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"People who are the most incompetent are the least able to recognize that they are incompetent. The people who have the least reason for confidence tend to be the most overconfident."

—Psychologist Gordon Pennycook, a behavioural science researcher with Cornell University in New York and an adjunct professor with the University of Regina, who studies misinformation, fake news and their effects on decision-making



OLYMEL

Quebec's pork industry has been in crisis since the COVID-19 pandemic, forcing large suppliers like Olymel to close doors at many of its facilities.

Yamachiche pork facility to close next month

Move points to drop in demand for exports

Andrew McClelland
The Advocate

The Lucyporc cutting facility in Yamachiche just west of Trois-Rivières will close its doors for good on Nov. 17, leaving 74 workers out of work.

The announcement was made by parent company Viandes Robitaille in early October. The Lucyporc factory specialized in preparing the "Nagano" pork line – Quebec-raised-and-butchered pork designed specifically for the Japanese market. According to Viandes Robitaille plant manager Carl Robitaille, the decision to cease operations was based on currency inflation in the destination markets.

"The very difficult decision to close the plant comes from the reduction in demand for pork products for export," said Robitaille. "We just have to look at the price of the yen. The ability of the Japanese to pay a good price is more difficult."

While Viandes Robitaille said the Lucyporc facility was doing well, the age of the building – and the fact that its equipment is more than 30 years old – meant its closure was a necessary choice.

Quebec pork giant Olymel has a variety of facilities in the Trois-Rivières region, including those operated through partnerships with groups like Viandes Robitaille. Workers from the Lucyporc plant will be well-positioned to find employment at "Olymel de Yamachiche."

"From a workforce and operations perspective, Olymel de Yamachiche is able to fully serve the Japanese market with Olymel and Oly-Robi products," says Richard Vigneault, Olymel's corporate communications manager. "Oly-Robi employees from the former factory will be able, given their experience, to apply for a position in the meat sector at Olymel."

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Investing in food production is Canada's 'moonshot:' new report

Brenda O'Farrell
The Advocate

"Canada's moonshot." That is how the authors of a new report looking at the future of Canadian agriculture have described the opportunity the country has to become a global leader in food production – a sector that is gaining in importance as the world's population continues to grow at an increasing rate.

But governments in Canada have to invest more in Canadian farms, farming practices and farmers themselves, they claim.

"Canada is uniquely placed to lead: Our assets are unparalleled, but we need to do more to maximize them," states the report entitled *A New Ag Deal: A 9-Point Plan For Climate-Smart Agriculture* released Oct. 3 by Royal Bank of Canada, the BCG Centre for Canada's Future and the Arrell Food Institute at the University of Guelph.

"As a politically stable country, and a reliable supplier of safe, high-quality food, Canada has an opportunity to become the world's sustainable breadbasket," the 19-page report concludes as it lays out nine initiatives as a road map to this destination.

The 'moonshot,' if achieved, would see Canada produce 26 per cent more food by 2050 with few emissions. The increase in production is the amount estimated to be enough to maintain the country's contribution to feed the global population as it grows – while reducing emissions.

But the report also raises the alarm that if Canada fails to invest, the opportunity to be a global leader in food production will be taken by other countries, leaving Canada's agricultural sector at a disadvantage as world demand for food grows.

See MOONSHOT, Page 11
Also see Report highlights, Page 5



Just the facts

65%+

More than 65 per cent of Canada's farmers have adopted at least one practice to improve their farm's resiliency to adverse soil, water or biodiversity challenges.

Source: *A New Ag Deal: A 9-Point Plan For Climate-Smart Agriculture*, produced by Royal Bank of Canada, the BCG Centre for Canada's Future and the Arrell Food Institute at the University of Guelph

7.7%

The percentage increase of farmland values across the country, on average, in the first half of 2023.

Source: *Farm Credit Canada's mid-year land value report released in early October.*

9 billion

The number of eggs Canadian egg farmers produce each year.

Source: *Egg Farmers of Canada*

1,200

The number of egg farmers in Canada.

Source: *Egg Farmers of Canada*

123,000

The number of jobs in the agriculture sector in Canada that is projected to go unfilled by the domestic labour force by 2029.

Source: *The Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council*

LET'S TALK TURKEY



IAN GRANT, THE ADVOCATE

Wild turkeys – like this one spotted in Montérégie earlier this month – are a common sight in rural areas of the province. They usually go about their business unconcerned, although licensed hunting is permitted in May and at the end of October.



Mission

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

Vision

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

Shared Values

Members of the QFA believe in:

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555 boul. Roland Therrien, office 255
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Editor-in-Chief Brenda O'Farrell / qfa@upa.qc.ca Graphic Design and Production Zoé Lindsay Sales Director Charles Couture / ccouture@laterre.ca / 450-679-8483 ext. 7290
Sales Representatives Sylvain Joubert, Marc Mancini

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News

Maple Syrup

Mining, battery plant eroding farmland: report

Brenda O'Farrell
The Advocate

Following last month's announcement of the \$2.7-billion investment by the federal and provincial governments to help build a massive electric vehicle plant near St. Basile le Grand and McMasterville, a recent report by Radio-Canada claims concerns have been raised at how Quebec's push to attract battery tech plants could eat up valuable farmland.

According to a document obtained by the French-language media outlet, everything from graphite mines to battery factories represent what is described as just the beginning of a trend that will erode farmland, pushing it to be put to other uses, officials with the provincial Agriculture Ministry are warning.

And these concerns are being raised as the provincial government continues its year-long consultation as it prepares to overhaul the laws that govern the protection of farmland in the province.

In September, Swedish battery manufacturing giant Northvolt announced it would build a factory in St. Basile and McMasterville. It is its first battery mega-factory outside of Europe. The first phase of the project, pegged at \$7 billion, was characterized as the largest private investment in Quebec's history. It will be located on 170 hectares.

When in operation, the facility is projected to produce batteries for 1 million electric vehicles and contribute up to \$1.6 billion to the economy.

Mining requests OK'd

When it comes to mining, the provincial Agriculture Ministry is raising a warning, pointing to recent alarming statistics. According to Radio-Canada: "In Quebec, when a mining project wants to encroach on agricultural land to explore or exploit, it gets the green light every time."

The report claims that between April 1998 and March 2022, the Commission de protection du territoire agricole approved all 10 mining related requests on agricultural land it received. This put 1,780 hectares out of food production.

The CPTAQ has also approved 97 per cent of all infrastructure projects linked to transportation and hydroelectric production, representing another 2,826 hectares of farmland lost.

Ontario maple producers offered sweet deal

Andrew McClelland
The Advocate

The federal government is teaming up with the province of Ontario to offer maple syrup producers in that province an envelope of \$1 million to help increase productivity, efficiency and growth in the maple industry.

The Maple Production Improvement Initiative is aimed at boosting Ontario's maple production by covering up to 50 per cent (to a maximum of \$20,000) of costs on improvement and expansion projects. But it does not have producers in Quebec too worried, at least according to one syrup producer.

"Our government appreciates the resilience and determination of maple syrup producers throughout Ontario and how they have continued to build a solid market for their maple syrup products," said Lisa Thompson, Ontario's minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. "This investment ... will drive increased production, supporting specific growth targets."

To be eligible, Ontario producers must have had 1,000 taps in operation since April 1, 2023. The money can be used for the purchase and installation of upgraded production equipment, like reverse osmosis or remote monitoring systems, which help reduce boiling time and save on fuel costs.

Funds from the initiative can also be used to cover a portion of certain woodland management activities, including tree marking and the development of a forest plan to assist business operations.

Federal Minister of Agriculture Lawrence MacAulay was on hand for the announcement, which took place in Toronto on Sept. 26.

"Ontario's maple syrup producers continue to deliver exceptional products that are enjoyed here in Canada, and around the world," MacAulay said.

While the initiative will be administered by the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association, it has not yet been disclosed how much of the support money will be provided by the federal government and how much by its provincial counterpart.

Sizing up the competition

The Maple Production Improvement Initiative shows Ontario's ambition to capture a more significant portion of the maple syrup market. Currently,



Maple syrup lines wind through the woods in Wyebridge, Ont., north of Barrie. While Quebec produces 91 per cent of Canada's maple syrup, Ontario is the second largest producer in the country.

Canada produces 71 per cent of the world's maple syrup – and 91 per cent of that is produced in Quebec.

"Ontario has a tremendous opportunity to grow its maple syrup sector," said Randal Goodfellow, president of the Ontario Maple Syrup Producers' Association. "Whereas Ontario has the largest number of maple trees in Canada, only a very small percentage of this number is used for maple syrup production."

But some Quebec maple producers aren't that worried by the prospect of Ontario taking a larger share of the maple pie. As Morgan Arthur – who has been running his maple operation in Rockburn, Que., in the Châteauguay Valley since 1989 – explained, the forests of Ontario simply don't have the same concentration of maples as Quebec.

"Yes, they have a lot of maples," said Arthur. "But when you go there and see how spread out those trees are, you realize you'd need an awful lot of land to have a good syrup operation."

Furthermore, the price of land in Ontario maple-producing areas like Lanark and Lennox and Addington counties has skyrocketed in recent decades due to development of the growing populations of Ottawa and Toronto.

In 2012, Arthur himself expanded into

Ontario, at one point with 26,000 taps in Madawaska, just east of Algonquin Park. But he realized the venture could never be as profitable as his Quebec forests.

"I was an Ontario maple syrup producer," he said. "But, in the end, it made more sense to sell my land. And the people who had the cash to buy it were multi-multi-millionaires."

Today, Arthur's operation in Quebec boasts 26,000 taps – 19,000 owned and 7,000 leased. And while he acknowledges that Maple Production Improvement Initiative gives Ontario producers some support, it won't be enough to tip the balance in today's market.

"The fact is \$20,000 doesn't go very far in getting set up in the maple business these days. I have a neighbour who just got into production and putting in 2,200 taps cost him \$180,000."

Since the initiative is part of Ottawa's Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, which came into effect April 1, Ontario producers seeking funding can retroactively apply to have costs covered as of that date. Program applications close Nov. 9.

Eligible costs run the gamut from purchasing sap collection pumps, coolers and evaporators to generators, filters and packaging and labelling equipment.



Climate of change



Mitchell Beer
President, Smarter Shift

Early October was a busy time for reports on the farm economy, with the National Farmers' Union co-publishing an important and thoughtful report on the mental-health crisis in farming and the Royal Bank of Canada releasing a document titled *A New Ag Deal*.

