Members

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Agricultural or forestry producer, rural resident or retired farmer:

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GST No. 107 867 814 RT 001 QST No. 100 611 322 9 TQ 001



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Membership includes

- a one year subscription to the Quebec Farmers' Advocate
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- free advertising in the Advocate's classified ads
- 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.



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Ottawa reaches out to farmers

Feds launch consultation as it prepares news Sustainable Agriculture Strategy

Andrew McClelland
The Advocate

The Canadian government has begun work to establish a set of farming practices that it hopes will make it a world leader for sustainable, environmentally-friendly agriculture.

And to start, it's asking farmers for their opinions on the subject.

Federal Agriculture Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau last month announced the launch of public consultations in developing a "Sustainable Agriculture Strategy" (SAS), a guide Ottawa hopes will help the Canadian agriculture industry "recover quickly from extreme events, thrive in a changing climate, contribute to world food security and ... contribute to Canada's overall efforts to cut (greenhouse gas) emissions."

Formerly referred to as the "Green Agriculture Plan," the SAS will be formulated by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in close collaboration with representatives from Canada's farming industry. The committee will be co-chaired by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture.

Resiliency in focus

"The Sustainable Agriculture Strategy will pave the way to help us sustain the livelihoods of farmers. Drawing from their expertise and best practices, we can ensure that the sector is more resilient in the face of climate change," Bibeau said.

AAFC pointed out that Canadian farmers have already come a long way in adopting sustainable farming practices on their own. It hopes the strategy can "amplify the work already under way and increase adoption of these best practices."

"We know farmers are already strong partners," said Terry Duguid, parliamentary secretary to the federal minister of Environment. "After all, they have the greatest stake in the fight against climate change."

Five priority issues outlined

The SAS has identified five priority issues that it hopes to address and improve upon: soil health, climate adaptation and resilience, water, climate change mitigation and biodiversity.

While Bibeau spoke of the importance of those issues, she stated that she didn't want to presume what the outcome of the conversations would be or what regulations or new legislation would result from the strategy.

"This strategy is ambitious and



PHOTO COURTESY AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD CANADA

Federal Agriculture Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau and various representatives of Canada's agriculture industry met at Ottawa's Central Experimental Farm on Dec. 12 to hold the first round-table meeting of the advisory committee for the Sustainable Agriculture Strategy. Public consultations close on March 31.

transformative," said Bibeau after the committee's first meeting on Dec. 12. "We want to take the time to get it right. Our first step is getting input from all players across the sector."

To that end, AAFC has invited 20 farming organizations – including the Union de producteurs agricoles, Dairy Farmers of Canada and the Canadian Cattle Association – to become members of the committee.

UPA on committee

UPA president Martin Caron was on-hand to lend his support for the SAS. The UPA says Quebec agricultural producers have responded positively in the past to making changes that will ensure farming becomes more sustainable.

"Substantial gains have been made in recent decades," Caron said. "It is

Take the survey

The federal government is starting its project of creating a "shared vision" regarding Canada's future Sustainable Agriculture Strategy by asking producers for their input. This is your chance to be heard.

Ag Canada's website hosts an online survey and discussion document about the key points of the Sustainable Agriculture Strategy. The survey can be easily found by Googling: "Sustainable Agriculture Strategy Consultation."

The online survey will close on March 31.

Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada

MENU ▾

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada - Sustainable Agriculture Strategy Consultation

Which of the following best describes your perspective? Are you...

A producer/farmer

Representing a provincial, territorial or local government

by building on these successes – with the help of initiatives and programs adapted to regional and sectoral realities – that farmers will be able to continue to build an ever more resilient and sustainable agriculture."

Strategy to be drafted by end of year

Bibeau says she and the advisory committee hope to have a developed strategy outlined and released by the end of 2023.

But the first step of developing the Sustainable Agriculture Strategy is hearing from farmers.

With that goal in mind, Ag Canada has set up an online survey and discussion document that can be filled out by members of the public – including agricultural producers. The survey will remain open until March 31, 2023.

Member organizations

Various industry groups have been invited to advise Ag Canada on the Sustainable Agriculture Strategy. You can help influence and shape the strategy by informing industry associations you're a member of about what you want to see.

Below is a list of all member groups of the SAS advisory committee:

- Canadian Organic Growers
- Egg Farmers of Canada
- Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute
- Farmers for Climate Solutions
- Canadian Canola Growers Association
- Fertilizer Canada
- Canadian Cattle Association
- Fruit & Vegetable Growers of Canada
- Canadian Pork Council
- Grain Growers of Canada
- Canadian Wildlife Federation
- National Farmers Union
- Canola Council of Canada
- Nature United
- Chicken Farmers of Canada
- Pulse Canada
- Dairy Farmers of Canada
- Union de producteurs agricoles
- Ducks Unlimited
- Soy Canada

News

Quebec farmer named head of Canadian Pork Council

Brenda O'Farrell

The Advocate

René Roy, a pork producer from St. Jules in the Beauce region of Quebec, has been elected the new chairman of the board of the Canadian Pork Council.

Roy replaces Rick Bergmann, the organization's longest serving chairman in the council's history, who retired.

Roy was elected at the pork council's meeting in Banff, Alberta on Jan. 11. The organization represents the roughly 7,000 hog producers across the country. Scott Peters of Manitoba was elected

first vice-chair.

"René Roy and Scott Peters will help lead the industry into the future, and I have faith in the board's direction and in the organization's ability to serve the best industry in Canada, the Canadian pork industry," Bergmann said in a statement.

The newly elected executive team said it is already working on plans for a potential response and recovery if African swine fever enters Canada. The disease has devastated pork production in China and other parts of Asia. To date, no cases of the disease have been found in Canada.

FIRST-FOOTERS OF THE YEAR



IAN GRANT, THE ADVOCATE

In folklore, the first to enter a household on New Year's Day, referred to as the "first-footer," is said to be a harbinger of what is to follow in the coming year. Here, a group of friends welcomed the new year by taking a tour of St. Lazare on a horse-drawn wagon on January 1.

Avian flu claims 6.7 million birds in Canada including 532,000 on 23 farms in Quebec

Daniel Sucar

The Advocate

Canadian farms lost 6.7 million domesticated birds due to avian influenza outbreaks in 2022, according to year-end data from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. The highly contagious bird flu tore across the country, hitting close to 300 farms and production facilities as well as sparking concerns over poultry shortages in eastern provinces.

The explosive outbreaks, which began in Europe and Asia, struck every province except Prince Edward Island. Farms in British Columbia and Alberta were hit hardest, suffering roughly 4.5 million deaths collectively. CFIA researchers hypothesize bird deaths were higher in these provinces because there are more poultry farms, many of which are in close proximity.

Meanwhile, Quebec was among the lowest hit provinces. Since the first cases of avian influenza were detected

in April, the CFIA has recorded about 532,000 deaths of birds that had to be culled due to exposure to the disease on 23 poultry farms in the province. As with other parts of Canada, flu cases shot up during the spring and fall migratory seasons, but stabilized in early November.

While the situation in Canada is grave, it is a far cry from what is happening south of the border. In the United States, poultry farms and producers lost nearly 58 million birds – surpassing the largest previous outbreak in 2015.

The deadly flu is expected to stick around in 2023, the CFIA says. In a statement, the agency noted the outbreak is "unprecedented in terms of the number of detections, the geographical distribution and its long duration." The situation is expected to spark a dialogue about the continued emphasis of biosecurity on poultry farms and a potential vaccine against the virus.

Student bursary applications now being accepted

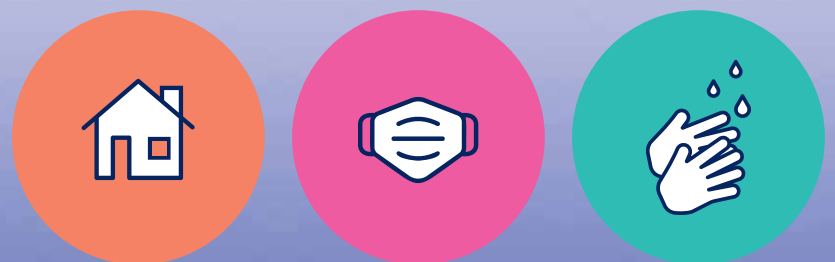
The Bulwer branch of the Quebec Farmers' Association is offering a bursary to students currently enrolled in post-secondary education in agriculture or related fields living in the area served by the Bulwer branch. Preference will be given to first-time applicants.

Interested applicants can send their names with details of their current studies and a few sentences about future aspirations to:

Mrs. Theda Lowry
59 de la Station Street, Apt. 3
Sawyerville, Que. J0B 3A0

Applications must be received by March 1, 2023.

Let's adopt good habits against the viruses.



[Québec.ca/LimitVirusTransmission](https://Quebec.ca/LimitVirusTransmission)

Votre
gouvernement

Québec

GROCERIES: Code of Conduct in works to address price hikes
From Page 1

In Canada, federal, provincial and territorial agriculture ministers met Jan. 13 to discuss a plan that would impose a more transparent and equitable relationship between food retailers and producers. The tool that would do that is the Canadian Grocery Code of Conduct.

A first in this country, the code, according to a statement from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada "will help make Canada's food supply chain more resilient."

In more practical terms the aim of the code, which is being drafted following more than a year of negotiations with industry stakeholders, including farmers, food processors and grocery retailers, would limit the power of the large grocery chains.

"What we're trying to do with the Grocery Code of Conduct is bring an end to the wild west and sort of have a sheriff in town," said Gary Sands, the vice-president of the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers in a statement to the media.

