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**"Canadians, would, I think, hunt our leaders down if they bowed and kissed the ring of the man from Mar-a-Largo."**

—NDP MP  
*Charlie Angus on CNN*

## QFA VIDEOCONFERENCES

**Wednesday, March 12**  
at 7:30 p.m.

**Creating a Trusted Product**

See page 12 for details.



ADVOCATE FILE PHOTO

UPA president Martin Caron ensures that farmers' concerns are part of the discussions on how to respond to the tariff threat.

## UPA president one of 2 Quebecers on federal tariff panel

**Brenda O'Farrell**  
*The Advocate*

The 19-member crisis panel struck by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau last month to help formulate and steer Canada's response to tariff threats from U.S. President Donald Trump includes two Quebecers – former premier Jean Charest and Martin Caron, president of the Union des producteurs agricoles.

Caron's appointment ensures that the interests of Quebec farmers will be part of the Council on Canada-U.S. Relations's conversations surrounding how Canada should plan and respond to the tariff threats.

Critics, however, have already weighed in, voicing concerns that other sectors are receiving priority treatment, especially in the wake of the so-called tariff summit the prime minister convened in Toronto on Feb. 7.

Keith Curry, president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, attended the summit, which focused heavily on the looming tariff threat and their impacts on the auto industry. In media

interviews, Curry said he would have liked to have seen a more proportionate representation from the farming sector.

"I know the auto industry's getting a lot of play around these tariffs, and rightfully so," Curry said, "but the industry that has \$14 billion GDP annually, versus an industry that has \$150 billion GDP annually, you'd think the ratio of representation would have been different."

The Council on Canada-U.S. Relations also includes Steve Verhaul, Canada's former chief negotiator from 2017 and 2021. He was responsible for hammering out the NAFTA agreement with the U.S. and Mexico and the Canada-European Union trade agreement. Prior to that he was Canada's chief agriculture negotiator responsible for leading the country's involvement in international trade talks involving agriculture, including with the World Trade Organization.

**Also see:**  
**Who is on panel, Page 4.**  
**How farm sectors could be touched by tariffs, Page 4.**

## Active case of bird flu confirmed in Quebec

**Brenda O'Farrell**  
*The Advocate*

In the first month of 2025, one case of avian flu has been confirmed in Quebec, according to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

The virus was detected at a commercial poultry operation in the MRC of Matawinie, in the Lanaudière region. It is the only active case in the province, the food inspection agency claims. It was confirmed on Jan. 31. No other details are available.

The case is one of 37 active cases in the country as of Jan. 31, the agency reported.

Previously, the agency has recorded a total of 58 cases of the infectious disease in Quebec, which have affected a total of about 1.46 million birds. Across Canada there have been 486 cases, with British Columbia being the hardest hit.

As of Jan. 31, there were 27 active cases in B.C. impacting just more than 8.7 million birds.

Although the virus has been detected in a dairy herd in the U.S., no such inter-species transfer has occurred in Canada, a statement issued by the food inspection agency claimed. Only poultry operations have been infected in this country.

On Feb. 11, however, Parks Canada issued a warning after a case was confirmed in Rouge National Urban Park in the Scarborough area in Ontario. The warning advised visitors to the park to keep dogs on leashes and report if any sick or dead birds are spotted. Five suspected cases in the park have also been found, Parks Canada said in a statement.

Federal officials say the H5N1 avian influenza virus is currently "circulating widely" in the country. Since 2021, it has been found in wild birds in every province and territory.



# Just the facts

## 950

Number of dairy herds in the United States that have been infected with the H5N1, a version of bird flu, as of early February. The herds are located in 16 states.

Source: The New York Times

## 16%

The proportion of municipalities in Quebec who stipulate English skills when hiring in 2023. This percentage has dropped from 24 per cent in 2018.

Source: Office québécois de la langue française

## 22,823

The number of family physicians needed in Canada, according to a new federal study released in the last week of January that predicted the situation of Canadians unable to access health care will only worsen in the next decade if action is not taken. The report, which looked at the education, training and distribution of the health work force, stated Canada only produces 1,300 medical graduates a year.

Source: The Globe and Mail

## 1.7 degrees

That is how much the annual and season mean temperatures across Canada have increased between 1948 and 2016, with the greatest warming occurring in winter. The average mean temperature in northern Canada has increased even more in that period – about 2.3 degrees Celsius.

Source: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

### BRINGING OUT THE COLOURS ON A COLD DAY



IAN GRANT, THE ADVOCATE

We have had a few cold days this winter, some getting close to the category of being neither fit for man nor beast – at least not without the proper winter-wear. But these two in a paddock in St. Lazare were not only dressed for the weather, they were making a colourful fashion statement while doing it. It almost makes you wonder: Maybe animals are colour-blind.



### 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.

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#### Members of the QFA believe in:

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# Saskatchewan farmer named to Canadian Senate

**Brenda O'Farrell**  
*The Advocate*

The vice-president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture had been named to the Canadian Senate.

Saskatchewan farmer Todd Lewis was appointed to the Upper Chamber by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Feb. 7.

In a statement from the Prime Minister's Office, Lewis was described as a "strong voice for the Saskatchewan agriculture industry and dedicated community leader throughout his life."

Lewis is the fourth generation to work the family farm in Gray, Sask., south of Regina. He is the former president of the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan and is currently a vice-president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture.

Lewis is the second member of the CFA executive to be named to the Senate in as many years. In early 2024, former CFA president Mary Robinson was named to the Upper House. These latest appointments signal a step to enhance the expertise in the agricultural sector.

A veteran farmer, Lewis has spent decades advocating for the agricultural sector and his local community. He has taken on roles with the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce environment committee, worked with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Crop Logistics Working Group, was a member of the board of directors of the Western Grains Research Foundation and Saskatchewan's provincial Water Advisory Group. He is also a member of the Canadian National Railway Agricultural Advisory Council.

He has also served two decades as a municipal



PHOTO COURTESY OF CANADIAN FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

Todd Lewis was named to the Senate on Feb. 7.

councillor and has been a volunteer firefighter.

In 2017, Trudeau visited his farm, drawing attention to the grain industry and its importance in the rural economy and to Lewis's efforts in representing producers.

Lewis's Senate appointment was one of three announced earlier this month. The other appointees to the Upper Chamber were Baltej Dhillon, a former police officer from British Columbia who was the first RCMP officer to wear a turban on duty; and

Martine Hébert, an economist from Quebec, who represented the province as its delegate to Chicago and New York. Hébert also worked with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, was an associate commissioner of the Great Lakes Commission and was a director of Government and Professional Affairs for the Ordre des conseillers en ressources humaines agréés du Québec, and an adviser on provincial policy.

## New national crisis hotline aims to help farmers deal with stress

**Brenda O'Farrell**  
*The Advocate*

A national crisis hotline has been launched with the aim of helping farmers cope with the unique stresses that come with running an agricultural operation.

Farming is one of the most demanding and high-stress occupations, according to health experts. And the stresses are intensifying as financial pressures from a growing list of circumstances and weather events multiple.

"The financial pressures, isolation and emotional demands of caring for livestock and crops can take a toll on mental health," said officials with the Canadian Centre for Agricultural

Wellbeing, a national non-profit organization focused on the mental health of farmers in Canada, which launched the hotline on Feb. 4.

The service received \$1.5 million in financial backing over three years from Farm Credit Canada.

It aims to help producers cope with what the Canadian Centre for Agricultural Wellbeing describes as the "unique mental health challenges faced by Canada's farmers, farm families and agricultural workers."

The free service, which is available 24 hours a day, provides farmers with access to a confidential counselling service that is specifically tailored to help farmers, with personnel who have an understanding of the

demands farmers face.

"Farm life comes with so many joys and celebrations. And yet, the challenges of farm life are often faced alone and without the needed supports," said Justine Hendricks, president and CEO of Farm Credit Canada in a statement. "This partnership with CCAW is our commitment to Canadian farm families; to help provide access to critical mental health resources that reflect the realities of their daily lives."

In a 2023 report by Canadian researchers that delved into the types of stress farmers experience, data showed farmers "attributed stress to a variety of chronic and episodic stressors, which they described as complexly interrelated, cumulative and overwhelming."

"Farmers worldwide consistently score more severely on measures of stress than the general population," states the study, funded in part by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, the University of Guelph and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. "Recently, farmers in Canada have scored more severely on the Perceived Stress Scale than population norms."

In Canada, the report continues, women and producers in the swine production sector experience the most stress.

*Farmers can call the National Farmer Crisis Line at 1-866-FARMS01. All calls are confidential.*

## News

# Farm sectors brace for impacts as U.S. tariffs loom

**Brenda O'Farrell**  
*The Advocate*

With the majority of Canada's agri-food exports going to the United States each year, including much of Quebec's farm and food products, the threat of a tariff war looms large over the agricultural sector. Producers on this side of the border remain in a tense wait-and-see mode as they speculate over what U.S. President Donald Trump will do next.

As the 30-day reprieve from the 25-per-cent tariffs imposed on all Canadian goods except for energy, counts down to March 4, farmers in every sector are bracing for some form of impact.

Overall, 60 per cent of Canada's agricultural exports go to the U.S., while 68 per cent of Quebec's bio-food exports are shipped south of the border.

### Pork sector

In the pork sector, a total of \$582 million in product from Quebec was exported to the U.S. in 2023, according to figures from the Éleveurs de porcs du Québec.