It would be lovely, and very timely, to be able to tell you that this is a story of cause and effect, of problem named and problem solved. But if you're a small or medium producer on a never-ending treadmill trying to make ends meet, there's not a whole lot of hope in the deep thought emanating from Canada's biggest bank.

Naming the root cause

The mental health report, a joint production of the Saskatchewan-based National Farmers' Union and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, is titled *Looking Upstream*. Drawing on interviews and surveys with Canadian farmers and farm workers, it leaps over the surface signs of a rampaging mental-health crisis to get at the root cause.

"At the heart of the farmer mental-health crisis is pervasive economic uncertainty and precarity," the union stated in a release. Yet, "therapeutic efforts remain focused on addressing the downstream impacts of the problem and not the underlying (upstream) causes of poor farmer mental health."

In the words of some study participants:

"All of the risk of producing food is put on the farmers, while all of the protection and profits go to large corporations. It makes the hard work feel futile some days."

"Farmers are on the front lines of climate change and it's exhausting and traumatizing at times. In the B.C. context, we've experienced several years of intense pressure from wildfires, heat domes and flooding, all of which have taken an incredible toll on our farms and farmers."

Strikingly, in contrast to a mental-health profession that mostly just focuses on "fixing" individuals, the report calls for policy action to deliver:

- Better economic stability for farmers and farm workers;
- More support to help farmers make

RBC offers a 'New Ag Deal,' but who is it really for?



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One report points to the cause of deteriorating mental health of farmers is the treadmill farmers are on – to produce more, get bigger and take on more debt, while another report advocates for government policy to help farmers to produce more, get bigger and take on more debt.

- the transition to sustainable farming practices;
- Expanding the federal goals for agriculture to include food sovereignty;
- Rebuilding rural infrastructure;
- Addressing discrimination and violence in the sector;
- Making more mental-health care available to farmers.

More pressure from above

While the report was in production, the Royal Bank was hard at work on its New Ag Deal, a nine-point plan to make Canada's corporate food sector more competitive with its international peers. Those competitors "are laying the foundations for formidable climate-smart food supply chains backed by sizeable funding and bold policy measures," the bank warns. And – you can close your eyes and script the next part by rote – Canadian investments (which is to say, Canadian taxpayer subsidies) are falling behind.

The RBC report, produced with the Arrell Food Institute and Boston Consulting Group, calls for new policies that treat soil as an asset class, methane reductions as a profit opportunity, supply chains as strategic drivers, farm technology and talent as future competitive advantages, and corporate consumers as drivers of market change. And it makes some important points:

- Done right, soil carbon credits can turn regenerative practices that restore the soil and boost productivity into a new revenue stream for farmers who adopt them.
 - A database of farm climate practices would be a good step forward.
 - Early adopters of low-carbon farming techniques should receive credit for their work and their leadership (though the words "regenerative" and "sustainable" are curiously absent from this recommendation).
 - Procurement is indeed a powerful, essential tool to reshape markets and deliver faster, deeper carbon cuts.
- But Darrin Qualman, the National Farmers' Union's director of climate crisis policy and action, sees a lot to worry about in an analysis that promises big things, with its allusion to transformative policies like the Green New Deal. The problems begin with what he casts as the RBC's "ominous" language for monetizing soil carbon capture.

"It's very ill-conceived," Qualman said. "Soil is a lot of things, but it should probably never be an asset class. It should not be financialized based on market forces or the ability to capture profit."

And the approach to methane capture relies on biodigesters that have been in development for 40 or 50 years, have seen only limited deployment, are

too expensive for most farms to afford (hence, the call for public subsidies), and aren't as useful for smaller, more distributed operations.

"What the report looks like it's designed to do is to manage the numbers around emissions so that some of the largest corporations in the chain can make their emissions go away," enabling mega-operations like Maple Leaf Foods to "tell their investors they're reducing their emissions to net-zero," Qualman warned.

All of which does exactly nothing to relieve the day-to-day pressure on farmers.

"That pressure comes from income shortfall, for sure, and it also comes from climate impacts," he said.

And "the other thing that creates pressure is just this treadmill farmers are on to produce more each year, get bigger and bigger each year, and take on debt."

Yet, the RBC report "seems to be completely compatible with the increasing size and growth of farm units and exponential growth in farm debt, which is a huge issue that you would think banks might want to deal with."

Mitchell Beer is president of Smarter Shift in Ottawa and curator of The Energy Mix, a thrice-weekly e-digest on climate change, energy, and the low-carbon transition.

Here is what New Ag Deal report recommends

Brenda O'Farrell
The Advocate

A report released earlier this month that looked at the prospects for Canada's agricultural sector outlined nine policy initiatives to increase Canada's food production while reducing the industry's carbon emissions.

The report, entitled *A New Ag Deal: A 9-Point Plan For Climate-Smart Agriculture* and produced by the Royal Bank of Canada, the BCG Centre for Canada's Future and the Arrell Food Institute at the University of Guelph, described this challenge as "Canada's moonshot," which would put the country on a trajectory to being a world leader.

Here is an overview of the nine policy recommendations that focus on five areas: soil, methane, fertilizers, talent and technology, and consumers.

Soil as an asset class

As thousands of farmers across the country saw the opportunity to increase their revenues by capturing carbon in their land, their enthusiasm about the prospects of the carbon market has waned. As the report states, pilot projects have been unsuccessful and guidelines to access are unclear.

1. Build Standards to Support Carbon Markets

The authors cite measures that say farmland in Canada can sequester between 35 to 38 mega-tonnes of carbon by 2050, an amount equivalent to about 40-45 per cent of the current emissions from the oilsands. With a carbon market estimated to be valued at \$4 billion by that time, farmers could see their slice of it ranging from tens of thousands of dollars for some operators to more than a \$1 million for larger operations. But it all needs to be measured.

To do this, the authors suggest:

2. Create a Climate-Smart Database to Help Farmers

An extensive data pool is the key to measuring the progress of climate practices, the authors state, adding that many soil maps have not been updated since the 1950s.

A government-funded database would provide real-time economic information for producers, experts and decision-makers.

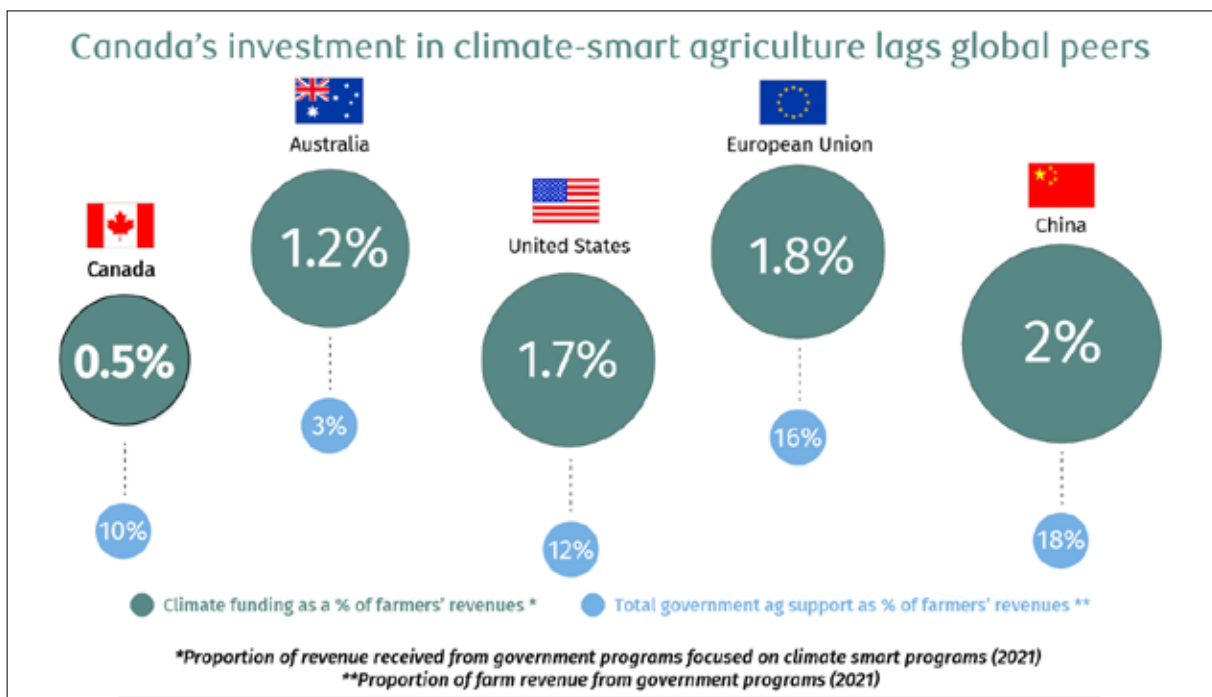
3. Develop a Fair System that Ensures Market Equity

The study stresses that although it is important to incentivize farmers' future behaviour, farmers who have been the earlier adopters of climate-smart practices should also benefit and be rewarded. Failing to do so could bring unintended consequences.

The study suggests farmers who have been the first to implement regenerative practices that were perhaps not adequately measured could benefit from expanding capital gains exemptions for qualifying farmland. Methods exist to "back cast" to estimate past changes in soil-bound carbon over several years.

Methane as a growth opportunity

Agriculture is responsible for an estimated 31 per cent of the methane emission in Canada, with 86 per cent of that stemming from ruminant animals digestive process and the remaining 14 per cent from manure. But manure can also be a source of renewable natural gas, the report's authors claim.



4. Promote Ways to Make Methane Cuts Profitable

Technology and tools to deal with methane exist, the report points out. The focus now needs to shift to how to make the process of mitigating its effects profitable. One way is to "incentivize utilities to purchase renewable natural gas from digesters" and support the construction of digesters.

Fertilizer supply chains as strategic drivers

5. Strengthen Canada's Domestic Fertilizer Portfolio
Beyond focusing on revenues, farmers need to ensure the supply of fertilizers and agriculture solutions are affordable and accessible.

While Canada is the largest producer of potash, it is dependent on other countries for nitrogen and phosphorus.

Prior to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Canadian farmers sourced 85 per cent of nitrogen fertilizer from Russia. Tariffs imposed following the outbreak of war has dramatically increased the price of that commodity.

Building in-Canada agricultural value chains by promoting the use of biological products can be one solution. By blending them with traditional fertilizers, they can help build healthier soils.

"Canada is in a unique position to lead in this space," the report stated, "given the raw resources required to create these solutions are found in rural regions."

Technology and Talent as Competitive Advantages

The labour shortage on farms extends further than merely needing workers during harvest periods. Farmers need access to experts and advisers. They need to collect data and integrate new technologies.