The federal government aims to put the code into effect by the end of 2023. It is now seeking to create a governing body or agency to oversee the rules that will be outlined in the code. This body would also be charged with imposing fines when necessary.

Similar codes have been adopted in the United Kingdom and Australia.

Last October, following a unanimous vote in the House of Commons, the federal government announced it would ask Canada's Competition Bureau to investigate grocery chain profits. In the motion, the government recognized that wages and agricultural prices were not reflected in the profits being reported by food retailers.

Food prices set to rise another 5 to 7% in 2023, experts predict

Daniel Sucar
The Advocate

After a year that saw food prices hit highs not seen in decades due to record inflation, the cost of groceries in Canada is expected to continue to rise in 2023, according to the latest Food Price Report.

The annual report, published by Halifax's Dalhousie University and the University of Guelph in Ontario, estimates food prices will rise by another five to seven per cent this year, adding hundreds of dollars to the average family's expenses.

"Given the increases Canadians saw at the grocery store this past year, many are likely hoping to hear 2023 will bring some relief," said Dr. Simon Somogyi, a professor at the University of Guelph. "But our models tell us that isn't likely to happen just yet."

Somogyi and his team estimate a typical family of four will be forced to shell out an average of \$16,288 on food over the course of 2023 – an increase of \$1,065 from last year. A two-adult household will spend \$7,711, a bump of \$500 from 2022.

Vegetable prices are expected to see the largest increases this year, in the range of six to eight per cent. Prices for meat, dairy and bakery items are also expected to go up between five and seven per cent.

According to the report, a combination of rising geopolitical tensions,

high transportation costs and a weaker Canadian dollar are the main factors behind the predicted increases. It also blames the persistence of many of the disruptions that defined the COVID-19 pandemic, like labour shortages and supply-chain issues.

"Conflicts in other parts of the world can impact food prices in Canada by restricting trade and experts, as well as by disrupting the supply chain," Somogyi said. "The ongoing war in Ukraine has especially impacted the supply of wheat, fertilizer and sunflower oil, which are widely used in processed foods."

"The uncertainty from the ongoing Ukraine war shows no sign of ceasing, and the Canadian dollar compared to the U.S. dollar has recently ranged five to seven cents lower," added Dr. Stuart Smyth, another of the report's main contributors. "This has driven up the cost of all imported American products."

The 2023 Food Price Report predicts this year's rising grocery prices will lead to major repercussions across the country. Food banks and soup kitchens will face greater demand and more Canadians will opt for cheaper, less healthy products.

"As healthy food becomes more expensive, people are forced to buy more calorie-dense alternatives," said Janet Music, a research program coordinator at Dalhousie University's Agri-Food Analytics Lab. "This has



PHOTO: RELESIO/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Will we see food prices in stores come down? "What we're trying to do with the Grocery Code of Conduct is bring an end to the wild west and sort of have a sheriff in town," says Gary Sands, the vice-president of the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers.

major health implications, especially for children."

However, there may be a light at the end of the tunnel. The researchers predict that prices may fall again later in 2023, once inflation cools down. Until then, they recommend that shoppers try to get the most bang for their buck at the check-out counter by buying in bulk, consulting flyers for specials and freezing soon-to-expire vegetables and other perishables for later use.

REGIONAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS OF THE PRODUCTEURS DE BOVINS DU QUÉBEC

2023 CALENDAR



REGION	DATE	LOCATION
English Information Meeting (FOR ALL)	Friday, January 27 7:00 p.m.	Zoom
Abitibi-Témiscamingue	Thursday, February 16 1:00 p.m.	Rouyn-Noranda
Bas-Saint-Laurent	Wednesday, February 15 9:00 a.m.	Rimouski and Rivière-du-Loup
Capitale-Nationale-Côte-Nord	Tuesday, January 31 10:00 a.m.	Québec
Centre-du-Québec	Thursday, February 9 10:00 a.m.	Notre-Dame-du-Bon-Conseil
Chaudière-Appalaches Nord	Thursday, February 16 10:00 a.m.	Lévis
Chaudière-Appalaches-Sud	Wednesday, February 8 10:00 a.m.	Saint-Joseph-de-Beauce
Estrie	Tuesday, February 7 10:00 a.m.	Sherbrooke

REGION	DATE	LOCATION
Estrie - English Information Meeting	Monday, January 30 1:00 p.m.	Sherbrooke
Gaspésie-Les-Îles	Tuesday, February 14 1:30 p.m.	New Richmond
Lanaudière	Wednesday, February 15 9:30 a.m.	Saint-Liguori
Mauricie	Thursday, February 2 10:00 a.m.	Yamachiche
Montérégie-Est	Monday, February 13 9:30 a.m.	Saint-Hyacinthe
Montérégie-Ouest	Thursday, February 9 9:30 a.m.	Saint-Rémi
Outaouais-Laurentides	Friday, February 3 9:00 a.m.	Gatineau
Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean	Tuesday, February 7 9:30 a.m.	Alma

Note: Please see your notice of convocation for the physical location or online address.



PHOTO: GIANNI31 JOKER/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Coloured diesel fuel, reserved for farmers and other business operators who use heavy machinery, is supposed to be less expensive than regular clear diesel. But that is not always the case, leaving farmers paying increased prices again.



John McCart
QFA President

Late last fall, most farmers were filling their diesel fuel reservoirs for the winter. It is common practice to do so with -40 degree Celsius coloured diesel to ensure that there are no problems with frozen fuel on the coldest days of the year. Even with climate change and the winters not being as cold as they were, or so it seems, it's a necessary expense to pay the extra. With the winter ice storms followed by sudden drops in temperature becoming more frequent, farmers cannot take the chance with frozen fuel lines.

After record-high prices earlier in the year for regular summer fuel, which is good for minus-25, farmers were not expecting the drastic jump in winter fuel. I waited for the price to drop. But that never happened.

Between Christmas and New Year's Day, I phoned my supplier and was told the cost of coloured winter fuel was \$2.35 a litre, plus a 4-cent excise tax, plus the federal and provincial

taxes. The total came to \$2.76 per litre. Outrageous!

Summer fuel was \$1.77 plus taxes.

I was offered a blend of minus-33 degree fuel at \$1.86 plus all the taxes, which I took.

Going to the local gas stations, five minutes away, the price of clear fuel was \$2.19 a litre, taxes included. My distributor did not want to lose the business, so they matched the price.

Last week, my neighbour filled his reservoir with clear fuel because it was 40 cents cheaper than coloured winter diesel. Coloured fuel is supposed to be cheaper, with no provincial fuel tax included. Some businesses, including farmers, are given access to this fuel to help reduce the cost of production. However, if a tractor is used for commercial purposes, like snow removal, roadside cleaning or grass cutting, it cannot be powered by coloured fuel. The same principal applies to home heating oil that is tax free.

The big question is why is there such a difference in the cost of diesel compared with gasoline? And why is coloured fuel more expensive than clear?

When I ask my local supplier about the prices, they could not explain it.

In a media report, petroleum analyst Dan McTeague put it this way: "The fact of the matter is demand is very strong and supply just isn't there."

That's a very weak statement, given that before the pandemic it was never an issue. In addition, diesel is less refined than gasoline.

Demand is the same

Also, what is the cost of the additive to make winter diesel?

The demand for diesel to produce food and distribute goods should be the same now as it was before COVID.

Is that demand McTeague referring to coming from all those big diesel pickups on the road pulling camper trailers?

Maybe so. I definitely saw a lot of them on the highways near the Laurentians last summer.

Consumers used to only purchase diesel pickups for commercial reasons. Farmers, contractors and small delivery businesses would buy these trucks because diesel engines are stronger and diesel was usually 20-cents-a-litre

cheaper than gas. I wonder if the campers will feel the pinch? Or, will they just complain and keep burning the fuel?

When I see a \$100,000 Ford F450 pulling a \$100,000 camper, I won't feel sorry.

However, right now in January, the costs are real. Most farmers are not able to upcharge the cost of fuel like the trucking companies can. Homeowner already feeling the cost of food is too high will have to tighten their budgets. And someone who is buying home-heating oil at \$2 a litre is really going to feel the pinch.

With no end in sight, I don't have any answers. I can only encourage everyone to ask around and be informed about local prices. There can be huge differences from one supplier to the other. And the prices can change from one day to another. I purchased my blended fuel to fill my reserve and to ensure I wouldn't be caught without any. However, in the future, if clear diesel is cheaper than coloured, I will be driving to the gas station because the government is failing farmers and consumers once again.

Why are farmers being held hostage by diesel fuel prices?

GREENHOUSES: Engineer behind innovative growing tech grew up on Vaudreuil farm From Page 1

To acquire the land that had once been so integral to his family feels like a homecoming of sorts, Daoust said. And while his father is no longer alive to witness the move, having died of COVID-19 in May 2020, his mother is.

"It's a dream come true for her, and for a lot of people who know us," Daoust said in a recent interview.

Daoust grew up on the farm, known back then as La Ferme Daoust, and watched as his parents faced many of the struggles that continue to plague growers and producers even now, including adverse weather and invasive pests. It was there, he said, that he first began contemplating how he could use technology to find a way for farmers to take their operations indoors, away from the volatility of the outdoors.

A few decades later, and Daoust has managed to do just that. His company last year partnered with Les Serres Vaudreuil, which had purchased the land from his father in the 1980s. It

then built a \$4-million 20,000-square-foot greenhouse that mimics the ideal sun, rain and wind conditions needed to grow strawberries. It is the largest vertical strawberry farm in Canada and serves as a state-of-the-art controlled environment that perfectly regulates humidity and temperature.