"We would lose market share," said René Roy, president of the Canadian Pork Council and a pork producer from Beauce. "Yes, in the medium term we could find other markets, but this would result in economic losses. Because if our industry sells so much to the United States, it is because the distance and the type of products we send to them remain more profitable than sales in other markets."

Exports of pork to Mexico have already picked up slightly since the threat of tariffs, Roy says.

Roy also points to another optimistic development – traders in the U.S. are pressuring the Trump administration to exempt the sector simply because of high consumers demand for the product.

Pork producers out west are not in the same position as those in Quebec, however, Roy points out.

Pork producers in Western Canada rely on the export of piglets. American operations that import these animals for raising and slaughterhouses that process them could see rising costs making it more difficult to fill their needs.

### Maple syrup

In the maple sector, tariffs on a product that is viewed as a bit of a luxury could be very harmful.

Adding to the concern is that 62 per cent of Quebec's maple syrup is exported to the U.S., the biggest export market for Quebec producers. The second largest importer of syrup from the province is Germany, which accounts for 8 per cent of sales from Quebec.

Last year, 45 million kilograms of syrup were shipped to the U.S. This represents \$368 million in exports.

### Dairy

Canada's supply-managed sectors like dairy are not immediately at risk if tariffs are imposed. And consumers will not see any price changes in the grocery stores. But these sectors have always been in the crosshairs of the Trump administration, which has repeatedly criticized the system and demanded greater access to the Canadian market for American products.

Since his inauguration, Trump has frequently commented publicly that he wants American dairy farmers to have greater access to the Canadian market. It is a likely target in any future trade pact negotiations, although federal Canadian officials have promised no more concessions in the supply-managed sectors.

### Vegetable sector

One winner in a trade war could be Quebec's vegetable and berry producers.

Retaliatory tariffs on U.S. vegetables will increase the cost of these products steering consumers to opt for more locally grown selections. This includes strawberries that could bolster greenhouse operators.

But with large quantities of Canadian produce shipped south, no one is predicting there will be any winners.

### Beef

Canadian beef producers are perhaps the ones dealing with the highest level of uncertainty.

Fifty per cent of meat raised in Canada is exported. And the largest client is the U.S., which accounts for 70 per cent of those exports. Anyway you look at it, tariffs will have a harsh downside.

And with U.S. beef herds at historic lows, there is no pressure from the industry in the States to seek any exemptions for the sector like in the pork industry.

# Canada-U.S. Relations: Who's on the council

The Council on Canada-U.S. Relations announced Jan. 16 by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau includes 19 members.

In addition to **Martin Caron**, the president of the Union des producteurs agricoles, it includes a variety of experts from the business and political words.

Among them are three former premiers – **Jean Charest** from Quebec, **Rachel Notley** from Alberta and **Stephen McNeil** of Nova Scotia.

The panel also includes Canada's ambassador to the United States **Kirsten Hillman** and her predecessor, **David MacNaughton**.

Other members bring a variety of expertise to the table, including:

**Jody Thomas** is a long-time federal public servant who has been Trudeau's national security adviser since 2022.

**Flavio Volpe** is the leader of the Canadian Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association.

**Hassan Yussuff** is a Senator and former president of the Canadian Labour Congress.

**Brian Topp** is a political strategist, union leader and writer. He served as ex-Alberta premier Rachel Notley's chief of staff and was the runner up for the leadership of the federal New Democratic Party in 2012, finishing behind Tom Mulcair.

Among the most recognizable faces on the council is **Arlene Dickenson**. The businesswoman, investor and author is perhaps best known for her role on the television show *Dragon's Den*.

Businessman **Wesley Hall** is another member of the *Dragon's Den* team.

**Linda Hasenfratz** is the president and CEO of Linamar, an Ontario-based manufacturer. She is the former chair of the Business Council of Canada and a member of the Canadian Business Hall of Fame.

**Lana Payne** is the president of Unifor, Canada's largest private sector union.

**Tabatha Bull** is a member of Nipissing First Nation in northern Ontario, and president of the Canadian Council for Indigenous Business.

**Shahrazad Rafati** is chairwoman and CEO of RHEI, formerly BBT, a global media company headquartered in Vancouver.

**Tim Gitzel** is president and CEO of Saskatoon-based Cameco, the world's largest publicly traded uranium company.

**Peter Tertzakian** is an economist, author and the deputy director of the ARC Energy Research Institute, a Calgary-based organization focused on researching energy trends for investors and corporate leaders.

**Steve Verheul** is Canada's former chief trade negotiator from 2017 and 2021 who helped put together the NAFTA agreement with the U.S. and Mexico and the Canada-European Union trade agreement. Prior to that he was Canada's chief agriculture negotiator responsible for leading the country's involvement in international trade talks involving agriculture.



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# 2024 hunting season sees record deer, wild turkeys killed

**Frederic Serre**  
*The Advocate*

The Quebec government unveiled the results of the 2024 hunting season last month, saying it was a record year for the white-tailed deer hunting campaign, describing it as “historic,” with a record 40-per-cent success rate for first-time deer hunters.

The Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs also said it was a record year for wild turkey, while reporting excellent results for moose and black bear trapping.

## White-tailed deer results

According to the ministry's report made public Jan. 30, the number of deer hunters has continued to rise since 2020, once again reaching the threshold of 10 years ago. Game was plentiful and the harvest was the second-highest of any year, meaning deer populations are doing well, the ministry stated in its report.

The report revealed that more than 142,000 hunters harvested a total of 59,500 deer in Quebec (excluding Anticosti Island) during the 2024 season. This represents a 3-per-cent increase over 2023. About 15 per cent of hunters,

or 21,700 individuals, purchased an additional licence.

“The excellent harvest in 2024 can be attributed in part to the fact that Quebec has not experienced very harsh winter weather conditions for deer since 2019 in most hunting zones, which has favoured their survival,” the ministry stated.

As for the situation on Anticosti Island, data compilation is not yet complete, as the hunt ended on Dec. 24. However, preliminary statistics suggest a record harvest, with more than 9,000 deer harvested.

## Wild turkeys

The ministry reported that the overall harvest of wild turkeys in Quebec set a new record last year at 10,766. This represents an 11-per-cent increase over 2023. Spring and fall wild turkey harvests reached new highs, at 10,163 turkeys (up nine per cent from 2023) and 603 turkeys (up 71 per cent on 2023), respectively.

The number of licences sold set a new record, with 23,361 for the spring hunt and 2,964 for the fall hunt. The total number of permits sold in 2024 reached 26,325, up 5 per cent from 2023.

All indicators suggest that wild turkey populations are doing well, the ministry's report stated, adding that the

species is either expanding or stable in the various regions of Quebec.

## Moose

Overall, moose hunting was very good in Quebec last season, the ministry said, with a total harvest of 20,431 individual moose, including 15,700 adult bulls, 2,578 adult cows and 2,153 calves. These figures reflect a total increase of 11 per cent over 2022 (when specific restrictions were imposed on hunters to limit the harvest of moose in a given area) and 6 per cent over the average of 2020 and 2022.

The harvest of 15,700 adult bulls is a record for both permissive and restrictive years. The harvest was 15-per-cent higher than in 2022, and 9-per-cent higher than the average for 2020 and 2022.

The government report said 167,618 licences were sold in 2024 – the lowest for similar hunting conditions since 2008. Nevertheless, moose remain a very popular game among Quebec hunters, the ministry said. On a broader time scale, population monitoring indicators suggest that the moose herd in Quebec is relatively stable.

## Black bears

The 2024 black bear hunt in Quebec was positive and above the average of past

years, the ministry's statistics showed. The 2024 harvest was second only to the record year of 2018. In addition, the number of hunting licences sold reached its highest level in nearly 30 years.

A total of 6,142 black bears were harvested in 2024: 86 per cent by hunting (5,298) and 14 per cent by trapping (844). This harvest is 12-per-cent higher than the five-year average for 2019-2023, and the increase is observed in both hunting and trapping.

The total number of hunters reached 20,023 in 2024, including 18,632 residents and 1,391 non-residents. This represents an 8-per-cent increase over the 2019-2023 average, and the highest level in nearly 30 years.

The ministry said it is continuing to closely monitor the black bear harvest in Quebec. Telemetric monitoring of bears ended in 2023. However, some bears are still marked with a red ear tag.

“Hunters and trappers must continue to report the harvesting of these individuals to enable mortality rates to be properly estimated,” the ministry memo stated. “The ministry, in collaboration with universities, is continuing to analyze the valuable data collected under this project, with a view to improving knowledge of the species and its management.”

# Stabilization payments help Quebec lamb producers navigate trying times

**Andrew McClelland**  
*The Advocate*

Quebec lamb producers received a second compensation advance for the 2024 insurance year in late January as part of the Agricultural Income Stabilization Insurance Program (ASRA).

This advance amounts collectively to \$3.3 million, which represents a net amount of \$11.18 per lamb and \$0.2577/kg of lamb sold. This payment is ASRA's net amount paid to lamb producers for 2024 so far this year.

It's a trying time for lamb producers in Canada – and Quebec in particular. Foreign imports, chiefly from New Zealand and Australia, make up 48 per cent of lamb in Quebec grocery stores. In order to stay competitive, Quebec lamb has to be negotiated at prices lower than the cost of production.

ASRA pays out to producers when

the average selling price of a product is less than the adjusted stabilized income, which is based on the average cost of production of a given sector, such as lamb, slaughter cattle, cereals such as oats, wheat, barley, among others.

“Because even with (the current) high prices, we don't cover our production costs,” said Jimmy Lapointe, president of Éleveurs d'ovins du Québec. “The proof is that ASRA was still triggered to the tune of \$120 per lamb in 2023.”