6. Nurture an innovation-driven ag sector

The report's authors call for support of tech-savvy Canadian agricultural companies. Research and development dollars for "a thriving carbon market and growth of big data analytics." It is an area that Canada finds itself falling behind compared with other global peers.

The report claims in 2021, more than US\$6.9 billion in venture capital funding went to American ag-tech companies, while only US\$270 million found its way to Canadian ag-tech firms.

7. Revive Canada's knowledge-sharing network

A once active network of agriculture experts associated with universities across the country that in years past provided farmers with guidance and advice has frayed, in many instances, due to a rollback in funding. This same type of network in the United States, according to the report, has been bolstered.

This is an area where provincial involvement would benefit, where experts can provide on-farm demonstrations to encourage the adoption of new management practices and innovations.

8. Boost investment in post-secondary education

Research shows that Canada's agricultural sector is on the threshold of its biggest labour and leadership shifts. "Current immigration policies that fast-track skilled farmers and on-farm labourers should continue to expand to meet this challenge," the report states.

To meet this goal, agricultural colleges and universities should continue creating programs that welcome students from different educational backgrounds and faculties to create programs that increase students' exposure to agriculture.

These institutions should create carbon management programs and invite students from different faculties "to understand how greenhouse gas emissions are tracked, ways to create corporate objectives to decrease emissions and effective methods to monitor progress."

In addition, to bridge labour gaps, governments should eliminate barriers to foreign credentials for professionals like veterinarians.

Consumers as Drivers of Market Change

9. Influence purchasing patterns through procurement:

The federal government must lead by example. That means it should align its procurement policies with climate-smart farming practices to achieve its net zero emission commitments.



John McCart
QFA President

I had the privilege of attending the North America, European Union Agricultural Conference in Charlottetown in September. I joined more than 260 delegates representing farm organization from across Canada, the U.S., Mexico and Europe for this event hosted by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture.

I was able to meet and talk with farmers from various parts of Canada and the States, Mexico, Northern Ireland, Spain, Belgium, Lithuania, Finland, Austria and Denmark.

The event hosted five panel discussions over two days, featuring representatives from a wide range of organizations. Each present their experiences and perspectives to the broad international audience helped by a fantastic team of translators.

Similar problems

One of the big take-aways was how farmers from very different areas of the world – areas that are very different from our own – all share many of the same concerns as we do in Quebec and Canada. This, in one way, seems amazing, yet is not necessarily surprising.

The conference's first panel focused on current global challenges. Farmers just about everywhere are being asked to do the same thing – produce, protect, reduce and restore. To do so, government policies must be based on science and not politics.

Among the challenges are the growing demand for food by the increasing global population, less arable land and climate change. While this is happening, however, many politicians are neglecting the science, while social media inflates the problems.

An example of this is how Europe is forced to reduce production at a time when it needs to increase its food output.

Questions posed focused on whether technology can help producers keep up with global food demand. Can farmers better use technology? There is a need for all countries to work together and pool their resources.

Two of the largest challenges facing farmers were exposed in the last three years. One is the vulnerability of the supply chain, an issue that was laid bare during the COVID-19 pandemic.

All farmers have the same challenges



PHOTO JOHN MCCART

While attending an international farming conference in Prince Edward Island in September, and talking to farmers from across Europe and North America, it was apparent that producers all share many of the same concerns.

The other is the impact of the war in Ukraine on the global food supply.

Global markets

The panel discussing agriculture and trade offered insights into the global export markets. It was noted that trade deals are good for all sides. The capacity to move food freely across borders is essential, as disease and calamity have no borders. One country should not suffer at the hands of another when it comes to the supply of food. Again, technology, or the access to technology, will improve a country's ability to produce safer food at a reasonable price.

Another panel focused on sustainability and innovation. Everywhere in Europe and North America, as here in Quebec, protecting the environment while producing food is taken very seriously. Consumers expect that the food they purchase is grown with the greatest measures to protect water courses, lakes and ground water. Animals raised for eggs, milk and meat must meet the growing list of standards for animal welfare. Through the advances in science and technology, the goals are continuously being improved.

Consumer trends

Responding to market and consumer trends was another topic addressed. Clearly, education is missing for the majority of consumers.

Governments used to talk to farmers before making policy. Now, they just react to the misinformed public.

Many farming organizations are expanding their outreach to include some sort of public education. They are hosting open-house events, like Les Portes Ouverts here in Quebec. It must be noted that the organic movement, while its intentions are good, is so far not sustainable. Organic food is actually more expensive to produce. As inputs like fertilizers and pesticides are reduced, so is the level of production, therefore, it actually takes 10- to 20-per-cent more land to produce food that way.

The conference also focused on food security and resilience in agricultural systems. One speaker noted that on average, world stockpiles of food would only last eight to 12 weeks, suggesting that we could be one calamity away from a major food crisis.

All countries must build their food stockpiles. This is a big challenge in

the face of having to contend with the unpredictable conditions and effects of climate change.

In European countries, like in North America, pressure to build more is taking more and more farmland out of production.

At the end of the conference I realized that all farmers share the same problems. People need to eat three times a day, and consumers must know more about where the food comes from. As a society, we must do more to protect our resources, and that includes the practice of farming.

Through science and technology we now produce more food per acre than ever before, while only using the inputs that are absolutely necessary. The costs, however, are still high. Farmers cannot afford to waste anything and consumers cannot afford to pay more.

As Christiane Lambert, the president of the Comité des Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles, one of two large farmers' organizations in Europe, said in her closing remarks, farmers produce food, feed, fuel and fibre. A solution must be found so that everybody wins.

Interest rate hikes not slowing upward price pressure on farmland

Price hikes in Quebec outpacing national average

Brenda O'Farrell
The Advocate

Despite higher interest rates, the price of farmland in Canada continued to rise in the first half of 2023, with prices in Quebec outpacing the national average.

In fact, the value of agricultural land in Quebec outpaced all areas of the country except Saskatchewan, according to figures released by Farm Credit Canada in early October.

Prices in Quebec increased by 10.6 per cent from January to June this year, while they jumped 11.4 per cent in Saskatchewan, FCC figures show.

The national average was 7.7 per cent.

Increases were lower in Ontario and Manitoba, where values jumped by 6.9 and 6.4 per cent, respectively.

Limited availability of land is said to be the main factor that continued to push prices higher, according to the FCC, even in a higher interest rate environment.

These latest increase continues the trend of ever-increasing farmland prices across the country. Last year, farmland values in Quebec jumped 11 per cent,

slightly below the national average hike of 12.8 per cent.

The value of agricultural land has seen consistent year-over-year increases for the last 37 years, with the most pronounced hikes recorded from 2011 to 2015.

Larger farmers more likely to buy

A survey of Canadian farmers conducted by RealAgristudies in July showed that 17 per cent of farmers in the country said they had or were intending to buy land in the current year. Some 59 per cent they had no intention of buying land, while 25 per cent said they were undecided.

The survey results also found that younger farmers or those who operated larger farms were the ones more likely to purchase land. According to the results, 44 per cent of the largest farms expressed an intent to buy land, while only 6 per cent of the smallest farm operators said purchases were likely.

RealAgristudies, however, did not disclose how many farmers participated in the survey.

FARM BABE IN ORMSTOWN



QFA ADVOCATE

Michelle Miller, known also as Farm Babe, met up with farmers in Ormstown in the Châteauguay Valley on Sept. 29. The popular keynote speaker and online influencer provide a presentation that touched on modern farming, food facts and discussed some of the myths that consumers have when it comes to agriculture. Here, she met QFA president John McCart (left), maple syrup producer Morgan Arthur and Elgin Macfarlane after her presentation that was hosted by the Livestock Breeders Association of the District of Beauharnois.

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Quebec Farmers' Association
Information Day and
Annual General Meeting

'The future of agriculture in Canada'

Friday, Nov. 17, 2023, 9:30 a.m.

At the Centennial Centre Ballroom, Macdonald Campus,
McGill University, Ste. Anne de Bellevue

Featuring presentation to
Warren Grapes Fund scholarship winners.

For more information, email your questions to: qfa@upa.qc.ca



**WARREN
GRAPES
AWARD
WINNERS**

NOVEMBER 17
**ANNUAL
GENERAL
MEETING**



Trends in agriculture



ALEXKICH/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

On Nov. 5, Daylight Savings Time will come to an end, giving us all a 25-hour day. Let's use that "extra time" to reflect on what is going on in our world.



Chris Judd
The Advocate

Maybe what the world needs right now is an extra hour every day. It would give mankind time to reflect on what's going on.

There seems to be too many people who think that they, their religion, their culture or their language are superior to others.

This is not new. It has been happening throughout history. Remember Henry VIII? When he became disenchanted with his wife, he either divorced her or had her beheaded.

And then there was the Ku Klux Klan. They claimed to be Christian and attended church regularly, but they did not attend the same churches as the Blacks.

Then there were some of our ancestors who burned witches at the stake. Although both Puritans and Quakers believed in a God, they burned hundreds – mostly women – at the stake both in Europe and America.

Things change slowly

Although we have become more civilized, it is only a few years ago that

What if we had 25 hours a day?

women in Quebec won the right to vote. I can remember vividly when the first lady was elected the president of a Quebec farm organization. Even today, many women are still paid less than their male counterparts.

It is only during the last few years that we have finally witnessed some of our churches and governments begin to admit to atrocities against native peoples of North America.

Even in Canada, a country that has been declared to be the most desirable country in the world to move to, we see some governments declare some languages inferior to others, some people not allowed to express their chosen religion or even work while wearing religious clothing.

Intolerance is everywhere. When we turn on the TV, we are bombarded with images of wars where thousands of innocent civilians, women and children are killed – even in hospitals! Blockades of the basics of life, like food and water, are being used as weapons of war.

We are fortunate

We are lucky to live in a part of the world where we have people from dozens of different cultures. They speak many different languages, practice many different religions and have a dozen different skin tones. We have

learned to adopt different languages, enjoy different foods, cultures and music. Maybe it's the beautiful place where we live. Or maybe, it's because we want to get along.

Maybe we do need more time every day to reflect on all that is going on.

Daylight Saving Time was created to help farmers

In the spring of 1918, Canada introduced Daylight Savings Time. Canadian farmers were asked to produce more food to help feed Europe because the First World War had disrupted food production there. By moving the clock ahead in the spring when cropping was getting under way, farmers could get up earlier and plant more wheat, milk a few more cows, feed a few more pigs. It gave them more time – more daylight time.