While vertical indoor growing is not new, what makes Daoust's work innovative is how he integrates it within a larger greenhouse facility. His technology transforms the light energy generated in the strawberry room into heat to warm the surrounding greenhouse. Converting the energy for a secondary purpose creates the ability to completely change how farmers in northern climates can grow fruits and vegetables all year around, he says.

The potential for the technology is limitless, with the engineer promising it can be pivotal to reducing Quebec's reliance on imports during the winter months, as well as fighting the ever-growing impacts of climate change.

"This is how we take food production to the next level," Daoust said. "We try to control the environment as much as we can."

Daoust has big plans for his company, and the site in Vaudreuil-Dorion will be at the centre of it all. The acquisition of Les Serres Vaudreuil – along with \$32 million in grants from the provincial government – will allow him to take Ferme d'Hiver "to the big leagues." More vertical farms and greenhouses will be built on the site, allowing his company to quadruple its current production and produce 1 million kilograms of strawberries per year.

But most importantly, Daoust said he will use the extra space to expand the company's roster of fruits and vegetables, as well as replicate the technology so that it can be deployed at other farms across Quebec. He's already identified a handful of other producers who are interested in operating their own indoor, climate-controlled vertical farms, and he's hoping to start rolling out the technology by 2024.

He'll have help, of course. The family that owned Les Serres Vaudreuil will be playing an integral role in overseeing the rollout, Daoust explained. They'll also help manage the newly expanded facility in Vaudreuil-Dorion as it continues to act as a home base for the budding company for years to come.



PHOTO COURTESY FERME D'HIVER

Last year, Ferme d'Hiver built a \$4-million 20,000-square-foot greenhouse in Vaudreuil-Dorion that mimics the ideal sun, rain and wind conditions needed to grow strawberries. It is the largest vertical strawberry farm in Canada and serves as a state-of-the-art controlled environment that perfectly regulates humidity and temperature.

Canada's is falling behind on agriculture productivity

Experts calling on federal government to act before it's too late

Daniel Sucar
The Advocate

Agriculture productivity in Quebec, and in Canada as a whole, is lagging.

That's according to Tyler McCann, the managing director of the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute (CAPI). Earlier this month, the researcher gave an impassioned speech to the House of Commons' agriculture committee, urging federal officials to take decisive action to boost agriculture productivity and meet international targets.

McCann points to how the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, an international forum whose aim is to stimulate economic progress and world trade, has called for 28-per-cent growth in global agriculture productivity in the next decade to eliminate world hunger.

Canada is not even close to keeping up, McCann noted. In fact, that level of productivity increase is three times greater than what the country has managed to accomplish in the last decade.

"There really is an urgent need to do more, and to do better," said McCann, who runs a farm just outside of Shawville in the Pontiac region of Quebec. "Not

only are we not boosting our productivity fast enough, but our growth is slowing down here in Canada."

The researcher explained there are several factors behind the slowdown in both Quebec and Canada, including increased demand, less space devoted to innovation and research, trade challenges and pressures on the food system. A persistent issue, he added, revolves around how producers and farmers are tasked to feed an ever-growing population while having access to less land.

But while the factors are complex and multi-faceted, the consequences are more straightforward. If Canada doesn't boost its agriculture productivity, McCann predicts farmers will be less prepared for the impacts of climate change, and more people will go hungry. In Canada alone, the level of food insecurity rose from one in eight Canadians to one in six in 2021.

"We need to start to think about these global targets, or else we'll start to miss them," he said. "And that means more people facing famine. That means being less prepared for more extreme weather. That means we're not doing what we need to be

doing to protect biodiversity."

Boosting productivity

So, what can be done to ratchet up Canada's agriculture productivity?

According to McCann, the brunt of the burden falls on the federal government. He recommends a whole-of-government approach that would involve boosting trade with the Indo-Pacific region, implementing cutting-edge biotechnologies to improve crop yield and above all, investing heavily in research that could lead to new innovations in the agriculture sector.

The tools needed already exist. The federal government just needs to improve them, McCann said.

"We already do invest in public and private agriculture research, but we don't invest enough," he explained. "We do have frameworks that allow for the launch of novel techniques, but they're not monitored enough. We do have market access that allow these techniques to get where they need to go, but they're not good enough."

He continued: "The system doesn't need to be torn down; we just need to do a better job with the building blocks we have."

But the burden doesn't just fall on

government officials. Farmers on the ground also have a role to play in adopting sustainable practices, embracing new techniques, pressuring government officials to invest in research and making strategic changes to their production when they see a need for improvement.

In Quebec, he urges farmers and producers to actively engage with provincial MAPAQ services, as well as support universities striving to uncover new ways to boost productivity.

"Quebec has a network that allows producers to be connected to the latest research, thanks to active universities," McCann said. "It's a strong asset for the province, and one all farmers should tap into."

McCann and the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute will be hosting a day-long conference later this month to discuss agriculture productivity and global food insecurity. The event will include a series of panel discussions, fireside chats and keynote speakers. It will take place at the Westin hotel in Ottawa on Jan. 31, between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. People can also attend virtually. More information and registration prices are available on the institute's official website, <https://capi-icpa.ca/>.

Trends in agriculture



PHOTO: 4 PM PRODUCTION/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Some of what we were told about how to farm in university 50 years ago has since proven to be totally wrong.



Chris Judd
The Advocate

Follow the science. But we need to be aware of who is paying for the research

Continuous education is an important thing you should always invest in. And it can be enjoyable, too.

On our family dairy farm, where we try to grow enough crops to keep our cows healthy and productive, we usually attend as many information days as we can to learn the latest on dairying, crop production, soil health and farm management.

Over the years we have attended info sessions in different towns, countries and places – from a university to sitting around a kitchen table. We heard some topics discussed many times. Many scientists, university professors and farmers would have the same opinion on a topic. But there were several times when someone would come up with a completely different conclusion with enough “backup” information to make you think about, and even question, what the true conclusion was.

It usually took some very difficult, pointed questions before some disgruntled speaker either walked out in disgust or admitted that their conclusion could be wrong.

Often, what we learned on a farm tour included what didn't work. And often, that was more important than seeing something that did work.

Some of what we were told about how to farm in university 50 years ago has later proven to be totally wrong.

It used to be that what scientists had spent a lifetime working on was accepted as a true conclusion. Until about the mid-1960s, “basic research” was carried out at our best universities and funded with our tax dollars by the federal and provincial governments. Because most successful “peer-reviewed” trials can take several years to complete, often the positive results were released only after a newly elected party came to power and claimed the success even though they had voted against the funding in the first place.

Who is paying for the research?

But then there was a change in how the government funding for research was provided. It started to include what was called “shared funding.” Under this new “shared funding” scheme, the government would pay half the cost of

the research if the other half was found in the private sector.

This meant large, for-profit corporations (like big pharma) jumped in to provide the other half. But they wanted control of the research.

As a result, some research projects were never completed or the results were never published.

The government could claim that research was doubled and the private industry got half its research paid for by taxpayers.

Another major change evolved when those same large corporations with deep pockets started hiring the best university graduates by offering higher wages than the government.

How climate change is addressed

Today, the most controversial subject among scientists is how climate change should be addressed.

The two largest camps of scientists addressing the issue either work for “big oil” or are part of a group from all over the world who believe that time is very, very short to address the rising temperatures that are melting our

ice packs and causing huge swings in storms, droughts and floods.

This is different from about 40 years ago, when all scientists, all political parties and even climate change scientists from big oil agreed that climate change would be a major world problem.

But then climate change became a political issue.

While all this was happening, a “revolving door” emerged among top paid private individuals from industry to influential positions in government and some influential government employees and elected officials who move to private industry. What influence and information do these people take along? Anyone who is near the place where political decisions are taken has noticed the extreme lobbying and dollars spent lobbying to try to sway the decisions of our law makers.

Yes. We must follow the science and be aware. But we must also be aware of where the scientists come from and where their salaries comes from. We are but the custodians of our great-grandchildren's world.



The Legault farm in Godmanchester is made up of 1,000 acres of corn, soybean, winter wheat and buckwheat. The family has improved its fields by transitioning from ridge till to strip till, tilling all its fields and diversifying crop rotation.

It starts and finishes by picking rocks

And along the way Châteauguay Valley student opted to study in English

Andrew McClelland

The Advocate

Growing up on the family farm in the Châteauguay Valley southwest of Montreal, Maude Legault knew that agriculture wasn't going to be the easiest or most glamorous of professions. But she knew it was a path to finding fun and community.

"My first experience on a farm was to pick up rocks," says the 18-year-old. "That was like a normal family activity during summer break. Everybody would go out and help. The sooner we would finish, the better!"

Legault was raised on the farm where her grandfather, Richard, had set up a cash crop operation in the 1970s, in the township of Godmanchester, just north of Huntingdon. In 1997, her father, Simon, graduated with a farm management degree from Institut de technologie agroalimentaire in St. Hyacinthe and started working on the farm full time with his brother.

As a young child, Legault loved visiting her father in the shop or going on tractor rides on weekends, eager to take part in the work of farming.

Started working the fields at age 10

"When I was about 10 years old, I started helping my dad occasionally during the summer," she said. "The older I got, the more I would work on the farm. For me, it was like a playground where I could learn useful things and life advice while having fun. And it still is."

Indeed, the Legault cash crop operation is no small venture. Maude's father and uncle cultivate about 1,000 acres of corn, soybean, winter wheat and buckwheat in addition to doing 400 acres of custom planting and 1,000 acres of custom harvesting.