Les Éleveurs d'ovins du Québec and La Financière were in extensive talks last fall regarding the cost of production calculation.

To calculate that cost of production, La Financière relies on data and analyses from the Centre d'études sur les coûts de production en agriculture (CECPA). A study released by CECPA last May caused concern among small-scale lamb producers who felt data

from large-scale operations was tipping the balance out of their favour.

“We knew that the new study would have an impact, but it fell in our face last May. It triggered (ASRA), but very little compared to what we expected,” Lapointe told French-language weekly *La Terre de chez nous*.

While the present high prices for lambs address the cost-of-production imbalance somewhat, many producers are short of cash, facing liquidity problems that the advance payout from La Financière hopes to fix.

At the Éleveurs d'ovins du Québec's annual meeting in November, members passed a resolution to set up a system for awarding heavy lamb sales contracts based on the same historical volumes of the past few years. Current Quebec production of heavy lambs exceeds market demand – and producers are concerned about a price drop.

“That's good news in itself, because it means that our (sales system for heavy lamb) is working well,” said Lapointe, acknowledging that the sales system should be wary about oversupplying the market.

“Thanks to its ASRA program, La Financière agricole supports agricultural companies in the face of economic fluctuations and variations in production costs,” said La Financière agricole du Québec president Ernest Desrosiers.

“This second compensation advance for 2024 demonstrates the organization's continued commitment to supporting and sustaining the agricultural sector.”

There are currently 709 sheep production companies registered in Quebec, making up a production volume of 4,000 tonnes. Monetary revenues for meat sales run to \$51.2 million.



CHUYKO SERGEY/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

When it comes to trade negotiations, Canadians – and all sectors of the country's economy – have to stick together.



**John McCart**  
QFA President

# Threat of trade war forced us to learn something about ourselves

Normally, I have a clear vision of what to write about. Usually, it is easy to share my experiences and expertise in the hope that readers can learn something relevant that will make their farm more safe or profitable, or that they can at least be entertained.

But right now we are in the period just after the governments of Canada and Mexico reached a last-minute agreement with U.S. President Donald Trump that has put a trade war on hold – at least until March. The days and weeks leading up to this reprieve have been a complex strain on everyone's emotions. We all became more aware of the repercussions of a trade war. The experience has profoundly shifted our view of our neighbours to the south.

Trump has been very outspoken about his view of how countries – including Canada – are being unfair to America. His tirades have pivoted from focusing on unfair trade – including dairy, lumber and automobiles – to border

protection and illegal drugs entering the U.S. As delusional as he sounds, he was still elected with a majority last November and is now trying to deliver on his promises. Even when he was elected the first time in 2016, Canada was always a thorn in his side.

Canadians have been forced to react.

## UPA at the table

Part of that reaction has come from the 19-member committee for Canada-U.S. relations that has been tasked to develop strategies to prepare and respond to the tariffs. UPA president Martin Caron sits on that committee. His selection by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was based on the knowledge he brings to the table, as well as the experience and force of the Quebec farmers' union. Caron is the only member representing agriculture and food, which is surprising considering the importance of this sector within the Canadian economy.

The impact of tariffs on both sides of the border will definitely have major

repercussions for Quebec farmers in a variety of sectors. Products under supply management, which was negotiated under the CUSMA agreement, may no longer be free to flow to the U.S. if Trump pulls out of the deal. The hardest hit sectors of Quebec production will include maple syrup, as 62 per cent of our syrup is exported south. Also affected will be potatoes, cabbage and other field crops.

## Brace for impact

Products coming into Canada will also be affected. That includes fertilizers, seeds, sprays and machinery. If you thought equipment parts were expensive before, imagine paying an extra 25 per cent!

But agriculture is not the only sector that will be affected. All sectors of the Canadian economy will be hit. And for that reason, the official response to the tariffs requires that everyone fight together against these unfair practices. A united front will be much more

effective than trying to go at it alone. This reality has resulted in an outpouring of Canadian unity that has been absolutely incredible.

Trade between Canada and the U.S. has come a long way since the Auto Pact was signed in 1965. Various agreements have been negotiated since, resulting in mutual benefit. Trade is how economies across the globe have grown. A protectionist society will eventually fall. Similarly, climate change affects everyone, and one of the solutions to ensure safe affordable food is through trade.

If Trump wishes to avoid internal chaos, he must reconsider what he thinks is the answer to America's woes, before he plunges the whole world into another Great Depression. The rest of the world is noticing, and no one is going to put up with this nonsense. The misinformation needs to stop so that we can all have a positive future and focus on other things, including ourselves and our families.



# Ann Louise Carson: Not your typical career in agriculture

**Andrew McClelland**  
*The Advocate*

Ann Louise Carson may be only the fourth woman ever inducted into Quebec's agricultural hall of fame, but don't tell the long-time Townshippier and agricultural executive that her gender held her back.

"It never, never, never affected me throughout my career," said Carson, who was one of four individuals named to the *Temple de la renommée de l'agriculture du Québec* last fall.

Her many job titles have taken her from government to private industry to non-profits.

"Were there people cackling in the background when I was hired? Maybe. But if they did, I didn't care."

It's that kind of confidence that has allowed Carson to forge her own path in the agriculture industry.

Raised on the family dairy farm in Durham-Sud, northeast of Sherbrooke, she grew up the only daughter of Ross Carson and Andrée Côté. Having an anglophone father and francophone mother would serve her well in life.



COURTESY: ANN LOUISE CARSON

Ann Louise Carson was named to the Quebec agriculture hall of fame, known as the *Temple de la renommée de l'agriculture du Québec*, last fall. This month, she receives the King Charles III Coronation Medal.

## Start on Township farm

Growing up on a farm in the Townships meant long hours, hard work and plenty of 4-H Club activities.

"Growing up on the farm, there was no feeding half the cows or feeding half the calves," Carson said as she explained her work ethic. "You simply got it done. And 4-H added to that, with leadership help and working for the team."

Carson was the third generation of her family to attend Macdonald College. Her grandmother had trained as a teacher at the college in 1916. The campus also housed the headquarters of the 4-H offshoot – Quebec Young Farmers. It was there that Carson got her first job upon graduation in 1981.

Two years later, the ever-restless Carson became communications director for the Townshippers' Association where, in 1985, she was noticed by Quebec Agriculture Minister Michel Pagé, who hired her as his press secretary.

## Worked for provincial ag minister

"That was an exciting time in Quebec," Carson said. "The province had been under a different government for a decade and Robert Bourassa was in his

second term. It felt like we could really do something."

After growing up in farming, seeing the political side of agricultural policy framework was fascinating for Carson. And it bolstered her career as other potential employers took notice.

"That led to people seeing me because I was hanging around with the 'tops.' When you're in government, you work with the top people," Carson explained. "But five years in a minister's office is enough. You learn so much, but your head is down and you just work."

When Pagé was transferred from agriculture to education, Carson handed in her resignation, having no desire to work outside of agriculture.

## She quit

"He said, 'Of course, you're going to come to the Ministry of Education,'" Carson recalled. "I said, 'Nope. I'm in politics because I'm interested in agricultural politics.'"

Undaunted about the future, Carson did what she often did when between jobs: she travelled. The trips allowed her time to think about the future and satisfy her restless curiosity.

"That's what I would do, I would just

'jump'," she said. "I think that time I went to the South Pacific with my knapsack, travelled for a month or two, and came back to find a job."

## Corporate opportunities

In 1991, Carson was hired by embryo transfer specialists Boviteq to be the company's CEO. She was only 31 at the time.

Carson spent the next seven years criss-crossing the globe in managing Boviteq's embryo transfer and sexed semen production, guiding the company through a changing industry toward profitability.

At the end of her tenure, she envisioned a successful company merger that combined Boviteq with Semex. The only problem was that it also merged her out of a job.

"I knew I was doing that. Merging the companies meant there would be a lot of redundant jobs," Carson said. "It wasn't only my job that was going to disappear, it was one of many. But today, Semex is doing quite well as a company."

Upper-management positions followed at both dairy excellence centre Valacta and dairy genetic expert Eastern Breedings. But it was in 2012 at

Holstein Canada where Carson really began making headlines again.

"I was the first woman CEO to be hired at Holstein Canada in its 140-year history," she said. "And the first Quebecker!"

Carson made Holstein Canada a truly bilingual organization, reflecting her upbringing.

"That's what it needs to be, to truly be effective," Carson said. "But I always moved to where the job was – much to my family's chagrin – and after five years of working at Holstein Canada in Brantford, I wanted to come home to the Townships. It was a lovely five years, but I said goodbye."

"I was never a person to shy away from having a tough conversation or making a tough decision. You do what's right for the company."

Now in retirement, Carson has time to enjoy the finer things in life: travel, the farms of the Townships, and the accolades like being named to the hall of fame and, on Feb. 16, receiving the King Charles III Coronation Medal. Created in 2023, the award is given to Canadians who have been deemed to have made a significant contribution to Canada or to a province or region of the country.



## Trends in agriculture



NILOO/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Canada has plenty to offer the U.S., and Canadians just have to stand up for ourselves.



**Chris Judd**  
*The Advocate*

Until the crowd at the hockey game in Ottawa booed the U.S. national anthem, we didn't know how really upset Canadians were.

Leading up to that point, U.S. President Donald Trump had been chastising Canada for our unfair trade practices and saying how terrible this country had treated the U.S. He, of course, did not mention that Quebec and Ontario supply a major part of the electricity used in the eastern part of the U.S., or that Canada supplies most of the oil imports to the U.S.