Once the crops were harvested in the fall, the clocks were moved back an hour, returning to standard time.

Today, it just gives most people an extra hour to rest.

Farm animals are the most affected. They don't have a digital alarm clock. Instead, their built-in clock works with the sun. If the farmer isn't in the barn at milking time, which the cow calculates herself, then she is very upset and often is quite vocal about it. Animals

are used to being fed at the exact same time every day. Many animal farmers switch time gradually over a week to give the animals a few days to adjust to the time change.

What to do with the extra time

What would the rest of us do if we had an extra hour every day?

Maybe we would use it to think about what is wrong with our world. Why can't we accept that not all people speak the same language, practice the same religion, come in different colours, practice different cultures, some are male and some are female? Could we forgive more easily and enjoy our differences?

Maybe we should take an extra hour to talk to one another more and get to know our neighbours instead of complaining about them at local council meetings or paying a lawyer to send a letter. Most of the mental stress we suffer from is started by not spending time talking to friends or friends that you haven't met yet!

This year, we will get a 25th hour on Nov. 5, when Daylight Savings Time comes to an end. The day falls just before Nov. 11, which is another day to do some deep thinking. Take the time.

Feds aimed to help dairy processors and farmers

Latest compensation package to offsets losses from big trade agreements

Andrew McClelland
The Advocate

The Canadian government will pay out \$333 million over the next 10 years to dairy processors and producers to offset market losses resulting from international trade deals.

Newly re-appointed federal minister of agriculture Lawrence MacAulay announced late last month the creation of the Dairy Innovation and Investment Fund, a compensation package designed to “help the Canadian dairy sector adapt to new market realities.”

Through the fund, for-profit dairy organizations can apply for financial support for a whole host of activities, from purchasing new equipment to constructing new facilities.

“This fund will help the sector manage the growing surplus of solids non-fat, create more opportunities for dairy processors and farmers, and build a more sustainable dairy sector,” said MacAulay at a press conference held in St. Hyacinthe on Sept. 29.

Canada is facing a growing surplus of “solids non-fat” (SNF), the remaining component once cow’s milk is processed. The fat is removed for use in products like butter and cream. Canada’s limited processing capacity for SNF has meant that dairy processors and farmers are losing out on turning the component into a money-maker.

The new fund will be managed by the Canadian Dairy Commission on behalf of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

“The Canadian Dairy Commission is committed to addressing the challenge of structural surplus of solids non-fat,” said Gaspé-based dairy producer and CDC chair Jennifer Hayes. “By supporting innovation and investments into medium to large-scale projects to add value to SNF, the Dairy Innovation and Investment Fund will help improve the competitiveness and sustainability of the Canadian dairy sector.”

The federal government hopes the injection of \$333 million into the dairy industry will help operations take on large-scale projects that will “modernize, replace and/or increase processing capacity for SNF and minimize skim milk that is not marketed.”

“The dairy sector is an integral part of Canada’s economy and rural landscape, supporting strong and vibrant



AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD CANADA

Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Lawrence MacAulay announced the creation of a fund to inject \$333 million into Canada’s dairy production and processing sectors in St. Hyacinthe last month.

communities across the country,” said Francis Drouin, MacAulay’s parliamentary secretary. “This new fund will drive innovation and increase processing capacity, enabling the sector to stay competitive by maximizing the full value of solids non-fat.”

Trade losses

The launch of the Dairy Innovation and Investment Fund comes hot on the heels of Canada losing a dairy dispute with New Zealand.

Both countries are signees of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). Eighteen months ago, New Zealand filed a complaint with the agreement’s arbitration panel claiming that Canada was not allowing access to its dairy exporters. Just last month, the panel ruled in favour of New Zealand.

The fund also builds on the compensation packages announced by then-minister of agriculture Marie-Claire Bibeau in November 2020, intended to support dairy, poultry and egg producers after those supply-managed sectors

lost certain protections in the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement.

“We will always stand up for the supply management system and we have delivered on our commitment to compensate our hard-working producers and processors who have been impacted by recent trade agreements,” said MacAulay last month.

Dairy industry satisfied

Nonetheless, the Dairy Innovation and Investment Fund was welcomed by representatives from Canada’s dairy industry, with the Dairy Farmers of Canada stating that it “is pleased to see the federal government honouring its commitment” to compensate dairy producers after trade agreement losses.

“These investments will not only benefit the dairy industry, but, ultimately, the entire Canadian economy,” said Phil J. Vanderpol of the Dairy Processors Association of Canada.

Applications to the fund are being accepted until Nov. 3, and costs are retroactive to Nov. 17, 2022. Only dairy products made from cow’s milk are

eligible at this time.

The program will support eligible costs of capital assets and contracted services, including:

- removing and disposing of existing equipment
 - purchasing, shipping, installing and commissioning of new equipment, software and production lines
 - installation of new, or expansion of existing, milk reception and milk storage areas as required to meet the objectives of the project
 - retrofits/renovations of existing facilities related to the installation and operation of eligible equipment
 - construction of a new facility
 - training necessary to operate eligible equipment, and
 - translation of materials related to training on the new equipment
- Costs related to the purchase of land or research and development are not eligible.

To apply, visit: cdc-ccl.ca/en/dairy-innovation-and-investment-fund-what-program-offers



ELECTRICAUTONOMY.CA

Radio-Canada claims that 70 hectares of farmland could be used for the planned Northvolt battery plant in St. Basile le Grand and McMasterville.



Martin Caron
UPA President

Batteries are nice – but eating is essential

On Sept. 28, the Swedish firm Northvolt revealed its choice of location to build its battery plant: St. Basile le Grand and McMasterville in Montérégie. The multi-billion-dollar project – funded in large part with public money – was billed as the largest private investment in Quebec's history. Together with previously announced projects, this brings the total the new sector has received from both levels of government to \$8.5 billion.

The battery sector, often referred to as the “sector of the future,” promises a profusion of benefits to society, we are told, including decarbonizing the economy and electrifying transportation. So it's rather surprising that the project has deliberately dodged a review by the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement (BAPE). As one prominent environmentalist put it recently, “all we ask is to be persuaded.”

In February, the Quebec government quietly raised the threshold for cathode manufacturing that would make a BAPE review mandatory. This

threshold jumped to 60,000 tonnes, up from 50,000; the future plant will produce 56,000 tonnes. One could certainly be forgiven for thinking that a move as “specific” as this, seemingly designed to prevent a “specific” project from being subject to review by the BAPE, clearly constitutes a “specific” reason to conduct a review in the first place.

Farmland always being sacrificed

From an agricultural perspective, the launch of the battery sector is not off to a good start in Quebec.

Take, for instance, the growing number of wind projects in Centre-du-Québec, Estrie and points beyond in response to Hydro-Québec's call for tenders. These projects pose a direct threat to the agricultural zone (also known as the green zone), which can be seen from the wave of developers already at work in the field.

And in its second phase of the current Quebec-wide consultation on farmland and farming activities, the provincial Agriculture Ministry itself even predicts a significant increase in non-agricultural encroachment on the green zone from this sector (including

mega-plants and companies, electricity production and transport, and mineral needs). This is certainly cause for concern.

It is worth pointing out that the land purchased by Northvolt for the first phase of the project is surrounded by farmland, that additional infrastructure will most likely be required and that Pierre Fitzgibbon, the minister of Economy and Innovation, has stated on more than one occasion that a second phase of the project could raise zoning issues. According to Radio-Canada, about 70 hectares of farmland may be at stake.

Furthermore, the creation of thousands of jobs in the area will also trigger many housing starts. All those workers and their families have to live somewhere, after all, and we are in the middle of a housing crisis. Housing starts will create added pressure in terms of infrastructure, road construction, schools, stores, etc., putting the agricultural zone doubly at risk.

Conflicting priorities?

Premier François Legault has stated that the battery sector could receive a further \$15 billion in new investment

in the next year. Meanwhile, feeding its people is a priority for Quebec, right up there with the government's other aims (including decarbonization).

With World Food Day having been marked in October, we note that nearly 670,000 of the province's residents visit food banks each month. The agriculture sector could certainly do more to help fight this problem. But the support needed from both levels of government, especially in comparison to the US\$22.6 billion provided to the American agriculture sector under the 2022 *Inflation Reduction Act*, is simply not there.

All else being equal, we should be supporting agriculture as enthusiastically as we support the battery sector, in terms of both the agricultural zone and farming activities. We know it is entirely possible to achieve economic development and urbanization while protecting farmland from sprawl. That's why it's imperative that we prevent serious and irreparable damage to Quebec's food heritage and renew our commitment to protecting where our food comes from. Batteries are nice. But eating is essential.

PORK: Latest closure comes as Olymel plant set to shut in December

From Page 1

Included in that group are approximately 50 temporary foreign workers, some of whom have been in the country for a little over a year and are still in training.

Troubled times

The Lucyporc factory has shifted operations and parent companies a few times in recent years. In 2015, the facility merged operations with provincial pork giant, Olymel. In 2019, all employees were transferred to the nearby "Atrahan Transformation" processor. Then, in October 2021, Viandes Robitaille formed a partnership with Olymel, resulting in the reopening of the Lucyporc building.

The Lucyporc closure follows the announcement in July of another Olymel factory in Vallée-Jonction, in the Beauce region. That plant is scheduled to close on Dec. 22. In that case, an additional 50 foreign workers will be transferred from Beauce to Yamachiche, more than 200 kilometres away.

"What we want is for these workers to rediscover the pleasure of working with us, but in another region," said Olymel vice-president Paul Beauchamp.

The many plant closures and workforce transfers point to the global pork crisis resulting from the lingering



The Lucyporc pork processing plant operated by Viandes Robitaille in Yamachiche will close Nov. 17, eliminating 74 jobs, the company announced in early October.

effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, rising input costs and a drop in demand. Olymel claims it has lost \$400 million in the past two years alone.

In February, the company also announced the closure of processing

plants in Blainville and Laval. And in November, it announced the closure of a factory on St. Jacques Street in St. Hyacinthe. Olymel has remaining facilities in Yamachiche, in Ange-Gardien (Montérégie region), and

St. Esprit, in Lanaudière.

While Viandes Robitaille's Lucyporc building will close Nov. 17, the slaughterhouse in Yamachiche will remain open.

MOONSHOT: Canadian governments have to match other countries' investments

From Page 1

"Canada is already falling behind," the report states. "The agriculture sectors in the U.S., EU, Australia and China get roughly three times the climate funding that Canada provides to its industry. Yet, the expectations placed on our farmers are growing: to produce more (in increasingly adverse weather conditions), to cut emissions and to help boost global food security."