Opted to study in English

When high school graduation came around, Legault decided to challenge herself: instead of going to study farm management in her mother tongue of French in St. Hyacinthe, she opted to enroll in the Farm Management and Technology program at Macdonald Campus of McGill University and study in English.

"I also wanted to be part of the McGill community because this university is widely recognized for good reasons," said Legault in her already-excellent command of her second language.

Legault won a Warren Grapes scholarship in her very first semester. The prize was one of seven scholarships awarded in 2022 by the Quebec Farmers' Association to support students who have chosen higher education in agriculture.

"I was super happy about it and so thankful for the QFA to help our future farmers," she said. "But what made me even more happy was to see that I wasn't the only one to benefit from that opportunity. I saw some friends of mine so excited to get that award that I was more excited for them. I'm so grateful to the QFA for all they are doing for us."

Mindful of challenges

These days, Legault pursues her studies at Mac while continuing to work on the family farm in Godmanchester on weekends and during the summer. While excited by all she's learning in the FMT program, she is also mindful of the challenges that face all farmers in the near future.

"I think the biggest challenge will be keeping agriculture sustainable by minimizing pesticide use, the fuel burned and the impact on the environment," she said. "Not only do pesticides and



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MAUDE LEGAULT

Maude Legault was one of seven Warren Grapes award winners at the QFA's annual meeting last November. "For me, (the family farm) was like a playground where I could learn useful things and life advice while having fun," the 18-year-old says.

fuel cost a lot, but using them in big quantities can have a huge impact on the future of agriculture. That's why, as farmers, we need to help each other by finding a great way to reduce the use of those products and keep it profitable."

Eager to return to run family farm

Legault hopes to return to manage the family farm after she has completed her studies, either following her FMT degree or after moving on to a degree in agronomy. With the other Legault children and grandchildren already pursuing non-farm careers, Maude's passion for agriculture makes her the natural frontrunner to continue the family's proud farming tradition.

"My biggest concern is about taking over the family farm," she said. "Nowadays, farms are bigger than they used to be and require more responsibility. If you fail after taking over the farm, you fall from higher. Also, there are a lot of big players in the game, big farms who aren't scared to step on smaller farms. There's more competition and higher risks."

Clearly, this ambitious young farmer has no illusions about coasting into an "easy" career in agriculture.

"I started really working on the farm when I was 10 and, now, eight years down the road, I still pick up rocks!"



Martin Caron
UPA President

Emerging from the holidays is a good time to look ahead. Most economists expect the spike in the key interest rate to eventually trigger a drop in inflation. However, this will only come at the end of the year, so times will remain tough for consumers over the coming months.

But getting inflation under control will not reverse the inflation we saw last year. Food price hikes in stores significantly outpaced the Consumer Price Index. The Institut de recherche et d'informations socioéconomiques even made allegations about a degree of "opportunism" among retailers during the pandemic.

In the Union des producteurs agricoles' submission to the Canadian Competition Bureau, which recently launched a study on the issue, we reiterated that increased expenses affect every link in the agri-food supply chain. However, farmers and processors have had to bear the brunt of this increase due to the low number of distributors (three major chains hold a combined 60-per-cent share of the food market – 80 per cent if you include Costco and Walmart) and the stranglehold they have on their suppliers.

Strong tools needed to tackle grocery bills

Many see this situation as a sort of "cartelization" of supply, leaving suppliers with little recourse and consumers with a smaller selection of products at higher prices. Additionally, tight constraints on centralized purchasing and volume that have been imposed on retail franchisees mean that these businesses lack flexibility for carrying local products, with all the consequences that entails for the environment (food miles) and community development.

Both at home and abroad, the food dollar is being divvied up in a blatantly unequal way. This has prompted a flurry of investigations around the world. Since 2021, the United States' Bureau of Competition has been working to get to the bottom of business practices among 10 major distributors suspected to have interfered with the free price system. Mexican authorities are likewise looking into mergers and acquisitions in the grocery sector.

Too few companies

New Zealand conducted an extensive consultation on business relations, competition and price-fixing. This study concluded that the country's grocery sector, dominated by two distributors, hurts consumers and suppliers. Meanwhile, in Europe, Germany recently decided that competition needed a boost in its domestic market, which is largely controlled by four companies.

Several conclusions from these studies could be applied to Canada. For



PHOTO: LUCIGERMA/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

The increase in food prices in grocery stores in Canada has significantly outpaced the Consumer Price Index.

instance, implementing a mandatory, legally-binding code of conduct (as in the United Kingdom and Australia) or creating a federal organization that would ensure the food dollar is distributed fairly (like France's Observatoire de la formation des prix et des marges des produits alimentaires).

Code of conduct needed

The Competition Bureau, for its part, needs to have the capacity to ban anti-competitive business practices in the grocery sector. A noteworthy example of what this could look like is France's Autorité de la concurrence, which has tackled multiple "cartels" in recent years (personal care and cleaning products, canned vegetables, fruit compotes, ham and deli meats, etc.).

For too long, Canadian suppliers have had to contend with a number of measures imposed by distributors (added fees, pricing policies, penalties, product promotions and administrative requirements). This situation has led to an imbalance that often feels like a conspiracy of silence, with the fear of retaliation hanging over suppliers' heads. The secrecy surrounding major chains' profitability also needs to be stopped. Equipping itself with strong tools will help Canada to foster the development of a viable economic model for all players in the agri-food sector, and to ensure greater transparency for the public on these players' practices and profit margins. This would be a big step forward on consumers' right to local, affordable, high-quality food.

McDonald's Canada and 4H launch new youth scholarship

Daniel Sucar
The Advocate

McDonald's Canada is partnering with 4-H Canada, a youth development organization based in Ottawa, for a new scholarship program geared towards young Canadian farmers.

The program includes 16 scholarships, totalling up to \$80,000. The funds will be awarded to senior youth leaders who are hoping to advance their educational pursuits in sustainability and agriculture.

"McDonald's Canada wouldn't be who we are today without Canadian farmers, ranchers and growers," said Gemma Pryor, the senior director of the restaurant chain's Canada Impact Team. "This new National Youth Scholarship program will help advance educational pursuits

in agriculture across Canada and help support the next generation of Canadian farmers."

The scholarships will be awarded over the next two years. During this time, the partnership will also see McDonald's Canada joining the 4-H Canada Leadership Awards as a sponsor.

"Through the generosity of McDonald's Canada, we have an opportunity to empower youth leaders in achieving their educational goals," said 4-H Canada CEO Shannon Benner. "This partnership ensures youth are given meaningful support to pursue studies to build a sustainable future and explore subject matter important to them as global citizens."

The 4-H Canada website will be updated when scholarship applications open later this year.

Quebec and Ontario farmers hit hard by holiday blizzard

Daniel Sucar
The Advocate

Farmers in Quebec and Ontario felt the financial pinch from the devastating Christmas blizzard that wreaked havoc on roads in both provinces and halted deliveries in many areas.

In Ontario, dairy farmers are facing thousands of dollars in losses after the storm shut down roads on Dec. 23 and 24, preventing drivers from picking up milk and forcing producers to destroy their supply. Farmers dumped roughly 1.7 million litres of milk down the drain during the "once in a generation" storm event, according to the Dairy Farmers of Ontario.

The organization is planning to reimburse farmers who dumped milk. To

fund the payout, it will temporarily lower the blend price by 2.5 cents per litre.

"Our ability to share in the impact of this natural occurrence is among the greatest strengths of our system," The Dairy Farmers of Ontario said in a statement. "While there are several key learnings through this challenging time, we remain thankful for our transporter and processor partners for trying to make the best of an extremely difficult circumstance."

Meanwhile, in Quebec, farmers across the province reported cases of violent winds ripping the roofs off their silos and being left without power for days. In St. Paulin, a small town near Trois Rivières, farmer Nicolas Pressé reported two of his cows died of hypothermia a few days after the blizzard struck.



PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. MISSION/ERIC BRIDIERS

United States trade representative Katherine Tai is once again accusing Canada of not holding up its end of the bargain in the United-States-Mexico-Canada Agreement. Tai and American dairy lobby groups say Canada is giving preferential treatment to too many Canadian dairy processors in its own market.

U.S., Canada appear headed for another trade dispute over dairy

Andrew McClelland
The Advocate

American trade representatives are taking issue with how Canada treats dairy imports under the United-States-Mexico-Canada trade agreement, which could lead to a dispute resolution panel under the often-controversial trade pact.

On Dec. 20, U.S. trade representative Katherine Tai said her office had “identified additional aspects of Canada’s measures that appear to be inconsistent with Canada’s obligations under the USMCA.”

If this all sounds similar, it’s because it is. At this time last year, Tai and her office were claiming victory after a USMCA panel ruled Canada had been breaking its commitments to the agreement by reserving quantities of quota in its dairy tariff-rate quotas for processors that transform raw dairy into cheeses, yoghurt, cream and other products.

At that time, Tai was satisfied with USMCA panel’s ruling and appeared confident it would result in greater access for U.S. processors to Canada’s dairy market.

“This historic win will help eliminate unjustified trade restrictions on American dairy products, and will ensure that the U.S. dairy industry and its workers get the full benefit of the USMCA to market and sell U.S. products to Canadian consumers,” said Tai.

At the heart of the dispute is how Canada has interpreted its obligations regarding what are called “tariff rate quotas” (TRQ). These rate quotas are preferential tariff rates for a certain quantity of imports of dairy products like milk, milk powders and cheeses. If dairy imports are above the specified quantity – or quota – a much higher tariff rate is applied.