If Canada turned off the power, shut of the pipeline and stopped moving car parts back and forth across the border, the "balance of trade" would be equal, and many U.S. citizens would be walking in the dark. Not to mention that it's Canadian water from British Columbia that keeps the golf courses and lawns green near Las Vegas and the Hoover Dam supplied with water high enough to water the California dessert to

# Canadians are nice – until they're provoked!

produce food and hydro-electricity.

### Canadian pork preferred

Then there is that Canadian pork that American shoppers chose before reaching for U.S. pork.

Also, I forgot to mention beer cans and Ford half-tons are made with Canadian aluminum. Then there is the DEW Line, a network of radar stations built during the Cold War in the north to detect enemy aircraft approaching this continent that is a key part of NORAD.

Oh, and that Canadian lumber Trump hates. It is twice as strong as lumber made from those "fast growing" American trees that have a very open grain.

And how about the border patrol? I always thought it was the Canadian border services that checked for U.S. weapons and other duty items that might come into Canada, while the U.S. border officers checked for anyone or anything going into the U.S. from Canada. When did Canada become responsible for anyone or anything going into the U.S.?

It's just since Trump showed his

bully side that Canadians became cemented and began looking in the shopping cart for U.S. produce that they either didn't need or could get somewhere else.

### Spirits from around the world

Ireland makes great beer and whisky. Jamaica makes pure sugar cane rum. My wife only drinks vodka made from potatoes. The best cider comes either from Ireland or Canada. Many countries, including Canada, make excellent wine.

Then there is that "Florida orange juice" that is mostly made with orange juice squeezed from South American oranges in South America and shipped "semi-frozen" in huge sea-going stainless-steel tankers to Florida for re-packaging before being shipped to Canada. That tanker-load of orange juice from South America could instead sail straight to Montreal and the orange juice could be packaged there and save Florida the expense.

### Travel within Canada

If Canada still had PetroCan, we could refine our own oil and ship it to the U.S.

and save them the expense of refining it. There are many autos, trucks, and both agricultural and industrial equipment manufactured in Mexico, Europe, Asia and South America that could easily replace more expensive U.S.-made machines. There are many Canadian vacationers who are thinking twice before choosing an expensive warm Florida vacation. There are many beautiful friendly places in Canada to visit for much less money.

Yes, Canadian citizens are pulling together, and if the U.S. wants to join us in a trade agreement that is fair, we can still make that happen. However, Trump better not wait too long. Some of the latest purchases of farm machinery on our farm – and all the TVs, cell phones and computers – came from either Europe or Asia. Take a look in the parking lots at stores and see what people are driving.

Several years ago, some highly respected U.S. agriculture professors told me that China had already surpassed the U.S. in agricultural research.

Don Cherry had a saying: "Don't poke the bear!" Yes, Canadians are nice – until provoked.





# Non-farmer picks sheep production and agronomy

**Andrew McClelland**  
*The Advocate*

An interesting thing started happening at agricultural colleges around a decade ago: students who didn't grow up on a farm began looking at farming as a viable career.

Call it a spin-off of the "buy local" movement, a brief trend, or the surprising development of farming becoming "hip," the fact remains that agriculture is attracting new recruits from outside its usual pool of farm-raised kids.

For prospective producers like 18-year-old Alice Charlebois, going into agriculture is all about following her heart.

"My grandparents used to have a small dairy farm, but they sold everything early on," Charlebois said. "Then, they went on to grow vegetables in a greenhouse, but now they only have a sugar shack."

## Grandparents farmed

Growing up in Coteau du Lac in the Vaudreuil-Soulanges region, west of Montreal, Charlebois and her family would often help in harvesting and boiling down the sap from her grandparents' maple syrup operation. That was the extent of her farm experience until she got a part-time job at Jardin chez Julie et Lova, a local organic vegetable farm.

"All throughout high school I was working there," she explained. "I'd work from spring to fall, but never thinking too much of it. Sure, I liked it a lot, but it was not really fulfilling all my needs."

However, a high school acquaintance had gone to Macdonald Campus in nearby Ste. Anne de Bellevue and was now working at a local dairy farm. From what Charlebois heard about Mac's Farm Management and Technology program, it seemed like a fast-track to becoming an agricultural producer. Hedging her bets, Charlebois applied to both Mac's FMT program and a CEGEP program in animal health technology, knowing that admissions to both were competitive.

"But I got accepted in both programs!" Charlebois said. "So I had to choose!"

## Learning English part of deal

Ultimately, Macdonald won out because it was closer to home, but also because Charlebois – raised in a francophone household – bravely wanted to improve her English.

"I personally believe that being well-spoken in English is important," Charlebois says in eloquent English. "Just in terms of being understood, but also because it is a language that most people know because of its easiness to learn."

Improving her second language has gone well, with only a little bit of awkwardness and trepidation as Charlebois plunged herself into an English-language learning environment.

"I certainly hope that my English has gotten better after studying here," she said. "Some of the challenges would probably be trying to express myself at the beginning of the school year when I didn't know all the words that I wanted to say."

## Attracted to niche market

And since starting in 2023 at Mac, Charlebois' educational aspirations have been very much fulfilled by the FMT program. During her time at Jardin chez Julie et Lova, the owners expanded into sheep production. That change inspired Charlebois to consider moving into the niche market herself and Mac afforded her great learning opportunities.

In the summer of 2024, she was able to work at The Northern Sheep Company in Lumsden, Saskatchewan, as part of her internship in the FMT program.

"I enjoyed every bit of time that I spent working there," Charlebois said. "It's what really confirmed my interest in lamb production."

And improving her English?

Well, a summer in Saskatchewan and a year in an English-language university has made Charlebois very adept at expressing her thoughts on modern agriculture in her second language.

"I think the biggest challenge in global farming today is the bad image that agriculture has on most city people. They don't know where their food comes from, or all the labour involved. They can be so detached from the reality of it all that, when the price of one



COURTESY: ALICE CHARLEBOIS

Alice Charlebois was an award winner of the QFA's Warren Grapes scholarship fund at the association's AGM this past fall. The 18-year-old from Coteau du Lac hopes to one day move into sheep production.

thing goes up, they want to find a cheaper alternative that is eventually worse for the environment and for the local economy."

## Undaunted by challenges

Charlebois knows that, coming from a non-farming background, she has challenges ahead. While she would like to have a sheep operation of her own, start-up capital and land are hard to come by. As a back-up plan, she plans to pursue her studies after FMT with a goal to becoming an agronomist.

"I know that the price of everything it high and doing a start-up with little to no money is impossible," she explained. "So I'd like to focus on the

animal side of agronomy."

But still, the lure of being a full-time agricultural producer looms large even for this "non-farming background" farmer. And with the determination Charlebois has, it's quite likely she'll succeed.

"Because of the increase of immigration in Quebec, the demand for lamb has increased – but the supply hasn't met the demand, so most lamb meat is imported from Australia and New Zealand. My hopes are that the demand still increases so that we can produce more lamb to feed people. For me, working with sheep is more enjoyable and safer than working with cattle. Plus, you get cutes little lambs!"



RAWF8/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Farmers need more information on what to expect quickly. What help will government offer them? They need more than access to loans.



**Martin Caron**  
UPA President

## Governments need to dispel uncertainty for ag producers

The Canadian government's \$1.3-billion plan over six years to improve border surveillance and stem fentanyl trafficking yielded a 30-day reprieve in a tariff dispute that will be disastrous to the Canadian and American economies.

Many voices are left wondering about the American president's true motives. Less than 0.2 per cent of fentanyl seized in the United States comes in through the its northern border. Less than 1 per cent of illegal migrants arrive from Canada. And the Americans' trade deficit is the result of their own spending on Canadian oil – \$100 billion in 2024, which represents 60 per cent of all oil imports to the U.S.

A number of people suspect Donald Trump's allegations are but a pretext for instigating what the *Wall Street Journal* called "the dumbest trade war in history." Others think Canada should reorient its economy and trade policies, given that our southern neighbours account for 50 per cent, or \$373.7 billion, of Canadian imports and 77 per cent, or \$594.2 billion, of exports. As we are seeing these days, the dynamic of dependency has its consequences.

This is why, for months now, we have been reminding the governments of Quebec and Canada, including through the newly formed Council on Canada-U.S. Relations, that 60 per cent of Canada's agri-food exports – or nearly \$60 billion – and 68 per cent of Quebec's bio-food exports, which represents more than \$8 billion in exports, wound up in the U.S. in 2023.

### Tariffs disastrous for farm sector

The tariff war breathing down our necks would have disastrous effects on a variety of Quebec's agricultural sectors that rely heavily on exporting their products stateside. This includes the pork sector, which sent \$583 million in product to the U.S. in 2023, the potato and vegetables sector, which exported \$487 million to the U.S.; maple syrup producers, who sent \$368 million of product across the border; the cereal and oilseed sector, which traded \$204 million; or the nuts and fruit sector, which includes blueberries, that exported \$139 million to the U.S. Our forestry industry, with its massive exports to the United States, would also be caught in the crossfire.

With this in mind, the chaotic situation that has unfolded recently is not in any way reassuring. Mere hours before the Feb. 4 deadline, customs officers informed Quebec produce growers

that they would be the ones on the hook for the 25-per-cent tariffs once they come into effect, rather than the American importers of their products. Meanwhile, distributors that export to the United States asked potato producers for an immediate 25-per-cent drop in prices in order to satisfy their American customers who will soon be facing the tariffs.