The report continues: "The world's top food producers are on the move. Making sustainable agriculture a strategic priority, Canada's peers are laying the foundations for formidable climate-smart food supply chains backed by sizeable funding and bold policy measures.

"The sector risks falling behind if Canadian governments don't match their competitors in supporting producers with the funding and policy tools to grow more food with fewer emissions."

The authors urge governments to act – and quickly.

"Ottawa and the provinces will need to transform their approach to agriculture policy to protect a sector that accounts for 7 per cent of national GDP — with huge potential for further growth."

Currently, Canada lags behind other countries in funding for the agricultural sector. For example, the report points out, the U.S. provides US\$19.5 billion in incentives and tax credits to support ag-tech and other measures to the farming sector through its recently adopted Inflation Reduction Act. And the pending US\$1.5 trillion Farm Bill could catapult the United States' advantage in the economic sphere.

At the same time, China is investing US\$7 billion to revitalize its farmland, while the European Union has earmarked US\$224 billion for what it has identified as "climate-relevant initiatives" that will be rolled out between now and 2027.

The report highlights Canada's strengths in the sector, too.

"Canada is already a vital contributor to global food security and has a head start in climate-smart farming. Canada is already a top food exporter, with a food system ranking among the highest in sustainability, according to the Food Sustainability Index."

It also points to how more than 65 per cent of Canadian farmers have adopted at least one practice to improve their farms' resiliency to soil, water and biodiversity challenges.

"Now is the time for Canadian governments to build on our farmers' successes," the report concludes. "Canadian governments have an opportunity to step up their commitments and create a robust policy environment that recognizes the sector's economic potential, its global role as a reliable food exporter and as a climate-smart leader. This is Canada's moment."



New season of QFA video-conferences!

The Quebec Farmers Association's "Farm Food Forum" videoconferences have been bringing entertaining and informative talks on important farm topics for more than six years.

The best place to learn about when these new videoconferences will be held is on our ever-active and growing Facebook group.

You can find it at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/306871089363565>

Do you have a topic you'd like to see discussed in our Zoom meetings? Or a presenter you think would be perfect for QFA videoconferences? Write to qfa_advocate@yahoo.ca and tell us!

Join the group on Facebook today and take part in the discussion.



2023 WARREN GRAPES SCHOLARSHIPS

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Every year, the Quebec Farmers' Association receives donations from members and non-members who see merit in supporting agricultural education through the Warren Grapes Agricultural Education Fund.

How to apply:

Students must submit their applications by email to qfa@upa.qc.ca.

Deadline: Monday, October 30, at midnight.

Information required:

Each applicant to be considered must include:

- The student's full name
- The student's home address
- The student's phone number, preferably a cell number
- The student's email address
- Indication of what year and program of study they are registered in
- A 600-800-word essay outlining the applicant's background, but focusing on his or her plans for the future. The essay should answer the questions: What does the applicant plan to do upon completion of their agricultural studies? What type of career in agriculture will they pursue? How has what they learned and the knowledge they have picked up on the family farm, if applicable, contributed to shaping their plans for the future? How important is agriculture? And, how do they see themselves being part of the industry.
- Be specific. Pay attention to grammar and punctuation.

Background:

Created in 1998 to promote agriculture education within the province's English-speaking community, the fund is named in honour of Warren Grapes who served as QFA president for many years before his death in 1994. He was a farmer in the Eastern Townships. He attended Macdonald College and taught an agricultural course at Champlain Regional College in Lennoxville. Since its inception, more than 135 scholarships have been awarded to individuals pursuing secondary and post-secondary studies in recognized agriculture and silviculture programs to help them cover the costs of these studies.



Leaving fossil fuels behind

Organic vegetable coop converted farm's fleet of machinery to electric

Andrew McClelland
The Advocate

Reid Allaway describes himself as an “inveterate tinkerer who just can’t leave tools alone.”

But describing the work he has done in converting gas- and diesel-powered farm machinery to electric as “tinkering” is definitely an understatement.

“When you convert most farm machinery to electric, the degree of performance improvement that you see with an electric drivetrain is so worthwhile,” said Allaway. “I’m slowly working my way through converting everything on our farm.”

That’s a big task considering Allaway is a founding member of La Ferme Coopérative Tourne-Sol, a 15-employee organic vegetable operation in Les Cèdres, approximately 60 kilometres west of Montreal. Tourne-Sol produces a variety of fruits and vegetables on 17 acres of land, sells a whopping 550 subscription baskets of produce every week, and also sells certified organic vegetable seed, herb seed and flour across Canada.

From the start, Tourne-Sol founded its production on the principles of agro-ecology and creating a viable food system. And Allaway quickly saw that burning fossil fuels for day-to-day tasks around the farm wasn’t the best choice for staying true to those principles.

“A lot of what we do as farmers is just moving stuff around,” Allaway explained during a QFA Farm Forum videoconference held on Sept. 20. “If you pull a trailer with a 50-horsepower diesel tractor, like we used to on our farm, that tractor is really only being used to five per cent of its capacity. And if you start it and stop it 60 times during the day, it hates you.”

Allaway realized that there was a better, more environmentally-friendly technology that could do the same thing: electric vehicles.

“But if you do the same thing with an electric utility vehicle, that’s what it was born for. As soon as you stop, it drops to zero power output.”

Tourne-Sol was started in 2004. But, as Allaway explained, it took a few years before reliable parts – batteries in particular – turned up at scrapyards to give him the chance of making his electric conversions a reality.

“It wasn’t until the very first electric automobiles came on the market circa 2010, with the Chevy Volt and the



PHOTO COURTESY OF REID ALLAWAY

Reid Allaway believes electric vehicles are better for the farm than their gas-burning equivalents. As a member of Coopérative Tourne-Sol in Les Cèdres, he’s converted dozens of machines to electric.

Nissan LEAF being sold in significant numbers in Canada, that periodically one of them would hit a tree or slide off the road in the winter and you could get parts,” Allaway said.

That’s when he began calling local scrapyards, searching for lithium-ion batteries for their light weight and high energy efficiency.

“The scrapyards didn’t know what they had,” he said. “Sometimes, they’d sell you a battery for \$500. Sometimes, they’d ask for \$5,000. And sometimes, they’d say, ‘I can’t sell you that – it’s against the rules!’”

In 2018, Allaway rebuilt a small utility vehicle at Tourne-Sol. It was already electric, but Reid did a full overhaul, rebuilt the drive motor and rewired the whole thing.

A year later, he converted a BCS walk-behind tractor from gas to electric, only the second time such a conversion had been done in North America. Its performance convinced him that electric was the way to go with farm machinery.

“The BCS has removable battery packs and a golf-cart-sized motor,” he said. “The performance really surpasses its gas-powered equivalent with any of the seven implements we’ve acquired for it.”

Since then, the number of projects he has undertaken with friends and fellow-tinkerers is mind-boggling. An old

PTO-powered wood splitter converted to work with an AC-induction motor; converting a defunct small tractor to electric for weeding; even adapting chainsaws to run on battery packs – Allaway has done them all, as a quick visit to his YouTube channel shows.

With Tourne-Sol delivering so many vegetable baskets over the years, he hit upon the idea of converting their main delivery vehicle to electric. The farm’s Ford E450 cube van was an ideal size for deliveries, but the co-op wanted to deliver its products in a way that produced zero emissions.

“The cost of converting an E450 was substantial,” Allaway explained. “But I found a company in Varennes that has this whole bolt-in drivetrain-and-battery kit that actually fits Ford trucks. They’re not in the business of converting one-offs, but I went and convinced them to do one for us.”

That’s how Tourne-Sol’s “Elec-truck Conversion Campaign” was started, a two-year odyssey that resulted in the farm now having its very-own customized electric cube van. Faced with hefty costs to make their dream come true, farm employees came up with a novel idea: Why not ask their basket subscribers and members to donate through a crowdfunding campaign?

“There’s a certain logic to

crowdfunding that really works for a farm like ours,” Allaway said. “You’re asking people to take part in what your farm is about. They want to support you and what you’re doing differently. And, ultimately, it’s about relationship-building with your clients.”

And clients and other supporters answered the call. In total, \$23,425 was raised through donations.

“This is our second year that we’re wrapping up where we can deliver three tonnes of vegetables twice a week and we don’t even own a diesel truck,” he said.

“This is the only road-going vehicle that the farm owns – so Tourne-Sol doesn’t even have a fuel-burning truck anymore.”

And that’s the way Reid would like the farm to operate, moving away from large, fossil-fuel burning equipment. While he admits the industry, time and money may be roadblocks towards that goal, he’s confident the day will come.

“It’ll take a long time before the last gas and diesel engine is gone. But none of them really deserve to stay because there’s a better machine waiting to replace each of them.”

To see dozens of Reid Allaway’s conversions, check out his YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/@reidallaway



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.

We are counting on your support. Show your pride in being part of Quebec's English-speaking community. **It only cost \$68.99.**

As soon as we receive your cheque, we will send you:

- ▶ Your **membership card**
- ▶ A **10% card** to use on all purchases at **L'Equipeur (Mark's Work Warehouse)** throughout the year
- ▶ A letter explaining the benefits of being a member

Membership Application

Last name First name.....
 Address Phone.....
 Fax E-mail.....

PRICE

Agricultural or forestry producer, rural resident or retired farmer:
 1 year \$68.99 [\$60 + \$3 GST (5%) + \$5.99 TVQ (9.975%)]
 2 years \$137.97 [\$120 + \$6 GST (5%) + \$11.97 TVQ (9.975%)]
 My cheque is enclosed, payable to "Quebec Farmers' Association"
GST No. 107 867 814 RT 001 QST No. 100 611 322 9 TQ 001

MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES

- a one year subscription to the Quebec Farmers' Advocate
- discounts on QFA sponsored events and services
- free advertising in the Advocate's classified ads
- voting privileges at the QFA Annual General Meeting

Quebec Farmers' Association

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

Signature.....
 Date.....

The Quebec Farmers' Association would like to thank English-speaking farmers who have opted to renew their membership.

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.**

Frank & Janet Retty, Sheenboro

Randy Melnechuk, Dunham

Lloyd Wright, West Brome

Erin Hogg, Wstmount



**Important information for
Quebec farmers!**

Agricultural plastic recycling is moving to a new phase



A provincial regulation has now been implemented for different agricultural plastic categories. The regulation is intended to manage these used materials in a way that is environmentally friendly.