Following the January 2022 ruling, Canada changed its regulations around dairy TRQ allocation to comply with what it interpreted as its commitments under the USMCA.

U.S. toughening its talk

But the American government and the U.S. dairy industry remain unsatisfied. And now U.S. representatives have started talking tough.

“Canada remains in violation of its commitments under the USMCA by

not removing its trade restrictions on American dairy producers,” said U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack.

The National Milk Producers Federation went even further, stating: “Canada has a long history of restricting trade and not honouring existing agreements.” The U.S. dairy lobby group called on Washington to impose retaliatory trade measures to “bring Canada into compliance given its persistent violations.”

Under the USMCA, Canada has the right to maintain 14 TRQs on the following types of dairy products: milk, cream, skim milk powder, butter and cream powder, industrial cheeses, cheeses of all types, milk powders, concentrated or condensed milk, yogurt and buttermilk, powdered buttermilk, whey powder, products consisting of natural milk constituents, ice cream and ice cream mixes, and other dairy.

Most of the quota reserved by Canada under the trade agreement is allotted to dairy processors that turn raw milk into other products, like cheese, yoghurt and cream.

That, says the U.S. is within the terms of the understanding agreed upon.

Dispute stems from vague wording

But the U.S. trade representative takes issue with a foggy definition in the text of the United-States-Mexico-Canada agreement. Documents refer to participating nations’ right to set aside quota for “further processors.” And just what that entails has become a topic of endless debate, with both Canada and the U.S. claiming they are interpreting the agreement correctly.

In response, the Canadian government has stated that the dispute was settled when it made changes to its TRQ allocations in May 2022.

“Dispute settlement panels have confirmed that our supply-management system is in line with our international trade obligations,” said Mary Ng, Canada’s minister of international trade. “The terms that we negotiated under the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement are being respected and upheld.”

The U.S. government has asked Canada for further formal consultations on the matter. If the two countries can’t come to an agreement, the U.S. can request another dispute resolution panel.



QFA videoconferences

Join us for upcoming QFA videoconferences!

Participate from the comfort of your home.

The QFA's fun and informative series of videoconferences continues throughout the winter.

Come say hello to English-speaking farmers from across Quebec as we get together on Zoom and learn about the big issues in farming today.



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15

Maple Syrup Collection with Less Energy (and Less Cost)

With Sean Butler of Ferme et Forêt

Outaouais producer Sean Butler of Ferme et Forêt has been collecting his sap through smaller 3/16-inch tubing combined with smaller diaphragm vacuum pumps resulting in a system that is cheaper, simpler to install and uses less energy. In this videoconference, Butler talks us through his methods for collecting as much sap as conventional systems in a more environmentally-friendly way.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83803180434?pwd=SGVVRjRyT-DRoY1ImUGVuTitUMzVXQT09>

Meeting ID: 838 0318 0434

Passcode: 859635



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22

Climate change and its impact on your farm – Part 2

With Phil Lavoie

We've heard about how climate change will affect farms. But what can we do about it?

Quebec beef consultant Phil Lavoie speaks about how your farm can cope with climate change – and adopt practices that can actually mitigate it.

The best place to find news about, links to and passcodes for the QFA's Videoconferences is at our Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/306871089363565/>

To be added to our email list so you never miss a videoconference, write to qfa@upa.qc.ca





It's all in how you stack it

QFA videoconference: The pros and cons of hay storage discussed

Andrew McClelland
The Advocate

Farmers have always been known for their common sense when it comes to making business decisions. In an era when there's a lot of "expert" opinions out there, producers often bravely stand by their principles, no matter what fad is floating around.

But what if common sense sometimes steers us astray? What if the science contradicts common sense?

For Alberta producer Jill Burkhardt, finding the best way to store your hay is often one of those solutions that runs counter to common sense.

"Often what we do on a farm is decided because we say, 'Oh that's the way we've always done it.' Or, 'That's the way grandpa did it,'" Burkhardt said. "But that doesn't mean it's necessarily the best production technique."

Burkhardt and her husband run Crooked Lake Farm in Gwynne, Alberta, 80 kilometres south of Edmonton. There, the couple raise more than 300 head of Angus-Hereford cross cattle on grassland. The family workforce consists of themselves and their three children.

Rising cost of hay

When Burkhardt noticed hay prices skyrocketing over the past year, she began thinking of how hay loss was a bigger issue than ever. That led the Montana-born producer to consult Canada's Beef Cattle Research Council (BCRC), the nation's leading industry-led think tank

for beef, cattle and forage research.

What she found was sometimes surprising.

"While there may not be a 'right' way to store hay, there are some real guidelines and considerations supported by solid research," Burkhardt said. "You buy hay, you bring it home and think your job is done. But how you store it makes all the difference."

Burkhardt shared her experience and insight with farmers in Quebec during a Quebec Farmers' Association videoconference Jan. 18. Entitled "Pyramids, Rows and Mushrooms: Storing Hay to Minimize Loss," the discussion was the first videoconference of the QFA's 2023 season.

"I've seen mushroom stacks all across the Prairies, and always figured it was a good solution to keep one bale off the ground without having to stack too high," Burkhardt said.

Mushroom stacks are made by placing one bale on end on the ground and a second bale, twine-side down, on top of it. While the method keeps one bale off the ground, the bottom bale suffers and can lead to spoilage.

"It's also the open end of that bottom bale that is touching the ground," Burkhardt said. "So it's sucking up moisture from the ground, and the research shows that the top bale sheds moisture down into it."

Pyramid stacks have their issues

Pyramid stacking has long been favoured by producers looking to stack

a lot of hay in a small area. That can be a bonus when having a limited acreage to store hay on. And you'd think that having two layers off the ground would keep all that feed nice and dry, right?

"That top bale will indeed stay fairly dry, but the other two layers are going to wind up paying the price," said Burkhardt, citing research done at South Dakota State University. "Plus, along with the moisture retained by the bottom two layers of bales, the area of the field below a pyramid stack will stay wetter longer from rain-shed."

However, noted Burkhardt, pyramid stacking is the best way to go if you are able to cover or tarp your feed.

"But, tarping comes with its own set of cons. It's very labour intensive to get a tarp over a big stack of bales like that. And it's expensive! We put up about 1,500 bales of hay per year and I couldn't imagine trying to tarp all that hay. Finding tarps that big would cost so much that we'd lose any economic value compared to the feed we save."

Single rows recommended

In the end, the BCRC recommends single-row storage: bales stored end-to-end in rows and orienting those rows north to south, with space between each row of bales. It's simple, but it has its advantages.

"Single rows give you as much air flow as possible," Burkhardt said. "If you orient those bale east-to-west, the north-facing side is going to deteriorate quicker. But spin them and place them



PHOTO COURTESY OF JILL BURKHARDT

Alberta producer Jill Burkhardt stores up to 1,500 bales of hay per year on her family's Crooked Lake Farm. That led the producer to look into the research on the best ways to store hay to reduce loss.

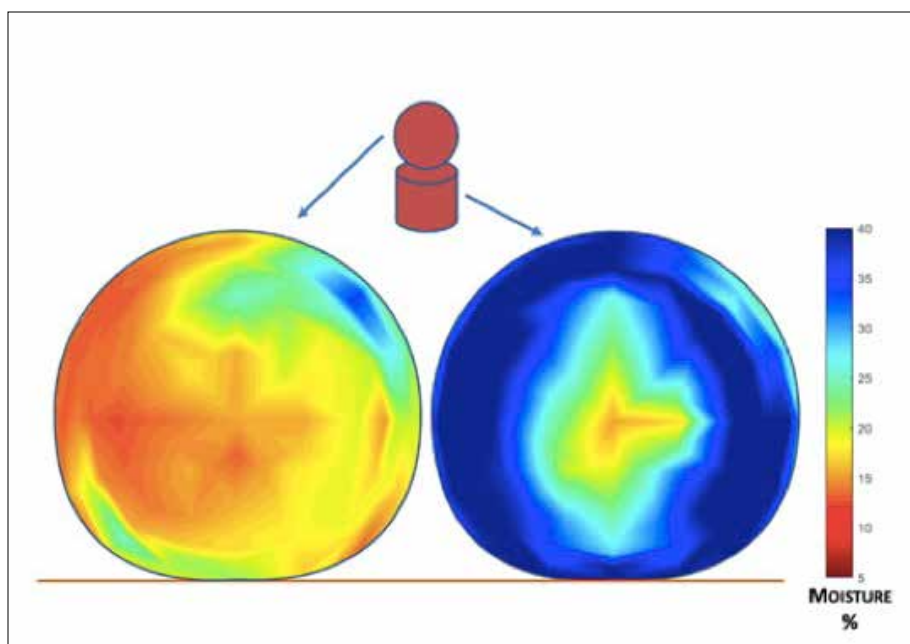
north-to-south and you have a lot of advantages: they'll get the best sunlight and wind, which lets those bales dry out faster."

Single row storage also allows the moisture to shed down the wrapped or twined side of the bale. At the same time, placing them end-to-end protects the end, decreasing the chance of rain or moisture getting in between.

When it comes to storing hay, not all methods are created equally. Ultimately, says Burkhardt, it's a farm management decision to use what resources you have to protect your best feed in the best way while also mitigating losses for the rest.

Which sounds a lot like common sense.

"Storage should always be thought of in terms of nutritional quality. So if your storage is limited, put your best feed where you have the best option to store it. Don't put your best stuff where it will weather."



Mushroom stacks are made by placing one bale on end on the ground and a second bale, twine-side down, on top of it – but the method leads to excess moisture in the bottom bale. This illustration shows moisture content in blue and dry feed in red.