Meanwhile, grain producers seek answers about what effects the tariffs and counter-tariffs will have on both grain prices and input costs, in the context of our highly integrated North American market. These examples and the questions they raise add to the anxiety and confusion throughout the agricultural world. This is why it is so important for both levels of government to dispel the uncertainty by promptly clarifying what their plan is should tariff hostilities be stoked again.

### Questions about counter-tariffs

For example, it is imperative that a twofold tariff impact – meaning tariffs imposed on both Canadian products and on dealers selling them – be prevented by excluding American inputs (fertilizer, dairy and packaged produce, equipment, tractors, etc.) from any and all counter-tariffs. Quebec

farm producers import about \$2 billion worth of such products each year.

### Other issues

The governments also must guarantee a smooth arrival for temporary foreign workers employed in agriculture and food processing, ease administrative and regulatory requirements to mitigate the damage arising from reinstated tariffs, and promote local purchasing in an exceptionally rigorous way.

As Florence St-Arnaud, a family farmer in Sainte-Geneviève-de-Batiscan in the Mauricie region, wrote recently in *Le Soleil* newspaper: "It seems as if we need either a pandemic or a trade war for local purchasing to become a priority."

Both levels of government need to announce what mechanisms they will use to provide direct financial assistance to businesses in production sectors that end up being penalized. And this does not mean access to loans. Our entrepreneurs are exceptionally resilient, but they need to know what to expect – and quickly.

Protecting the agri-food interests of Quebec and Canada is a strategically important responsibility, especially in a time of extreme instability. As the pandemic showed, it is also a matter of national food security.





**Paul J. Hetzler**  
ISA Certified Arborist

One of our native residents has an adorable face, makes welcome mats out of their own poop, openly carries weapons and plows snow all winter. If you snowshoe or cross-country ski, there's a good chance you'll come across its furrows. Often, these trails will dead-end at a large tree, and if you look up, you might actually see the rascal itself, a ball of fur and quills sleeping among the branches.

One of 29 species worldwide, the North American porcupine is found throughout nearly all of Canada. Growing to 50 centimetres long and weighing as much as 15 kilograms, it's the second-largest North American rodent behind the beaver. It's the only cold-hardy porcupine in the world, and one of the few that regularly climb trees.

Their name derives from the Latin for "quill pig," but my Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) friends call them anêntaks, literally, "bark eaters." Reportedly, this is a less-than-endearing term they applied ages ago to their Algonquin neighbours, with whom they once shared hunting grounds in what is now northern New York State.

The Kanien'kehá:ka, like all six member nations in the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy, have a long history as agronomists. The Algonquins, who were mainly hunter-gatherers at the time, wisely knew that the inner bark of pine, maple, elm and other trees is nutritious. This is, in fact, how the Adirondack (anêntaks) Mountains got their name.

### Active all winter

These rodents of unusual size are active all winter, which is a great time to track them. More or less bullet-shaped, they make effective plows, and after a new snowfall, you can see which troughs have been recently cleared. Though not strictly nocturnal, porkies do tend to be more active at night.

Like me and a few others, porcupines talk to themselves. For the most part, they "speak" softly. If you like to camp, you may have heard one of these animals "muttering" as it passed near your tent in the dark. Vocalizations range from grunts and mewls to low whines, and even what sounds like the caw of a bird.

# Speak softly and carry a sharp quill

A porcupine's feet are pebbly textured and furless, and in deep snow you can also see marks where the tail drags side to side as it waddles. In cases where the claws don't register, its footprint can look strangely like that of a small child. Because porcupine fur includes roughly 30,000 hollow quills that collectively act like a personal flotation device, they swim well, and dine on all sorts of aquatic vegetation in season.

### Quills not launched

Their quills, which are really modified hairs, also account for the porky's ho-hum attitude toward humans, dogs and, unfortunately, cars. Quills, of course, aren't missiles, and can't be launched at predators. But they do come off at the literal drop of a hat, provided you drop said hat on a porcupine. A quill's barbed end sticks amazingly well to skin and other things, and if not removed right away, can work its way through soft tissues like muscles and organs.

Quills are used the world over by indigenous peoples for embroidering. Usually cream-coloured at the base, transitioning to brown or black at the tips, quills have an innate beauty, but are often dyed before being worked into leather or textiles. In North America, native peoples reportedly threw a blanket or skin over a porcupine to harvest some of its quills. I've never messed with a live specimen, but have harvested quills from road-killed porkies by touching a leather glove to them. The quills take some effort to remove from leather, and I store them in small glass jars for later use in beadwork.

### Not invincible

Generally, quills lie flat until a predator comes on the scene, at which time a porky will raise them and keep its back to the threat. Lashing its 20- to 25-cm-long tail side to side, the porcupine tries to make a protective radius around itself. Fishers, fierce predators and one of the largest members of the weasel family, are quick enough to outflank a porcupine and kill it by attacking the head.

One winter, I tracked a pair of fishers across a frozen pond to some rock ledges where I knew porkies denned. There, I found fisher and porcupine



LARRYDALLAIRE/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Porcupines are the second-largest North American rodent behind the beaver. They are cold-hardy and can climb trees.

tracks in the blood-stained snow, a scene that spoke of a porky's demise. Great horned owls, coyotes and wolves are said to hunt porcupines as well.

Having a cute face only gets you so far in life, and porcupines are despised by many folks because bark-eating harms and even kills trees. Since porkies are attracted to salt, they'll chew on tool handles and other items used by people.

In addition to eating bark of all kinds, they have a particular weakness for apples. It's impressive how far out on a branch a porcupine will go to get one, seeming to defy gravity. Unfortunately, this resulted in some of my apple trees getting pruned a bit more than I would have liked over the years.

Porkies usually den in rock crevices, caves and sometimes in hollow trees, the entrance often carpeted in a deep layer of crap that gets pushed out into an alluvial formation. Some biologists think this is to deter predators, but it does not smell bad.

### Long life

Breeding is in October and December. In May and June, females may birth up

to four young, but typically just one. Not only do porcupines have a low birth rate, it takes more than two years for them to fully mature. In the wild, a porcupine may live 17 or 18 years, with the oldest on record being an ancient 28 years.

Ray Fadden, a former neighbour of mine, used to teach school at Akwesasne, where a pupil once handed him an orphan porcupine. He said it was easily house-trained and made a great pet, and showed me pictures of "Needles," a full-size porky, in his lap. Apparently, he tried to release it into the wild, but after few days it found its way back home, where it bypassed my neighbour's outstretched arms and made a beeline for the litter box to hurriedly deposit several days' worth of pent-up feces. It seemed that Needles knew how to eat in the wild, but not how to relieve itself.

Kids and adults love to watch porcupines, as they're one of the few wild animals that will stand for such ogling. Just hang onto your dog if you have one!





## QFA videoconferences

# Save the date! Creating a Trusted Product

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 7:30 P.M.**

Stan Christensen and his family have been selling beef directly to the consumer for 22 years.

At Ferme Sage in Lac Ste. Marie, they've created a trusted partnership with customers who are looking for a truly local product.

In this videoconference, Christensen will explain how direct marketing beef has meant connecting with Ferme Sage's community by promoting local events and making the public a priority.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84091202201?pwd=3lapsBc8TqiuOf1KX3q1beJT3cgbzT.1>

**Meeting ID: 840 9120 2201**

**Passcode: 289382**



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The best place to find news, links and passcodes regarding QFA's Zoom meetings is at our Facebook Group: [facebook.com/groups/306871089363565](https://www.facebook.com/groups/306871089363565)

To be added to our email list so you never miss a videoconference, write to [qfa\\_advocate@yahoo.ca](mailto:qfa_advocate@yahoo.ca)





# Multi-species grazing makes big difference: rancher

**Andrew McClelland**  
*The Advocate*

"I'm not a scientist. I'm just a cowboy who makes some observations," said Devin Robertson. "My goal is to find a better way to feed the cattle."

Feeding cattle is what Robertson does best on his ranch in Last Mountain Lake, Sask. Robertson Ranch, located 70 kilometres northwest of Regina, was operated by Devin's grandfather until he died in 1995. Robertson recalls the tillage used on the farm from working it day-in, day-out as a teenager.

"Oh, I remember it," Robertson said. "That was the way things were done. But out here, it's short-grass prairie. You can look at the species growing along the edge of Last Mountain Lake and not be able to count how many species there are. And it's been here since the buffalo."

That native soil fertility made Robertson reflect on how to best retain the richness of his soil and get away from tillage. But in the late 1990s, finding practical information on rotational grazing and regenerative agriculture wasn't as easy as it is now.

"This is all before YouTube, when you couldn't sit down and learn this stuff from a computer," Robertson said.

"But I had rented some land from a local landlord we'll call 'Cowboy Bill.' He owned 300 housing units but had somehow read a book by Allen Savory and wanted to try his theories out on his pastureland. I was the only guy crazy enough to bring my cows to him."

Savory was a Zimbabwean livestock farmer and ecologist.

Inspiration can come from surprising places.

While Robertson found that Cowboy Bill wasn't overly concerned with the health of Robertson's cattle, he was keen on the pasture health brought about by rotational grazing.

What's more, Cowboy Bill's hair-brained foray into agriculture had somehow put him in touch with a real luminary of livestock farming: mob grazing and stocking density pioneer Neil Dennis, now well-known from the documentary *Soil Carbon Cowboy*.