Ecofees

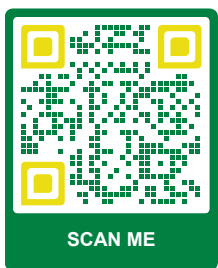
Non-refundable fees are used to fund these programs, which are specific to each product category and applied at the point of sale. Some of these ecofees will apply as of October 1, 2023.

These programs are operated by AgriRECUP, which has been named the recognized management organization (RMO) and is responsible for organizing and managing the programs.

Products	
Plastics for hay and silage storage	Balewrap, silage bags, tarps, covers, twine and netting.
Bags	Empty ag bags that held agricultural products: seed, pesticides, fertilizers, feed, bedding, peat moss etc.
Containers	Empty ag jugs, totes and barrels used for a variety of products: pesticide, fertilizer, etc.
Obsolete pesticides and treated seed	Unwanted and obsolete pesticides. Note, livestock medication is accepted during obsolete collection events but is managed outside of the RRVPE.*
Maple tubing	Tubing used to collect maple sap.

* Regulation on the Recovery and Reclamation of Products by Enterprises (RRVPE)

Find out how to recycle your ag plastics and what else is involved:
agplasticwastequebec.ca



agrirecup.ca
info@agrirecup.ca @agrirecup





Paul J. Hetzler
ISA Certified Arborist

There is good news about treating cognitive decline – and it's tasty.

In North America, nearly one in 10 adults over the age of 65 has some form of dementia, including Alzheimer's, while another 20 or so per cent have mild cognitive impairment. With treatment costs rising and our senior cohort expanding faster than the population at large, dementia is a topic that won't get old any time soon.

Though Alzheimer's disease was first described in 1906, it seems to have been mostly forgotten until the mid-1970s, when real research began. Historically, those with dementia were locked in asylums and subjected to brutal "cures," like lobotomies and electric shocks, practices that continued through the 1950s. Later, anti-psychotics, like haloperidol, came into vogue for calming aggressive patients – until it was found these drugs made dementia worse.

Donepezil and other cholinesterase inhibitors, which tweak brain chemistry to aid memory, came on the scene in the late 1990s. And now, there's a drug called lecanimab, which was just approved this year, that slows or even prevents the formation of brain plaques thought to cause Alzheimer's and certain other dementias.

More than drugs to treat dementia

But treatment goes beyond medication. Proven techniques for mild dementia include what's known as cognitive stimulation therapy. In a group setting, patients discuss world events, collaborate on novel tasks and play word and math games. For those with advanced brain disease, reminiscence therapy is a one-on-one talk about times past, using beloved objects or favourite songs to help spark memories.

We know smell and recall are closely linked. But until a few years ago, aromatherapy for dementia patients was relegated to non-medical use by family and friends of loved ones, since there was little science to support its value. Fortunately, that has all changed.

The reason smells can evoke deep emotions and rich memories is because other sensory inputs go through the thalamus, a "sorting hat" that routes data for processing elsewhere in our brains. But aromas zip from our

Mint and maple: Nature's memory medicines



SHOWCAKE/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Scientists at the University of Toronto have found that natural compounds in maple syrup help keep tangles and plaques from forming in the brain, contributing to the prevention of Alzheimer's.

olfactory bulb directly to our hippocampus, without passing "GO" or collecting \$200. The hippocampus is involved in memory formation, and has been shown to be more strongly connected to smell than to any other sense. Aroma is likely how Santa, who's hundreds of years old, still keeps track of all those kids and presents. He's got fragrant evergreen boughs, a tang of reindeer dung and smoky chimneys to jog his memory.

Mice respond well to mint

In a report that came out in April, researchers from the University of Navarra in Pamplona, Spain, detailed how a mere whiff of menthol, an essential oil extracted from mint leaves, improved cognitive function in mice. I'm not sure if we need or want our mice to be any smarter, but that's what happened to every test animal. However, this is not the most intriguing part of the study.

In addition to normal mice, the research team got their hands on a strain of transgenic mice that were modified to have the kind of brain plaques that cause Alzheimer's disease in people. These poor mice got

dementia quite young. To the researchers' surprise, brief daily exposure to mint oil for six months was enough to completely halt cognitive decline in mice with Alzheimer's.

The cool thing about mint is that it's easy to grow. In fact, the hard part might be keeping it in check. It prefers moist, rich soils, but seems to thrive just about anywhere. Place a fresh mint sprig in water, and it will begin to root in a week or so. Once the roots are fairly well developed, transfer it to a corner of your property where it won't be a nuisance if it spreads. Dried mint can be kept in glass jars for use in winter.

Essential oils improve brain function

A topically related study at the University of California at Irvine this year took aromatherapy one step further. Published in July, the report states that diffusing trace amounts of essential oils into the air during sleep improved brain function 226 per cent in adults age 60-65. The odorants used in the six-month trial were not specified, but it's a safe bet mint oil works as well, if not better, than other scents. I've already begun doing this at night.

I'll let you know when I feel 226 per cent smarter.

Study looked at effects of maple syrup

In 2016, scientists from the University of Toronto went public with findings – which they admitted were preliminary – that maple syrup helps prevent Alzheimer's. Natural phenolic compounds in maple syrup seem to keep tangles and plaques from forming in the brain. It's only right that this research took place in the maple capital of the world. Since that time, studies in the U.S. continue to affirm the results from the earlier work at the University of Toronto.

Exercise, good sleep habits, a balanced diet and plenty of social interaction will help protect brain function. It's best to avoid smoking and limit alcohol as well.

Given this new information on the benefits of eating syrup and sniffing menthol, I think we should all add mint ice cream topped with maple syrup to our diets. Just to give our brains a leg up. There's no sense taking chances.

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

Project sets to measure methane emissions by analyzing bulk tank milk

**Dominique Maxime
and Annie-Claire Daviault**
For Lactanet

Enteric methane emissions account for approximately half of the greenhouse gas emissions produced by Canadian milk. Understanding these emissions is a priority in the context of the national commitment to reduce greenhouse gases and the determination of the entire dairy industry to other consumers "low carbon" milk.

Various practices and strategies exist to reduce the methane produced by a cow's digestion process.

These mainly involve changes in herd and feeding management, and the monitoring of their effectiveness in the field to validate the expected reduction targets.

Outside a well-controlled experimental environment, enteric methane cannot be measured daily for every animal, on every farm. It is always estimated based on models developed by scientists (equations specific to each animal category linking various parameters, especially feeding and productivity parameters). There are dozens of models, more or less advanced and representative of reality, all of which share the disadvantage of requiring data that is difficult to obtain. This often limits their application to average annual estimates of methane emissions.

In light of these observations, Lactanet and Les Producteurs de lait du Québec decided to conduct a research project, with the financial help of the Quebec government. It began in July 2023 and will be completed in 2027. The main objective is to estimate the enteric methane emitted by all dairy cows in a herd using bulk-tank milk analysis.

As milk is collected and sampled every two days, we can take advantage of a well-established routine that provides a large amount of data essential to the project. During this project, the methane emitted will be estimated by analyzing the infrared reflectance spectrum of milk, which characterizes its composition (including its fatty acid profile), in addition to other relevant production variables also routinely collected. (See Figure 1.)

The first phase of the project will be to develop the algorithm linking the enteric methane emitted by lactating cows to the infrared reflectance spectrum of milk and other key production

variables. To do so, an experimental protocol will be set up on 10 commercial farms in Quebec using robotic milking. The enteric methane belched out will be recorded during each cow's milking using a sensor placed in the feeding bin for the duration of the project.

Milking samples and bulk tank milk samples will also be analyzed in the laboratory. (See Figure 2.)

In a second phase, the model developed will be validated on bulk tank milk from about 50 other commercial farms (without sensors). Exhaustive herd, feeding and management data will be collected on these farms to check the model's sensitivity to various parameters thought to influence methane emissions (i.e., reduction strategies). The farms will be selected among all Quebec farms on the basis of their model-estimated emission intensity

(estimated CH₄ emissions per kilogram of milk or per cow) to cover the full range of the model's response spectrum and select groups of low-, medium- and high-intensity herds.

In addition to helping validate the model's sensitivity, the farms selected will be able to implement enteric methane reduction strategies over the final years of the project, the benefits of which will be monitored on a quasi-continuous basis thanks to the model.

The project will include other complementary activities, with the following objectives:

- Estimate the enteric methane output of other animals in the herd (heifers, calves and dry cows) using conventional prediction models, to complete the inventory of this greenhouse gas source.
- Estimate emission values for all the

other sources of greenhouse gas emissions on the 50 or so dairy farms participating in the study from a life-cycle perspective. This will be done with a farm calculator, chosen based on a review of current tools that will calculate the milk carbon footprint on these farms.

- Identify and better understand the enteric methane reduction strategies implemented and assess their cost-benefit ratios.
- Contribute to the improvement of the Lactanet genetic index for methane efficiency and encourage the adoption of this genetic index by farmers who are interested.
- And finally, develop the IT infrastructure to make available the model's estimates for the enteric methane emitted by lactating cows, through the bulk tank sample.

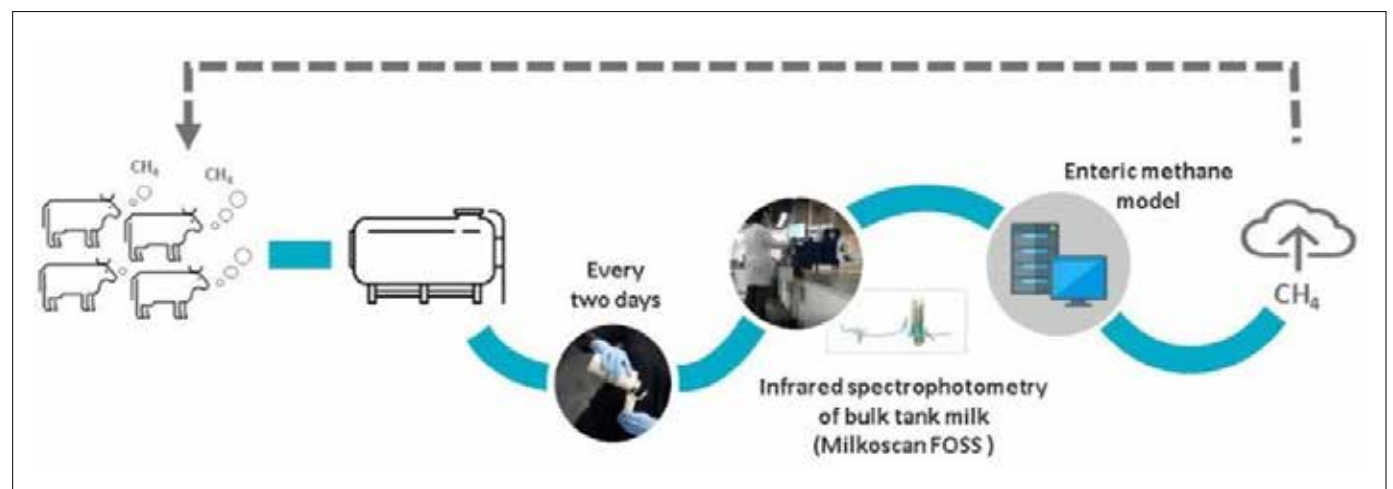


Figure 1. Project objective: Routine estimation of the enteric methane emitted by lactating cows in a herd using bulk tank milk.