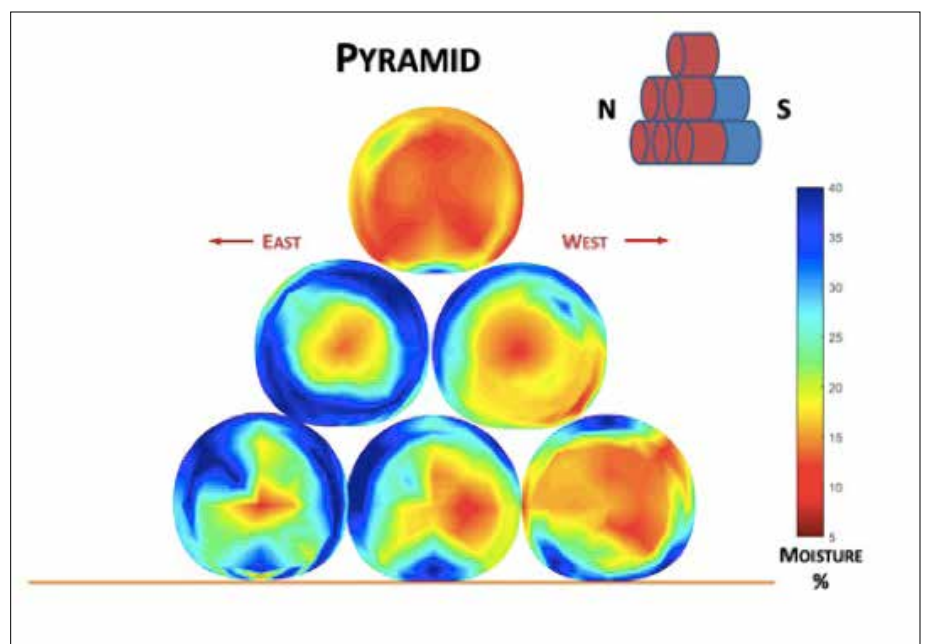


PHOTO COURTESY OF SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Pyramid stacks can be great if you have the time to cover or tarp all of it. But without covering, the bottom two layers pay the price for keeping the top bale dry.



The Quebec Farmers' Association is only as strong as its **membership**

It's time to renew your membership. Reminder cards will not be mailed out. So we are asking that you clip out the form below. Fill it out and send your cheque in the amount indicated and mail it in.

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

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By supporting the QFA, you ensure that *The Advocate* arrives in your mailbox every month.

Here are just a few of members who recently renewed.
Your support makes a difference.

Michael Hobbs, Dunham

Andrius Valevicius, Sherbrooke

Daniel Bachmann, St. André d'Argenteuil

Graham and Bernard Hodge, Cookshire

Sue and Bob McClelland, Cantley

Garnet Cheslock, Val des Monts

Gilbert Campbell, Harrington

Allan Sutor, Waterville

James Johnston, Melbourne

Joshua Johnston, Melbourne

Melvin Johnston, Kingsbury

Doug Lang, Howick

Stanley, Joyce and Ben Martin, Dunham

Karl Heusser, Cowansville





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Paul J. Hetzler
ISA Certified Arborist

"My girdle is killing me." This line is from an obnoxious TV ad that ran in the late 1960s and early '70s in the U.S. The widely-mocked catchphrase was meant to inspire women to rush out and buy a certain brand of non-murderous undergarment. I doubt the ad's plaintive tone boosted sales, but hey, I'm no marketing expert.

Although, girdles have never slain anyone, they have been known to kill many trees in yards, parks and along roadsides. If you know what to look for, it's often possible to arrest this type of "crime" and reverse the damage. Better yet, you can easily girdle-proof a young tree when you plant it.

What kills a tree are girdling roots. They begin when roots curve inside the planting hole rather than point straight out, away from the trunk. If a container-grown tree is root-bound and the twisted roots are not cut and straightened, this is the outcome. It also can result from a planting hole that is either too deep or not wide enough. Although girdling roots sometimes form on the surface, they usually develop out of sight in the soil.

These dizzy roots that go around and around in a planting hole don't cause trouble at first. But as the trunk widens, at some point it begins to press against the circling roots. From then on, the tree's girdle is killing it.

Signs of stress will be visible

Over time, the expanding trunk is garroted ever tighter until the tree's vascular system can no longer get water and nutrients to the leaves. The tree will begin to show evidence of acute stress, like a sparse canopy or early fall colour. As the process advances, the tree declines and dies.

It commonly happens that girdling roots choke a portion of the trunk and not the whole circumference. This leads to the decline and death of a corresponding part of the canopy. While it sounds better than losing the entire tree, it presents another kind of danger: dead wood. A compounding factor is that the live foliage remaining in the canopy can hide dead limbs from view, as seen from the ground.

Getting to the root of a tree's problem

Premature death

Given that all trees perish sooner or later, death by girdling may not seem calamitous. One heartbreak of girdling roots is that they kill trees before they can mature; typically within 20 to 30 years. Two or three decades of life is better than nothing, to be sure, but compared with the 300-year potential lifespan of sugar maples, red oaks and white pines, or the 500+ years in the case of bur oaks and white oaks, it's not much.

Nurturing a tree to the point that it gives us shade, pollution control, carbon storage and other "ecosystem services" takes money, time and energy, whether that tree lives 25 or 250 years. A truncated tree lifespan is a major impact of girdling roots.

Not only do girdling roots lead to an early grave for an afflicted tree, they create life-threatening hazards. The girdle choke-point is mechanically unstable, and gets weaker with time. Because this usually happens under the soil, the condition tends to go unnoticed until the tree topples. When you learn to spot the signs of girdling roots, they can be detected in the majority of cases.

Look for the clues

The best clue that girdling roots are present is when a tree goes straight into the ground like a utility pole. Tree trunks normally widen at their base; this is called a trunk flare. Incidentally, the trunk flare should always be visible after you've planted a tree. It is nature's depth gauge. When one side of the trunk has a flare and the other is straight, only half the tree is being choked.

Although treating a root-girdled tree is not always feasible, the only way to find out is to dig down to expose the offending root(s). For this task, it's best to hire an arborist, who may use compressed air to gently remove soil. An arborist can also tell if excising an embedded girdling root will do more harm than good. To remove a girdling root is a bit like surgery, and may involve hand saws, chisels and gouges. A successful procedure gives the patient a longer, healthier life.

The time to prevent girdling roots is when a tree is planted. A planting hole should be two to three times as wide as the root ball, but never any deeper. Locate the trunk flare to guide you.



PHOTOS BY PAUL HETZLER

One sign of possible root girdling is when a tree goes straight into the ground like a utility pole – like this tree.



You should be able to see the trunk flare of a tree at ground level, where it expands in an outward direction.

Carefully cut and straighten all circling roots on container-grown trees. If the root ball is wrapped in burlap, all fabric must be removed, along with the wire cage, once the tree is situated in the hole.

Girdles may no longer be popular,

but girdling roots are never in vogue. Help save trees by putting an end to killer girdles.

Paul Hetzler is an ISA-Certified Arborist and a former Cornell Extension educator.

Grains

U.S. corn and soybean production both down, while Ukraine wheat, corn exports are up

Ramzy Yelda
Senior Market Analyst
Quebec Grain Growers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's January Supply and Demand Report is rather bullish, with some surprises.

We have the final U.S. crop estimates: both corn and soybean production are down. Corn production is lowered by 200 million bushels (MBU), at

at 210 MBU versus 274 MBU in 2022. The average farm price is up by \$0.20 at \$14.20/bu versus \$13.30/bu in 2021/22.

Worldwide, the USDA lowered Argentina's crops by 3 million tonnes (MT) for corn and by 4 MT for soybeans, reflecting the very dry conditions. As a result, Argentine exports are down 3 MT for corn, 2 MT for soybeans and 1.1 MT for soybean meal. Brazil's soybean crop is up 1 MT at a record level

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's January Supply and Demand Report is rather bullish, with some surprises.

13.73 billion bushels (BBU) compared with 15.07 BBU last year. Feed demand is down by 25 MBU and exports are reduced by 150 MBU. The 2023 stocks are down by 15 MBU, at 1,242 MBU compared with 1,377 MBU in 2022.

The U.S. soybean crop is down by 70 MBU, at 4.28 BBU versus 4.47 BBU last year. Exports are lowered by 55 MBU due to Brazilian competition. The 2023 stocks are down by 10 MBU,

of 153 MT. Brazilian soybean exports are up 1.5 MT at a record level of 91 MT. Brazil's corn crop has been trimmed 1 MT at 125 MT, which remains a record level, while corn exports were left unchanged.

Finally, Ukraine's exports are up by 500,000 tonnes for wheat and 3 MT for corn, reflecting the full use of the grain shipping corridor deal.



PGQ directors focus on promoting grain farming profession

Directors of the Producteurs de grains du Québec gathered for a day-long event Dec. 12 to discuss issues of importance to the federation and to grain production. Discussions centred on the various strategic issues at the federation level. These included the new strategic planning process (2023–2025), promoting the grain farming profession and grain products, markets, sustainable production, and the financial plan.

Information and feedback gathered at this event will be used to finalize both the strategic plan and the financing plan, which will be presented at the 2023 AGM.

Toward government programs that keep up with future needs

In July 2022, the federal, provincial and territorial ministers of agriculture reached an agreement that sets the stage for the agricultural policy framework to cover the next five years. An additional \$500 million was added to the budget for the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (SCAP), bringing the total to \$2.5 billion. AgriStability saw a modest enhancement, with its compensation rate increasing from 70 per cent to 80 per cent starting in 2023. However, the trigger for that program remains at 70 per cent of the reference margin, which limits the scope of the program and goes against our requests.