"He was running steers in high-density and he had grass like nothing you'd ever seen," Robertson said, referring to Dennis's method of moving cattle daily and having nearly constant availability of hay as supplemental



COURTESY: DEVIN ROBERTSON

Devin Robertson of Last Mountain Lake in Saskatchewan followed his instincts when it came to maintaining soil and herd health through cover crops and rotational grazing. Nearly 30 years later, his intuition is paying off.

forage or as fertilizer.

Robertson told his story during a videoconference Jan. 15 hosted by the Quebec Farmers' Association. After being inspired by Dennis's practices, he began experimenting with cover crops, purchasing multi-species green feed from Covers & Co. that combined warm- and cold-season grasses, legumes, sunflowers and more to provide his herd with a healthy, balanced feed and improve soil health.

"I'm not a rep or a salesman for any company, but you can just tell that the cows are healthier," Robertson

explained. "The runtier calves did well. The bigger calves got bigger, they're hair was shiny, they'd walk by the lick tanks not craving anything. It was a complete ration and the feed was doing all the work."

Robertson estimates his cost per head per day feeding corn is at \$1.60. While his costs grazing cover crops are up to \$2.70 a day, he feels the added cost is well worth the health benefits it brings out in his cattle.

"But it does more for your soil underneath, and your animals do better on a diverse species," he explained. "I have

no scientific fact for that other than my eyeballs and watching my animals grow for 20 or 30 years."

For Robertson, the justification for better grazing through cover crops and rotational pasturing comes from common sense. Fertility is in the soil, and the producers' job is to preserve it and pass it along to the herd – and have the herd return the fertility to the soil.

"If you can keep moisture in the soil, you grow a better crop. It's not rocket science. It's just life. It just works. So why wouldn't you have a bigger diversity of species working for you?"



# The QFA has a new website!

Quebec farming news

Events you might be interested in

Details about upcoming online Farm Forums

Information about the Quebec Farmers' Association

**IT'S ALL THERE.**

<https://quebecfarmers.org/>

**Check it out.**

Let us know what you would like to see there.

Contact us by email: [qfa@upa.qc.ca](mailto:qfa@upa.qc.ca)

Contact us by phone: 514-246-2981







SCHARFSINN/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Farmers are willing to do their part to adapt to environmental concerns, but the economics have to work for them.

# Climate action programs need to help farmers be financially viable, too

**Christopher Bonasia**  
*The Advocate*

While emissions from Canada's agriculture sector showed a slight decline last year, farmers need more support and a strategy that centres viability and economics in order to make further gains.

"Canadian farmers are doing a lot of great work on sustainability," said Geneviève Grossenbacher, director of policy at Farmers for Climate Solutions (FCS).

But efforts to support farmers need to be greater, and need to prioritize severe weather events, too – "especially when we know the economy is becoming even more unstable, making sure that at least we're more stable in terms of production will be really key."

Canada's food production has been a prominent part of the federal government's climate goals. While emissions within the sector had continued steadily rising in past years, a preliminary report from the federal government released in mid-December indicates that in 2023 – the most recent year available for that data – emissions fell for the first

time, dropping to 55 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent from 56 the year before.

## Climate targets being met

The RBC Climate Action Institute's 2025 report, *A Year for Rewiring*, also showed Canadian farmers moving towards meeting climate targets because of "steady progress from diesel-use efficiency and fertilizer management plans on farms." Policy action – especially from the federal government – also helped as a "catalyst for capital investments and on-farm action."

Some of that progress was spurred by a capital boost from private investments and from federal programs, including the On Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF) that was recently extended for another three years. Farmers can use the OFCAF to fund adoption of beneficial management practices like cover cropping, rotational grazing and improved nitrogen management. Though it is funded by the federal government, it is administered through 13 farm organizations across the country, including

ECOCERT Canada, Canadian Grasslands Association, and L'Union des producteurs agricoles.

## Quebec farmers on board

Grossenbacher says the farmers and ranchers who FCS works with generally like OFCAF. An analysis of Quebec farmers' perceptions on climate change, based on a national poll, showed that many Quebec farmers are already adopting those practices, and they see climate change as a top challenge facing the sector. But the second-ranked challenge was farm viability, which contrasts with national responses that listed input costs as second.

"We definitely see that the link to sustainability – for us and for most farmers – is increasingly an economic priority," said Grossenbacher. "And that comes out even more strongly for the Quebec farmers."

## Economics need to be part of picture

RBC also credited policy action from the federal government as a key driver. But the Sustainable Agriculture Strategy

that was being developed in partnership with the industry is now on hold. In December, several key organizations withdrew out of frustration that economic sustainability was not being emphasized enough.

FCS was not among the organizations that withdrew. Grossenbacher said she shared those concerns but FCS had been hopeful a consensus could be reached. She added that building climate resilience is an important part of safeguarding Canada's food security and economic viability long term as losses from weather become worse.

"The economic lens of sustainability is absolutely essential, and we still feel there's a lot of things in the Sustainable Agriculture Strategy that can be done to address that," said Grossenbacher.

"But definitely we need to clarify what the government's role will be to make sure that farmers are not left hanging and holding the burden of (climate change) by themselves."





# Responding to hunger in Sudan – now world's largest humanitarian crisis

Canadian Foodgrains Bank

The hunger crisis in Sudan is at a critical stage for millions of people.

Over half the population of Sudan – 24.6 million people – are facing acute hunger since the outbreak of civil war in April 2023, and up to 640,000 people are already experiencing famine-like conditions.

Twenty months into the conflict, Sudan has become the world's largest humanitarian crisis and has triggered the mass displacement of millions of people.

### How Foodgrains Bank is responding

To respond to the rapidly worsening hunger situation in Sudan, Foodgrains Bank members and their locally-based partners are serving nearly 100,000 people with nutritional support and agricultural programs, with plans to reach even more people with emergency food assistance in the next few months.

In neighbouring countries like South Sudan, Foodgrains Bank members and their locally based partners are also serving thousands of women, men and children who have been forced to flee amidst the ongoing crisis.

### Insights from partners in Sudan

David O'Hare works for Trócaire, a partner of Foodgrains Bank member Development and Peace-Caritas Canada. He recently returned from Sudan where he witnessed the devastation the current conflict has caused to the country and its people.

People in Sudan's Nuba Mountains still remember when planes dropped bombs and not aid

It was 36 degrees and very humid. Travelling on foot in these conditions is a real challenge, yet that is exactly what millions of people are doing right across Sudan. They are not travelling through choice but through necessity having been forced to flee their homes because of the vicious civil war that has torn this country apart since March 2023.

The scale of the crisis is difficult to comprehend.

Approximately 30 per cent of the inhabitants of Sudan – about 14 million people – have been forced to flee. That's more than twice the population of the entire island of Ireland. This has been recognized as the greatest humanitarian crisis in the world today.

Many are on the move with nothing



CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK

Caregivers of children with malnutrition receive nutrition services at a Trocaire-supported nutrition clinic in Nuba Mountains in Sudan.

– no food, no water and no possessions. More than 25 million people do not have enough food to eat. Millions of women and children are at particular risk in this situation from malnutrition and from violence.

In the Nuba Mountains region in the south of Sudan nearly 1 million internally displaced people are finding it hard to cope. This region was already reeling from acutely high levels of poverty and the extra strain on resources has brought the system to breaking point.

"The humanitarian crisis here is so bad for several reasons," said Juma Edris Kuku, the regional director of the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association.

"Firstly, the conflict has resulted in so many people fleeing to the region because of the fighting elsewhere in the country. Secondly, the last harvest was very bad because of a lack of rain and a plague of locusts. This has meant there has been no surplus or safety net for people here who have shared what they have with the newcomers and that has exacerbated the situation.

"Half of the million (displaced people) in this region are children and many of them are being accommodated in 15 camps. We are seeing a worrying increase in levels of malnutrition in the camps particularly in women and children. It isn't the fighting that will kill people here, but a lack of food."

"We are seeing a lot of malnutrition

cases here in mothers and children," said Dr. Tom Cartina, director of the Mother of Mercy Hospital, the only major hospital in the region.

"It is causing a particular problem in newborns whose mothers have not had enough food," said Cartina, who has worked in Sudan for more than 16 years. "Babies are being born very prematurely and this is a huge risk to them in this situation.

Trócaire has provided the hospital with essential support in the form of highly nutritious food supplements, he said.

Another challenge facing Trócaire is access. There is only one humanitarian corridor into the Nuba Mountains and that is a rutted dirt road from Yida in South Sudan up to Kauda in Nuba. During the rainy season this road is almost completely impassable.

Airdrops of aid were made when the road was closed. Unfortunately, people in the Nuba Mountains still remember when planes dropped bombs and not food, and so many fled in terror when they heard the aircraft. The airdrops had to stop, however, as the airspace became too dangerous because of the conflict. This meant that just a trickle of the necessary aid got through over a period of several months.

The stories of those affected are stark. One mother, Madina, whose husband and one of her sons were killed, was

forced to walk for six days with her seven remaining children to reach a camp in Thobo. They had no food and had to eat leaves and grasses to stay alive. When they first reached the camp her youngest son, Muriambi, was extremely malnourished. He was treated at the Trócaire clinic.

"The nutrition program helped my child to survive but he has other complications," Madina said.

Her son looked like he was around 3 years of age. He is 9. Severe malnutrition over a prolonged period of time had stunted his growth.

But this family's experience is not unique.

"We were originally helping 12,000 people but this number has doubled since the opening of the camp nearby, said Elizabeth Philip Kori, head of the clinic at Trócaire's Amdulu Health Centre.

"There is a shortage of food, clean water and medical care. Malnutrition is a major problem, particularly for women and children. We are saving lives here but when we aren't able to save someone, it makes me so sad and angry that I just sit and cry."