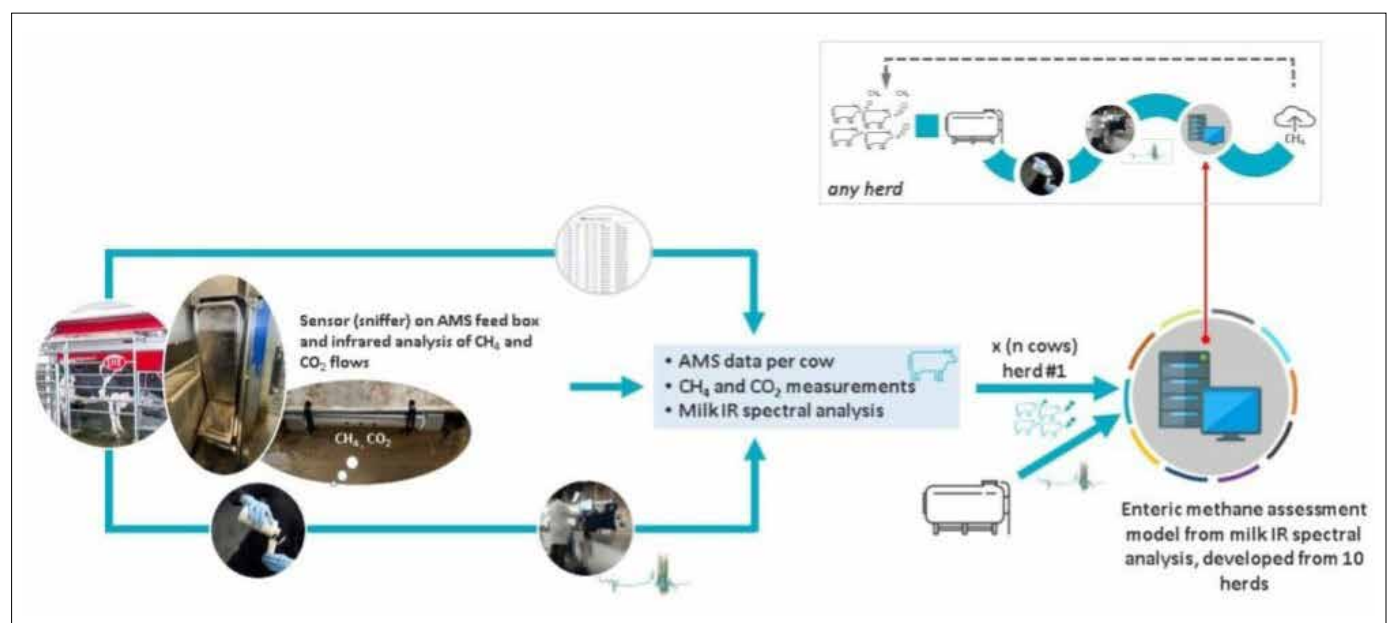


Figure 2. Study on commercial farms with robots.

USDA reports little change in October, corn stocks and yield are down

Ramzy Yelda
Senior Market Analyst
Quebec Grain Growers

The October U.S. Department of Agriculture's supply and demand report has no surprises: changes are quite minor.

U.S. 2023 corn stocks are down by 91 million bushels (MBU) at 1,361 MBU. Yield is down from 173.8 bu/ac to 173 bu/ac, hence production is down by 70 MBU at

15,064 MBU, that is a 9.8-per-cent increase compared with last year. Animal feed demand and exports are both down by 25 MBU.

The 2024 stocks are down by 100 MBU at 2,111 MBU. The average farm price is up by \$0.05/bu at \$4.95/bu versus \$6.54/bu in 2022/23.

The 2023 soybean stocks are up by 18 MBU at 268 MBU. Yield is down from 50.1 bu/ac to 49.6 bu/ac, hence production is down by 42 MBU at 4,104 MBU, that is a 3.9-per-cent decrease compared with last

year. Crushing is up by 10 MBU, while exports are down by 35 MBU.

The U.S. wheat seeded area is down by 200,000 acres, yield is up from 45.8 bu/ac to 48.6 bu/ac, hence production is up by 78 MBU at 1,812 MBU, that is a 9.8-per-cent increase compared with last year. Imports are up by 5 MBU. The 2024 stocks are up by 55 MBU at 670 MBU. The average farm price is down by \$0.20/bu at \$7.30/bu (all wheats included) versus \$8.83/bu in 2022/23.



Crop insurance: What should I do if my crops get damaged?

If you notice damage to one of your fields, whether it be a problem with harvest maturity, growth that could lower your harvest yield, or poor quality, we invite you to contact La Financière Agricole du Québec service centre to file a notice of damage. This needs to be done a minimum of two days before you start harvesting.

If you receive a grain grading certificate or analysis report and notice that your grain does not meet the "sample grade" criteria or does not meet the quality criteria concerning toxins, it is also best to contact your service centre as soon as possible.

Contact information for service centres can be found in English on La Financière's website at <https://www.fadq.qc.ca/en> Click on 'Contact us' in the top right corner of the page.

If you have concerns about the handling of your file, you may contact agricultural economist Marie-Hélène Parent at the PGQ at any time. Simply call 450-679-0540, ext. 8468, or email mhparent@pgq.ca.

Record number register for cover crop *Agrisolutions climat* program

The Producteurs de grains du Québec is glad to receive more than 1,000 registrations for the cover crop component of the *Agrisolutions climat* program this year – over 200 more than last year.

The purpose of the program is to increase cover crop use, both in number of businesses and in total surface area, to increase soil fertility, promote nutrient recycling, and increase knowledge and skills in cover cropping.

The *Agrisolutions climat* project originally got off the ground in 2018 as an initiative of the PGQ. For the last two years, it has been running as a partnership between the PGQ, the Union des producteurs agricoles and the Conseil pour le développement de l'agriculture du Québec (CDAQ) through the Agricultural Climate Solutions – On-Farm Climate Action Fund.

Seeking 4R Nutrient Stewardship producers

4R Nutrient Stewardship is a framework whereby growers apply the right fertilizer source at the right rate at the right time and in the right place – 4Rs. It is all about maximizing fertilizer efficiency, obtaining the optimum desired effect and reducing the crop's carbon footprint.

The Producteurs de grains du Québec is currently seeking producers interested in planting 4R nutrient stewardship test and demonstration plots.

If you are interested, we invite you to complete this short form: <https://forms.office.com/r/dtd27GaBZS>

Note that the form is in French and refers to the 4Bs, not Rs, because the translation of "right" is "bonne" in French.

If you have questions about this project? Email the PGQ at agro@pgq.ca.



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.





Peace is a big part of improving food security

Paul Hagerman

Canadian Foodgrains Bank

The village of Shasha, a little west of Goma in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, illustrates well the integration of humanitarian, development and peace work. The rich volcanic soils in this area are densely settled by small-scale farmers. But in recent years, they have been joined by thousands of newcomers, internally displaced people who are fleeing conflict in their own villages.

The arrival of these displaced people creates the potential for more conflict as they seek out plots of land to live on and support their families. In response, local non-government organizations are implementing triple nexus projects.

Triple nexus projects have three points of focus: to meet humanitarian needs (short-term food assistance), development needs (land to grow food) and prevent conflict between displaced individuals and host communities (peace).

In January, I visited one of these projects as part of a trip to meet partners of Mennonite Central Committee in Rwanda, Zimbabwe and Democratic Republic of the Congo to learn more about triple nexus programming. The partner organizations have a long history in their communities, and their work has shifted over time to respond to changing needs – sometimes conflict reduction, sometimes humanitarian aid, sometimes development projects.

In all three countries, reducing interpersonal conflict is a priority for partners.

For example, a Zimbabwe partner providing a water source for a community garden recognized that water access is a potential source of conflict, so a second water source was provided for the wider community who were not members of the garden group.

While there are tools to measure the impact of these “little ‘P’ peace” activities at a community level, it’s not clear to what degree they contribute toward what we call “big ‘P’ peace” – the integration of peace at a societal level.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the conflict is highly visible and ever-shifting, a Congolese partner works towards “big ‘P’ peace” efforts by encouraging members of armed groups to disarm, while also helping those who disarm to find



CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK

Paul Hagerman, the director of public policy with Canadian Foodgrains Bank, visits a small-scale farmer in the village of Shasha in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. One of the challenges people here face, he says, is integrating thousands of displaced people who are fleeing conflict from their own villages.

livelihoods and communities that will accept them. This is peace and development, working hand in hand.

Even in cases where peace-building doesn’t include a humanitarian or development component, peace-building efforts are often an inexpensive way of adding significant value to food security projects, by reducing the risk of conflict that could undermine project gains.

In Zimbabwe, a partner trains police officers in non-violent methods to shift

their activities from protecting the state to protecting civilians.

And while Rwanda’s big conflict is in the past, the 1994 genocide casts a long shadow over the present. Peace-building efforts to prevent future atrocities are vital to healing the wounds that remain.

These local partners may be working in three very different contexts, but there was one belief many partners and program participants shared: “There is no development without peace.”

Canadian Foodgrains Bank is a partnership of 15 churches and church agencies working together to end global hunger. It provides millions of dollars of assistance for people in 36 countries. Canadian Foodgrains Bank programs are undertaken with support from the federal government provided through Global Affairs Canada. Assistance from the Foodgrains Bank is provided through its member agencies, which work with local partners in the developing world.

Can spreading crushed rock on crop field help farms, the environment?

Katie Ballard

William H. Miner Agricultural Research Institute

Newly published research from a team of researchers at the University of Illinois suggests that spreading crushed rock on crop fields can help farms and is good for the environment.