In addition, the SCAP includes a form of environmental cross-compliance with the AgriInvest and ASREC programs. Few details have been shared about this. The PGQ is monitoring the situation closely.

Inputs causing a world of worry

The market for fertilizer, especially nitrogen-based fertilizer, was a source of concern in 2022 and will remain an issue in 2023. The PGQ and its partners in Eastern Canada are working tirelessly to secure compensation for the tariffs that were put in place in 2022 and to maintain functional, competitive access to the world's leading fertilizer exporters.

Canada was the only G7 country to bar access to farm inputs from Russia and Belarus – a move that stands in complete opposition to repeated calls from the United Nations concerning food and agriculture.

Last year was also a fretful period in terms of upholding trade agreements in the grain sector, given the added customs tariffs placed on Russian fertilizer.

Fertilizer isn't the only factor driving the jaw-dropping increase in your production costs, however. Fuel, machinery and interest rates all contribute to the upward pressure on costs. Farm input prices can be expected to increase significantly in 2023.



The Producteurs de grains du Québec (PGQ) represent the interests of about 11,000 Quebec grain farmers. In addition to liaising with farmers, the PGQ engages in monitoring, analysis, collaboration and communication with industry and government. The PGQ is responsible for acting on various economic and political levels, specifically in the following domains: market information, commerce and market development, research, technology transfer and consulting, financial protection, and risk management.





PHOTO: PATRICKLAUZON PHOTOGRAPHE/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Average farmland prices in Quebec have increased an astounding 263 per cent between 2010 and 2021, according to Statistics Canada.



Mitchell Beer
President, Smarter Shift

Land prices soaring with solutions hard to find

Nearly a century after U.S. humourist Will Rogers offered the advice: "Buy land. They ain't making any more of the stuff," farmers in Quebec and across Canada are still stuck in the same bind that gave rise to the quote: If farms feed cities, but the fundamental economics are stacked against them, how long can farmers be expected to carry that contradiction on their backs?

And how much more intense and complicated has the problem become since Rogers first commented on it, after decades of urban sprawl and a new trend toward globalization that has brought global investors into the mix?

Supply and demand? It's complicated.

It's funny how supply and demand sounds like such a simple concept, until it gets a whole lot more complicated.

As any farm operator knows, the price of farmland turns on a mix of factors – from demand for land, to interest rates, to the productivity of individual operations. A 2018 report by the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry

also pointed to environmental measures, like manure management and mandatory three-year crop rotations, to increase the amount of land farmers need to deliver the same amount of product.

But there are also bigger forces at play. As The Advocate reported last month, about half of all farmland sales in 2021 were to non-producers.

"Farmland is being lost to urban expansion in Canada every year, with much of this occurring in Ontario, Quebec, Prince Edward Island and British Columbia, where the majority of Canada's best farmland is found," Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada manager Allan Howard told the Senate committee in 2017.

That sudden whooshing you just heard was the sound of Will Rogers twirling in his grave.

The results are stark. Between 2010 and 2021, average farmland prices in Quebec skyrocketed 263 per cent, according to Statistics Canada data. They rose another 10.3 per cent in the first half of last year, the Farm Credit Corporation reported in October.

At the time, FCC senior economist J.P. Gervais pointed out that the latest increase came before the Bank of Canada

began introducing major interest rate hikes in July. But while the FCC's next data won't be out until a bit later this year, one-off news reports last fall indicated that land prices were still rising – in Canada and the United States alike.

So much for real-world economics responding to the invisible hand of the market.

Unfortunately, the impacts for farmers are all too real.

Making it work for farmers

"As the value of land goes up, the need to increase the revenue from it goes along with it," QFA executive director Brenda O'Farrell explained to CBC last March.

"For young farmers, it makes the hurdle to get into farming that much higher, because there are very few businesses that have such a high investment requirement in terms of land and machinery," she added. "In terms of established operations, it comes down to: What is the return on this land? Land can be valued at a high amount, but what kind of revenue can you make on that land?"

The question that raises is how to tilt land values in favour of keeping

farmers solvent and farms in operation, particularly when some of the measures we need to make agriculture more sustainable have the knock-on effect of driving up demand.

The Senate committee had some thoughts on what to do. It suggested a higher lifetime capital gains exemption to make it easier for new farmers to buy land, stronger protections to keep land in production when non-farm investors buy in, better land use planning and analysis, and federal-provincial cooperation "to protect and promote the use of land for agricultural purposes."

But meanwhile, in the nearly five years since the committee report, farm input costs have soared, interest rates are rising, climate-driven weather conditions are wackier – and through it all, land prices are still rising. We need some creative new thinking, and fast, to keep small and medium operators in business and hold a door open for young farmers to get into the field.

Mitchell Beer is publisher of The Energy Mix, an e-digest on climate change, energy and the shift off carbon, based in Ottawa.

Employee retention is essential for farm sustainability

Omar Sandoval, Agr.,
 Provincial FIATÉ Adviser
 and
 Catherine Larivée Bazinet, Agr.,
 Knowledge Transfer Adviser
 Lactanet

Farm sustainability is a unified whole. To be sustainable, you have to look at the long term: Will your farm overcome the challenges of time from an economic, environmental, social and animal welfare perspective? To succeed, you will need to surround yourself with the right people and the right employees. But how do you retain this workforce over the long term?

First question: What am I looking for?

Before we explore three main employee retention strategies, you need to ask yourself what type of employee you're looking for. Is it someone who comes in and performs their day-to-day tasks and returns home only to return the next day to the same routine, day after day? Or, are you looking for an active member for your work team, someone who will have a voice and be part of the company's decision-making process? The answer to this question will help you prepare your retention approach.

Proper onboarding

We often feel like we never have enough time. The onboarding of new employees can seem like a standardized step that we can get through quickly as well. We want our tasks done so that we can dedicate more energy toward the company's more strategic decisions.

In reality, the onboarding stage is crucial to employee retention. From the beginning, you must have good communication with your new employees and clearly explain your expectations, their roles and responsibilities, and always keep your door open to offer them the support they need during these first weeks of intensive learning. A personalized approach during onboarding will also save you money and time in the long term, and will help employees integrate more quickly into their role within your business.

Once your employees are onboarded, you can ask them for their opinion by means of a survey. This survey could, for example, give you an idea of their understanding of roles, responsibilities and information related to work experiences, giving you a chance to continuously improve your onboarding process.

2. Employee involvement through training

Employee continuing education remains an important aspect of their sense of belonging. They will feel that you want to invest in them and their skills – in other words, in their success. In addition, you will have a more skilled workforce that will have more and deeper knowledge and, therefore, make fewer mistakes. Training also improves work team morale, commitment and mood. Your employees will be more autonomous and will be able to identify and solve certain problematic situations on their own. Be proactive rather than reactive.

Train your employees according to the following five criteria:

- a. Assess the level of knowledge.
- b. Adjust training according to knowledge level.
- c. Plan a continuing education program tailored to your needs.
- d. Prioritize example-based, practical learning.
- e. Provide training in the employee's first language.

3. Motivation is a valuable asset

The third most important strategy is motivation. It creates a sense of belonging to your company and promotes employee commitment.

Keeping employees motivated is not that difficult. You can start by recognizing your employees. This recognition could be in the form of economic benefits (seniority benefit, performance bonus, loyalty bonus, etc.). Other ideas could include planning team outings or simply showing your employees that you care by asking them about their projects or by requesting their opinion.

Did you know that a happy employee will be 31-per-cent more productive? Think about it.

Success for you and your employees

Whether you have local employees or temporary foreign workers (TFWs), retention strategies are the same: onboarding, training and motivation. Make sure you share the good and the bad with your employees. Make sure that if you win an award or see good results, they are aware and can celebrate with you. There is nothing better than a positive, dynamic environment to keep employees around for a long time.

So, what did you decide: Do you want people who simply do their job? Or, do you want a functional, productive and motivated work team?



PHOTO COURTESY OF LACTANET

Omar helps explain the process in the worker's own language to ensure it is well understood.

Training for the onboarding and support of foreign workers

"Omar is an effective communicator. The training he provided to our foreign workers quickly made them more autonomous when milking, their main task on the farm. We need to understand them (our temporary foreign workers). They are parachuted, for six to 24 months, into a new culture, a new environment, where we do not speak their language. So, it's just normal to offer them training that allows them to be their best. It gives them confidence and it gives us confidence as well. I think it's a very profitable investment. I suggest it to all farmers."

– Myriam Côté, Ferme Jendro in Rimouski

"At our farm, we have a double-8 milking parlour and the cows are housed in sand-bedded stalls. Since 2020, we have two foreign workers from Guatemala. From the outset, we felt it was important for them to participate in dairy production training with Omar because, firstly, it was carried out in their language. So, it was easier for them to understand the production system in Canada and that of the farm [...] (e.g., SCC, animal welfare). Training promotes faster onboarding and understanding of tasks. Also, the work was more interesting for [our TFWs] afterwards. They are still talking to us about that training!"

– Mathieu Lavallée, Ferme Framala in Berthierville

A few temporary foreign worker training programs designed for the dairy sector:

- **Workplace francization program:** Agri Francisation offered by Agricarrières
- **Virtual onboarding kits:**
 - Traite pas traite, j'y vais (Milking, no milking, I'm going) and Je travaille avec un robot (I work with a robot)
 - Agricarrières, Lactanet and the PAMT (dairy production workers)
- **Milk quality and animal welfare:** Collaboration between Agropur and Lactanet
- **FIATÉ service from Lactanet:** The only customized technical dairy production training service in Quebec.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NAME

Parents needed to explain to their children why they are not making as much as other kids in school who get an allowance for much less work. The difference is the non-farming kids are not gaining equity in a business.