The work Trócaire is supporting is having a positive impact, but the resources are being totally outstripped by the huge level of need. There is no end to the fighting in sight.



# Fuelling dairy calves with fat helps get them through the winter

Sommer Thompson

William H. Miner

Agricultural Research Institute

As winter settles in, farmers face significant challenges in maintaining the health and growth of their young stock. The plummeting temperatures can drastically increase the energy demands of calves, making it difficult for them to maintain body condition and achieve optimal growth rates.

Dairy calves are particularly sensitive to temperature changes. Unlike adult animals, they experience higher environmental stress due to the lack of heat production from rumen fermentation and underdeveloped subcutaneous fat reserves. Consequently, their energy requirements increase as they strive to maintain body heat in freezing conditions.

Research indicates that calves under three weeks of age experience a 40-per-cent increase in maintenance energy requirements when exposed to temperatures of 37°F or lower, while calves over three weeks see a 13-per-cent increase.

Despite consuming more starter grain compared with other seasons, calves average daily gain intake was not significantly affected for calves up to 13 weeks. This highlights the disruptive impact of cold stress on animal productivity, which can interfere with the daily operations of dairy facilities.

To meet the increased energy needs during the cold season effectively, supplemental fat can be incorporated into the diets of calves using starter grain. This provides an efficient energy source, helping calves stay warm, grow and thrive during harsh winter conditions. It also is encouraged to introduce calves to starter as soon as two weeks of age to improve rumen development.

Fat is an energy-dense nutrient, offering more than twice the energy per unit weight compared with carbohydrates and protein, making it an excellent supplement during the winter months. Adding fat to the diet of dairy calves helps meet the increased energy demands without significantly increasing the feed volume, which is critical for young animals with limited stomach capacity.

The primary benefit of feeding supplemental fat is the provision of additional calories without increasing feed



ZHURAVLEV ANDREY/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

In winter, dairy calves are more sensitive to temperature changes than adult cows, experiencing higher environmental stress due to the lack of heat production from rumen fermentation and underdeveloped subcutaneous fat reserves.

volume. This is especially important during winter, when cold stress may reduce the feeding frequency of calves and lower intake.

Additionally, integrating fat into the diet provides a consistent energy source that supports their energy requirements and enhances growth rates.

Although some studies have shown that supplemental fats may limit dry matter intake and reduce average daily gain in thermoneutral conditions, some research reports no significant decrease in dry matter intake when feeding 6-per-cent soybean oil supplemental fat during the winter months.

The findings indicated that combining supplemental fat with a high-protein or high-fibre starter grain was optimal for increased growth and performance.

Beyond the energy boost, supplemental fats can support the development of the immune system in young calves. Essential fatty acids and certain hormones synthesized through fat supplementation can help maintain calf health during the cold season.

Calves might be reluctant to consume certain types of supplemental

fats, but alternative forms can be added to their diet to boost intake. Vegetable oils, like soybean oil, canola and palm oil are commonly used due to their high-fat content and palatability. These oils are easily digestible and can be added directly to starter feeds. Whole fat sources, like soybeans, sunflower seeds or corn offer high oil content and additional nutrients like fibre and protein. Blended fats and tallow are also viable options that can be easily incorporated into calf diets.

Supplementing young animals with fat provides significant benefits, but it is essential to recognize and address potential challenges. As with any dietary change, fat should be introduced gradually to avoid digestive issues. Overfeeding fat can lead to complications such as diarrhea or reduced feed intake, so monitoring the inclusion level is crucial. Typically, 3-6% DM fat is recommended in the overall diet, though this can vary based on the calves' individual needs and environmental conditions.

Another challenge is ensuring a balanced diet.

While fat is energy-dense, it doesn't supply all the necessary nutrients for growth. Therefore, ensuring that the diet includes adequate protein, vitamins and minerals is vital to prevent nutrient imbalances. Combining supplemental fat with a high-quality milk replacer or starter grain helps provide a balanced diet that supports both growth and immune function.

Supplemental fat is particularly valuable for supporting the health and growth of dairy calves during the cold months. By offering a concentrated energy source, fat helps calves meet the increased energy demands associated with cold stress, enhances growth rates and boosts immune function. With supplemental fat, dairy farmers can ensure their calves remain strong, healthy and well-prepared for the challenges of winter.

*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.*



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**Robert McCartney**, Athelstan

**Romeo Lagarde**, Calamut Island

**Patrick Sherrrer**, Roxton Falls

**Barbara Beattie**, Brownsburg-Chatham





# Robot start-ups: To ensure profitability many factors come into play

**Catherine Cross, Strategic adviser and Simon Jetté-Nantel, Economist**  
*Lactanet*

Robotic milking continues to gain popularity, which is understandable given current labour challenges. But it is not a cure-all. Some find it suits their needs, while others less so. What factors contribute to a successful operation?

The start-up period is often one of the determining factors in the success of the transition to robotic milking.

The milk recording data from a sample of 248 herds that have made the transition to robotic milking have been reviewed to see the impact on herd production, and to compare the 2023 economic results of more than 500 herds, 131 of which are robotic.

## Impact on production

During the first 120 days following startup, robot operations were marked by an average drop of 0.71 kg milk/cow/day or 0.34 kg fat/cow/day.

Over the course of the following year these farms, on average, work back up to their pre-robotic production levels. In the second year, there was a 6-per-cent increase (1.7 kg milk/cow/day or + 0.060 kg fat/cow/day) and in the third year, an 8-per-cent increase from their initial level. It's worth noting that Quebec Holstein herds achieved an average annual increase of 1.2 per cent in milk production per cow (or 1.8 per cent in fat production per cow) over the same period, regardless of the type of operation, according to Lactanet's comparative statistics. The net gain we can attribute to the robot is, therefore, closer to 5.6 per cent in the second year, and 4.4 per cent in the third year.

The variability in productivity gains observed for milk and kg fat/cow/day

production in the second year is linked, among other things, to the production level pre-startup. While less-productive herds were able to, on average, achieve gains of almost 3 kg milk/cow/day, or around 0.1 kg fat/cow/day, the more productive herds prior to start-up had much more modest gains overall.

These trends are highly variable. After startup, the type of housing, feed management, overall herd management and the ability to adapt to the new management style (between both cows and people) explain some of the variability observed between farms.

A seasonal effect was also observed: a large proportion, 70 per cent of the farms, started in autumn/winter, with the remainder in spring/summer. Productivity in both groups was initially similar, with an average of 31 kg milk/cow/day. Herds transferred during spring and summer showed a marked drop in production during the first few months after startup, probably correlated with heat stress and the division of working time between the herd and seasonal tasks. After the first year, both subgroups returned to similar production levels.

## Impact on milk quality

Changes in milking method and cow environment also affect milk quality.

The above graph shows that herds with SCC averages around 100,000 cells/mL before startup show, on average, no improvement afterwards. In fact, they show a slight deterioration.

On the other hand, those with a starting average of 200,000 cells/mL can expect an average reduction of 45,000 cells/mL, and those with an average closer to 300,000 can expect an improvement of 100,000. These are only trends, and the variability of the results indicate that several other factors influence these outcomes (type of bedding, stall management, vaccination protocols and tolerance threshold for intervention).

## Impact on operation costs

Firstly, all available sources of feed cost data (whether from the Lactanet feed services or from analyses carried out by a farm's adviser) lead to the same conclusions: robotic milking adds additional concentrate costs per kilo of fat and per cow. But on average, although the total cost of feed per cow increases, the cost per kilo of butterfat produced is slightly lower than other operation types.

When all variable costs are taken into account (feed, veterinary, reproduction, bedding, etc.), robotic herds compare favorably over pipeline herds. This is due, among other things, to the

productivity gain per cow. For 2023, we're looking at an average advantage of \$0.60/kg fat/cow/day associated with robotic milking (see table).

## But is it profitable?

Obviously, investment cost is a key factor in determining the profitability of robotic systems. We know that the investment cost per robot and per cow varies from one company to another for a variety of reasons (such as site planning and management, new versus used equipment, space per cow). But once in place, a large part of the success of an operation is linked to its efficient use of assets.

In the case of robotic milking, we're talking about robot efficiency, i.e. the quantity of milk or fat produced per robot. Lactanet periodically publishes Quebec references on the subject, and the latest, (autumn 2024) shows that on average, milking robots in Quebec produce 71.8 kg fat/day, while maximum use is calculated to generate 91.1 kg fat/day on average.

Assuming an operating margin of \$10/kg fat delivered, an additional production of 20 kg fat/day for the same robot represents approximately \$73,000 more in operational profit annually (i.e., revenue minus variable expenses).

## In conclusion

There are several challenges to optimizing a robot's efficiency, one of which is quota availability. That being said, robotic milking can bring us an increase in production and substantial operational savings. To optimize them and ensure their profitability, we need to focus on their efficiency, cow selection (kg milk/min in the robot), and management improvement and building design and maintenance, among other things.

Interestingly, start-ups that have happened since 2018 show no significant improvement for criteria such as production, culling or milk quality versus those prior.