While more research is needed to confirm these findings, the experiment is one of the first to take what had been promising small-scale studies done in greenhouses out into crop fields.

The practice itself is relatively simple: apply crushed basalt rock to farm fields similar to a lime application.

In fact, researchers used a conventional lime spreader to apply the basalt and a chisel plow (row crops only) to incorporate the material. After four years of application to fields plots (corn/soy rotation and giant miscanthus, a tall grass that is a popular biofuel crop) the researchers saw significant greenhouse gas reductions, increased soil pH in the acidic soils and crop yield and quality that was either similar or better than the conventionally managed plots.



OLGA DANYLENKO/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Size matters

At this point you might be asking the very reasonable question: How could mixing in more rock with my soil that is already full of rocks and minerals have much of an impact on anything?

The first key factor is the particle size of the basalt.

Rather than applying actual rocks, the basalt rock is crushed to roughly the size of sand grains, which greatly increases the amount of surface area that is exposed to the soil and water it will eventually react with.

The second factor is the chemical makeup of the rock, which is high in calcium and magnesium. When rock is repeatedly exposed to wind and water, freezing and thawing, the rocks crumble into smaller and smaller pieces. But as they undergo this "weathering" process, their internal makeup changes as well. This means, as the calcium- and magnesium-rich minerals are weathered, the calcium and magnesium are released from the mineral structure and enter the soil water where they can be used by plants for growth, or interact with other components of the soil water.

This is where the rubber really meets the road, and those small calcium- and magnesium-rich particles will react with

The particle size of the basalt is key. Rather than applying actual rocks, the basalt rock is crushed to roughly the size of sand grains, which greatly increases the amount of surface area exposed to the soil and water it will eventually react with.

CO₂, which is also naturally found in the soil water. When this happens, much of that CO₂ is transformed into bicarbonate (HCO₃), which takes that carbon particle and carries it down deep into groundwater and, ultimately, deep into the ocean where it can settle and remain unchanged for millions of years.

Long-term CO₂ storage

This long-term storage has a major benefit over trying to store captured carbon in cultivated soils, as carbon nearer the soil surface will be much more likely to be transformed back into CO₂ and reintroduced into the atmosphere.

The natural process of rock weathering across the planet offsets about 3 per cent of current fossil fuel emissions already, but these early results demonstrate we may be able to greatly increase that number through this "enhanced weathering" process.

The University of Illinois team found that adding 20 tons per acre of crushed basalt increased soil closer to optimal levels (without becoming too alkaline) and increased the amount of available calcium and magnesium to the crops.

These soil quality improvements were reflected in significantly greater biomass harvested from the plots that received the basalt treatment.

Environmental benefits

So now that we know the crop wasn't negatively impacted, we'll move onto the environmental benefits.

The basalt treatment offset 23 to 42 per cent of the carbon emissions from the corn/soybean rotation plots. Row crop production, particularly when tillage is utilized, can generate substantial amounts of greenhouse gas emissions from the soil, so offset nitrogen almost half of what would typically be produced is a major improvement.

Perennial grasses, which don't get tilled (or at least much less frequently if in rotation) and typically have much more plant biomass (and therefore carbon) underground, can be a net sink of carbon, meaning more is removed than lost.

In fact, the results from the miscanthus plots, which were grown for biofuel, showed that they sequestered much more carbon than was emitted

during the experiment.

Finally, the carbon that was sequestered by the miscanthus was enough to offset the remaining balance of what was produced by the corn/soybean rotation.

Altogether, this means that growing these two crops side by side and on equal acreage, there was roughly a "net-zero" change in the amount of greenhouse gas produced. Becoming net-zero is a major goal of the dairy industry. And while we may not be planning to incorporate miscanthus into our crop rotations, this concept has shown a lot of promise.

Even better, we're utilizing equipment that is already on the farm, incorporating a by-product of other industries, seeing benefits to the crops we're already growing all while having a positive impact on the environment.

The Miner Institute, based in Chazy, N.Y., conducts practical research on the dairy-crop interface, equine reproduction and management, and environmental conservation. Its research activities combine a global perspective with a regional application.



Beurre Blanc



PHOTO BY CYNTHIA GUNN

Beurre blanc sauce is made of simple ingredients. It is traditionally served over fish, but goes well with steamed vegetables, too.

INGREDIENTS

6 tablespoons shallots, minced
6 tablespoons dry white wine
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
½ cup butter cut into pieces
pinch of sea salt and white pepper

PREPARATION

Place shallots, wine and lemon juice in a small pan. Bring to a simmer and reduce to 2 tablespoons.

Strain into a small metal or ceramic bowl that will fit just so over a small pot of simmering water (acting like a double boiler).

Add the butter, piece by piece, whisking thoroughly after each addition. Sauce should become slightly thick and a little frothy.

As soon as butter is amalgamated, remove from heat and season to taste.

Serve immediately or keep warm over heat, but not over simmering water.

Source: Sally Fallon with Mary G. Enig, *Nourishing Traditions*, 1999.

Like clothes that make the man, a good sauce dresses up a meal

Cynthia Gunn
 QFA's Food Writer

In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Polonius tells his son Laertes to dress well because "apparel oft proclaims the man."

MyShakespeare.com explains that Laertes must dress according to his station, both as a matter of family pride and also to communicate his social rank to others around him. This notion that the clothes make the man (or woman) is still with us hundreds of years later, more subtly, perhaps, but there all the same.

"Dress for success!" Unless, that is, you live in a place where no one really cares. Thankfully, I do. The whole notion of dressing for success seems such a bother and a waste of resources. And yet, who could quibble with the promise of having a few simple but fine quality pieces of clothing in your closet for those special occasions. Kind of like sauces.

Curnonsky, one of the 20th century's most prolific and influential food writers, often asserted and promoted simplicity in food, stating: "In cooking, as in all the arts, simplicity is the sign of perfection."

The proper attire of food, nevertheless, can at times make all the difference. He believed that "sauces comprise the honour and glory of French cookery. They have contributed to its superiority, or pre-eminence, which is disputed by none. Sauces are the orchestration and accompaniment of a fine meal..."

The idea of different sauces being prepared in advance and awaiting in their bain-marie to accentuate a series of fine French dishes sounds quite delightful, as long as you're not the cook and chief bottle-washer. The right sauce can transform something good into a sumptuous treat. Think of hollandaise: What would a poached egg with a slice of ham on a toasted English muffin be without the hollandaise? A breakfast sandwich, nothing more, nothing less. The hollandaise sauce makes the meal.

Some sauces are deceptively simple. Beurre blanc, a classic French sauce, is a case in point. It is made with a few basic ingredients. And because it can be made without ever touching heat directly, fear of burning it or overcooking are banished.

Moreover, extra sauce can simply be left in the bowl and refrigerated, ready to be reheated over steam to adorn leftovers or another meal. It is traditionally served over fish. We had it with salmon, and it's wonderful with steamed vegetables as well. I put the beurre blanc right on the table, and everyone added more sauce to their liking.

And before you start protesting about eating a lot of butter, let me assure you that the jury is most certainly not all on the same page regarding butter and saturated-fat intake. Sugar, once the sugar industry was muzzled enough to hear critics, has emerged, without a doubt, as villainous. Fat is much more complicated, and depends greatly on factors like the type of fat in question. This recipe should be made and enjoyed in the spirit of butter as a natural and healthful food.

A former caterer, Cynthia Gunn now runs a window-restoration business. She restores pre-1950s wood windows, preserving their beauty and inherently durable old-growth wood, and creating superior energy-efficiency with high-end weather-stripping. She still cooks and bakes for her family in West Quebec.



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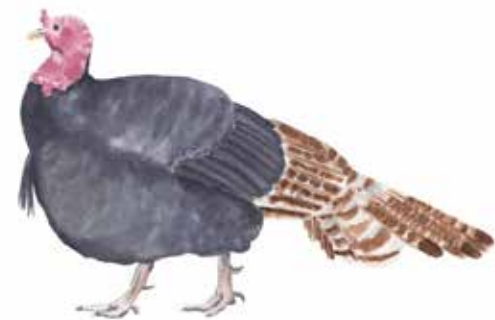
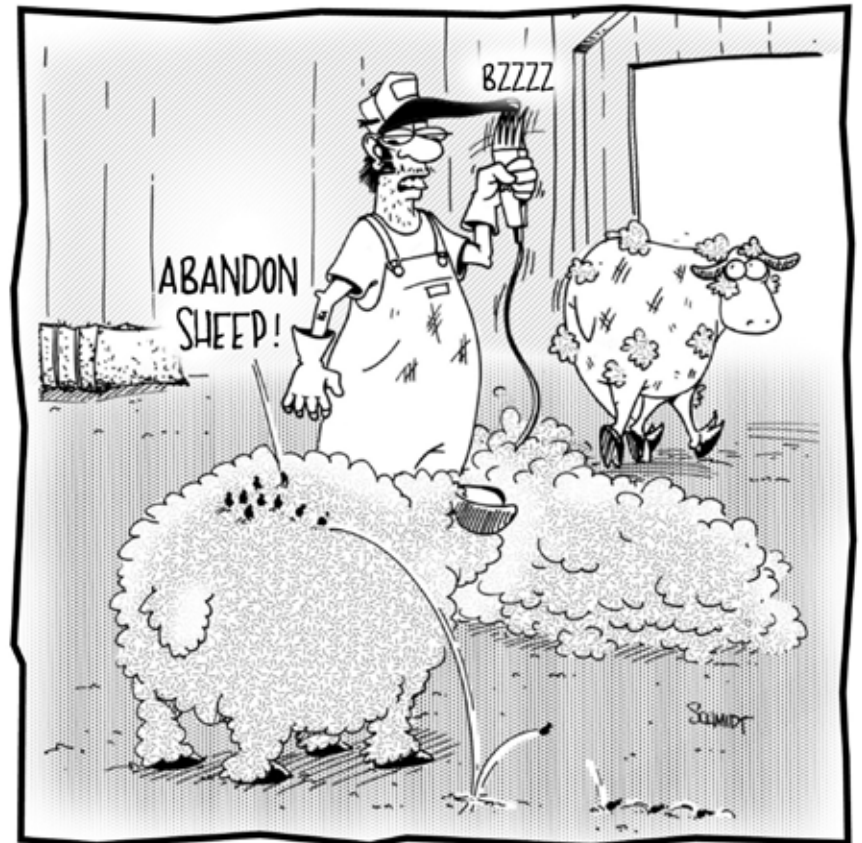
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