Calculating sweat equity – how to get it right and make it fair

Richard Kamchen
For Farm Credit Canada

How much is the sweat that you put into your parents' farm worth? And how should they pay you?

GRS Consulting's Merle Good grew up in an era when doing chores was expected. You pulled your weight, and your return was three square meals and a place to live.

But when rural life stopped being all about farming, a cultural shift occurred.

Parents needed to explain to their children why they weren't making more or as much as other kids in school who got an allowance for much less work. The difference, Good points out, is the non-farming kids weren't gaining equity in a business.

Sweat equity

Sweat equity is a form of compensation that considers that few farms have adequate cash-on-hand to fully compensate

the next generation's labours.

"It's like a deferred wage," FCC business adviser Joel Bokenfohr says in a Farm Marketer podcast. "You're earning a wage in the short-term while building equity compensation over time."

Fellow FCC business adviser Andrea De Groot explains sweat equity isn't just the labour contribution of the offspring – it's about recognizing the next generation as a business partner.

"Maybe you start in a labour position, and then you're moving to a manager position, and then, ultimately, your end goal is that you want to be a co-owner or a business partner," De Groot said.

Calculating value

Good says sweat equity goes beyond an hourly salary and considers incentives and expectations.

To ensure both sides get a fair deal requires calculating value.

Good says a value formula for labour provided by a child or teenager may

simply total cash plus cash equivalents. The latter may just be the worth of, say, using the truck.

The equity side comes into play for a returning adult offspring who may have left the farm for post-secondary education. Much more is expected as the offspring moves up the ladder from labour provider to key employee and manager.

"I want more value than just employment, and that's why I'm willing to add an equity side," Good said.

Parents seeking \$60,000 a year's worth of value out of their returning offspring might pay \$40,000 of that in cash, with the rest split in cash equivalence (like a home and food) and equity in the business.

Start early

Good recommends parents start the conversation about sweat equity with their teens.

"This is a concept that a young person has to understand early: farming is

not simply an income game. Farming is an equity game," Good said. "The sooner you can get that across to a young person, the better they'll understand your business."

It's important to set expectations early on, Bokenfohr said. He also encourages an annual review of sweat equity as part of business planning discussions.

"Being as clear as possible helps make sure those expectations match for all family members," Bokenfohr said.

Bottom line

Sweat equity is like a deferred income for farm offspring. Starting the conversation early provides a map of performance and compensation expectations for both the older and younger generations.

This article was republished with permission from Farm Credit Canada, a federal commercial Crown corporation that reports to the federal minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.



Cookin' with the Advocate

Hot Buttered Rum Mix



CYNTHIA GUNN, THE ADVOCATE

Hot Buttered Cider (pictured here), as well as Hot Buttered Rum hail from the 1600s, but still can warm you today.

INGREDIENTS

½ cup butter
 2 tbsp brown sugar
 1 tsp cinnamon
 ¼ tsp ground cloves
 ¼ tsp nutmeg
 ¼ tsp allspice
 fine zest of a small lemon – optional

PREPARATION

Soften butter and mix all ingredients thoroughly. This mixture may be kept refrigerated for at least two months. It may also be frozen.

HOT BUTTERED CIDER

Put 2 tsp of mix in a mug and add 1-2 ounces of dark rum, ½ cup heated cider and ¼ cup boiling water. Stir until butter is melted and serve immediately.

If you are making Hot Buttered Rum without cider, add 1 tbsp of mix to ⅔ cup boiling water and 1-2 ounces of dark rum.

It's old, it's storied and it's scientific: It is also a perfect drink for mid-winter

Cynthia Gunn
 QFA's Food Writer

All these years, I assumed Hot Buttered Rum was a concoction developed in the hedonism of après-ski culture. Being a B.C. baby, I was forced to ski as a child. I hated it, having inherited extremities that seemed to suck in the cold and then freeze. One of my earliest memories is of screaming my head off as mom attempted to defrost my burning feet, all the while being vaguely aware that the crowded room of skiers might think she was intentionally hurting me.

Somehow, I was also vaguely aware of the après-ski atmosphere: warm ski chalets, restaurants and bars filled with (mostly young) adults, with a Billy Joel song playing in the background. And hot pungent drinks, warming the hands that held them. That drink, I'm pretty sure from my own later experiences, was often Hot Buttered Rum. The aroma is strong, and implants itself deep in your brain.

In the drinks' cupboard at home there was always a jar with a blue label, Jamaican Hot Buttered Rum Mix. It was the 1970s, after all. It seemed a strange thing to put into a big person's drink. I thought it looked like it would be good on toast. Forty years later, watching me make what is called the batter, my own daughter had the same thought. Perhaps some child centuries ago also wondered if they could get away with snatching a spoonful?

It is likely the cocktail dates to 1655, when rum replaced brandy in the British Royal Navy's ration after the British empire captured Jamaica. Historically, rum was, of course, dependent on slavery, as was anything that originated from sugar. By the time mixologist Jerry Thomas memorialized the cocktail in written word when he published *The Bartender's Guide* in 1887, slavery had long been abolished by Britain.

Joel Lockovich, with degrees in chemistry and microbiology, a former high-end bartender, a self-professed rum nut and contributor to *Got Rum? Magazine*, seems a worthy source on the subject of cocktails. He claims that "to create savory success, the cocktail is more than just the sum of its eight individual parts. The quality of the preparation and the muddling of the initial ingredients are equally important. If not thoroughly combined, the cocktail will be nothing more than butter in a mug filled with rum."

With his scientist hat on, he adds, that the addition of a heavy (dark) rum, "which possesses significantly more esters," produces a blend that is rich in flavor and enhances the aromatic properties of the cocktail. Lockovich reminds us that colonial-era rum was not of the quality we have become used to, and the addition of spices would have also made it more palatable.

Personally, I prefer Hot Buttered Cider. The lemon zest in the recipe below is not traditional, but when used for Hot Buttered Cider adds a wonderful tart counterpoint to the sweetness. Hot Buttered Cider can also be enjoyed without the addition of rum, though it will not have quite the same aroma.

Cynthia Gunn 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.



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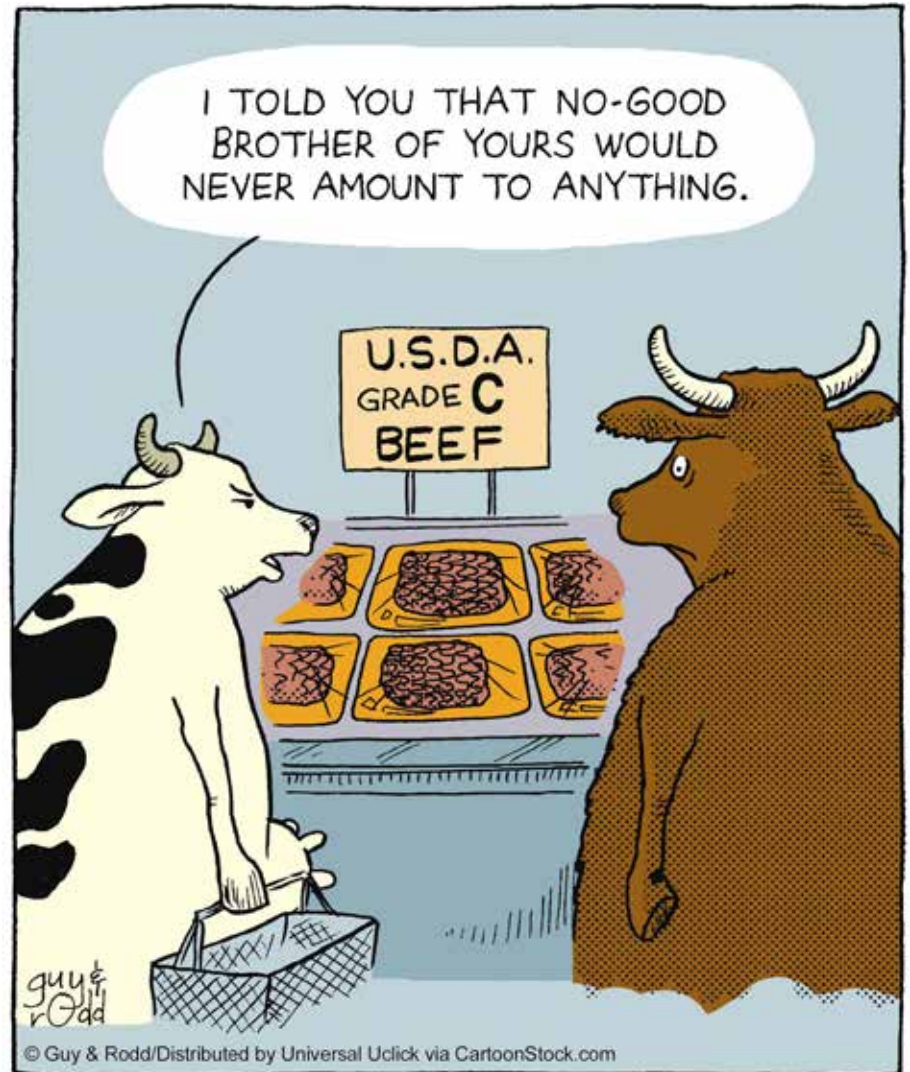
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