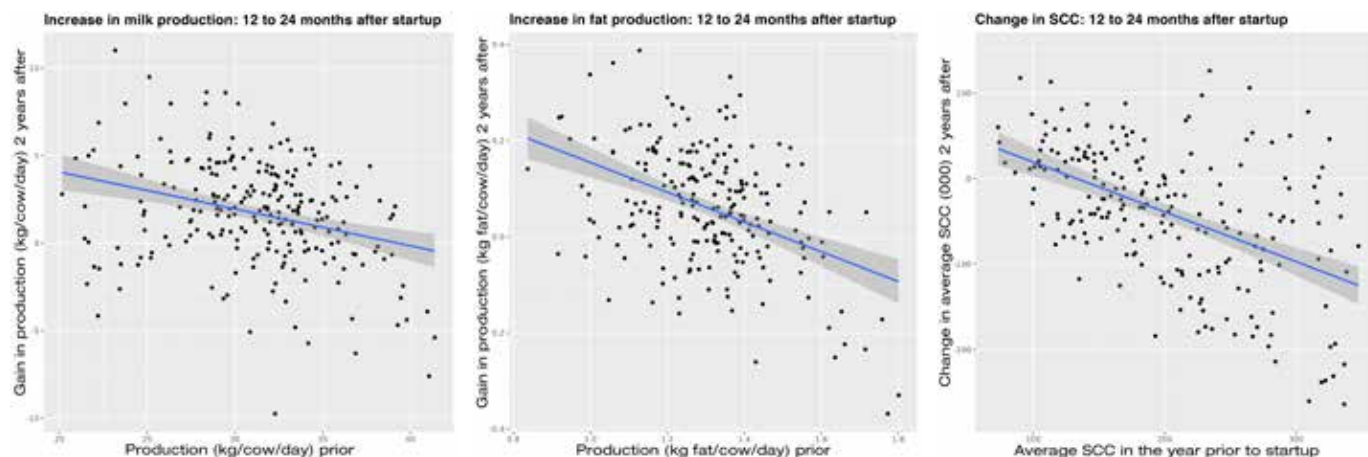
Is there still room to improve and adapt our methods, such as protocols for preparing cows for robotic milking, subject selection, cow transfer methods and feed management?

Robot start-ups remain a key planning challenge. Successful robotic start-ups make it possible to stand out from the crowd and have a healthy, profitable herd.

**Table: Average Variable Costs (2023) – Dairies**

	Pipeline (n=314)	Robot (n=131)
Feed cost (\$/cow)	11.30	12.00
Feed cost (\$/kg fat)	8.33	8.17
Total variable costs (\$/cow)	5,717	5,874
Total variable costs (\$/kg fat)	13.90	13.30

*Data: ViaPole, Agritel 2023*





# Corn, soybean demand unchanged, Chinese grain imports down

**Ramzy Yelda, Senior Market Analyst**  
*Producteurs de grains du Québec*

U.S. Department of Agriculture's February supply-and-demand report is neutral, with very few changes.

The U.S. supply and demand are unchanged for both corn and soybeans.

Prices, however, have fluctuated.

The farmgate price of corn is up by \$0.10/bushel, while the price of soybeans is down by \$0.10/bu.

For wheat, the only change is a slight increase of 4 million bushels in human consumption, resulting in a similar decrease in 2025 stocks.

Worldwide, wheat exports are down by 1 million tonnes (MT) in Europe and by 0.5 MT in both Russia and Ukraine. Brazil's corn production is down by 1 MT. Brazilian and Ukrainian corn exports are down by 1 MT each. As for soybeans, the Argentine crop is down by 3 MT due to dry conditions.

One interesting report highlight is the reduction in Chinese wheat and corn imports. Wheat imports are reduced by 2.5 MT, hitting 8 MT, while corn imports are down by 3 MT, now at 10 MT. Both import levels are low relative to recent years, probably due to good local crops and stagnating demand.

## Grain growers reflecting on past year

A series of annual general meetings for the syndicates affiliated with the Producteurs de Grains du Québec kicked off at the end of January and will continue through the end of February. These gatherings provide grain producers from across Quebec with a valuable opportunity to connect, discuss key issues and reflect on the past year.

The PGQ annual general meeting will take place on March 27 and 28 at the convention centre in St. Hyacinthe. With the theme "Cultiver passion et fierté," the program features a variety of talks and presentations, including one by journalist, news anchor and economic analyst Pierre-Olivier Zappa.

Nearly 300 grain producers from across Quebec are expected to attend this year's provincial event, which will also be a celebration of the PGQ's 50th anniversary.

A gala dinner on March 27 will be hosted by entrepreneur, television producer, speaker, columnist and blogger Anne Marcotte. Celebrating 50 years of pride and collective accomplishments, this festive evening will feature notable guests, a gourmet dinner and short videos highlighting key moments in PGQ's history.

## Production costs: launch of studies and recruitment of producers

A particular focus of 2024 was the study of production costs in the grain sector. Several studies are being conducted simultaneously, with research planned to continue until 2026.

One such study is a cost-of-production survey for cereals and canola, conducted under the Farm Income Stabilization Insurance (ASRA) program, which will help update the stabilized income figures. This survey is mandatory, and producers who refuse to participate will face financial penalties.

In addition, other studies will be conducted at the request of the PGQ on issues like production costs for corn, soybeans and some emerging crops, as well as additional costs related to seed production and organic grain production. Participation in these studies is voluntary, but the PGQ strongly encourages participation and is grateful to those who take part. It is crucial for us to gather credible, real-world techno-economic data from the field: this information helps us understand the changes occurring in production and strengthens our analyses and advocacy efforts.

The Centre d'étude sur les coûts de production en agriculture (CECPA) has begun recruiting farms, and a number of producers have already been contacted or will be soon.

## Advance payments program

The Advance Payments Program is a federal loan initiative, with a portion offered interest-free, that provides agricultural producers with easy access to low-cost advances. The PGQ encourages Quebec grain producers to watch for the opening of the registration process for the seeding component of the 2025-2026 season, which the PGQ hopes will be earlier this year than in previous years. The PGQ is urging Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to announce the interest-free amount as soon as possible and to open the registration process.

We also remind you that, since the start of the 2024-2025 season, the Advance Payments Program has gone digital: the AppGrains app is now the fastest and most efficient way to manage your file.

## Agriculture and food event

PGQ directors from the Chaudière-Appalaches and Rive-Nord regions hosted a booth at the Semaine de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et de la Consommation in Quebec City in January. Visitors who stopped by had the opportunity to find out more about grain production in Quebec, handle and compare different grains, and explore the wide variety of Quebec-made consumer products derived from grain. They could also enter a draw to win one of 10 six-packs of Jean de passion, a beer specially created to mark the PGQ's 50th anniversary.

A big thank-you to the producers who took shifts at this well-attended event to help showcase grain production in Quebec.



COURTESY: PRODUCTEURS DE GRAINS DU QUÉBEC

Members of the Producteurs de Grains du Québec manned the booth at an agriculture and food event in Quebec City in January.



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.







## Bruschetta with cherry tomatoes and whipped feta



CYNTHIA GUNN, THE ADVOCATE

Using Quebec cherry tomatoes, this appetizer – made with feta and yoghurt on baguette – is easy to make, delicious and very on trend in the buy-Canadian-and-fight-U.S.-tariffs climate we are in.

### INGREDIENTS

**Day-old baguette**

**1 cup feta cheese**

**½ cup Greek-style yoghurt**

**lemon zest from about half a lemon**

**salt and pepper to taste**

**2 pints of cherry tomatoes**

**2-3 cloves garlic, crushed**

**1/3 - 1/2 cup olive oil**

**½ - 1 tsp. dried thyme**

**salt and pepper**

### PREPARATION

Slice day-old baguette in slices about half an inch thick (In the picture I had to use what I had, which was already sliced differently. Use what you have!). Toss with olive oil and bake until slightly crispy. Set aside, or make ahead and put in a sealed container for use later.

In a glass or metal container, put feta and yoghurt. Using a handheld immersion blender, whip until smooth. Add lemon zest, salt and pepper and mix until well combined. This can also be made ahead. Refrigerate.

Prick a batch of cherry tomatoes twice each with a fork. Place in a roasting dish, drizzle heavily with olive oil, sprinkle with dried thyme, crushed garlic, salt and pepper, and toss. Bake at 350 degrees F for about 15 minutes. Tomatoes should be softened and split.

Spread whipped feta thickly over prepared baguette. Spoon warm (not hot) cherry tomatoes and oil over top and serve.

Source: Tara Gellatly, February 2025

## Simple and delicious – with a cherry tomato on top

**Cynthia Gunn**

*QFA's Food Writer*

It hurts to buy cherry tomatoes. It hurts because there was such a surplus in the garden just a short time ago. Well, five months may not be a short time, exactly, but you get the point. The little gems were so abundant that many remained unpicked, rotted and eventually fell to the earth, where undoubtedly some sort of furry or insect creature happily gobbled them up.

In the middle of winter, these bright little gems almost look out of place. They are such an embodiment of sun and warmth. A reminder of those summer days, eagerly awaiting the first ripe cherry tomatoes to be tossed with basil, olive oil and balsamic vinegar, or added to a simple Greek salad. Normally, I can wait for the once-a-year surplus in August and early September and not purchase them from the store the rest of the year.

But something happened to shatter my will power last week.

While visiting an old friend, she made an appetizer. A first course that was so simple and so delicious that I asked her to make it again the second night. (I asked her husband to make a whisky sour the second night as well, a strangely enticing drink made with frothy egg whites and real maraschino cherries, recipe withheld.)

Knowing how she cooks, I received the answer I expected to the request for the recipe: "I don't really have one. I kind of made it up after having something sort of like this in a restaurant."

I'm guilty of having done the same on a few occasions when I'm still making up a recipe, a frustrating truth for those on the other side of the stove.

On the second night I said, OK, so just tell me what you did.

Here it is, as narrated to me while pricking the cherry tomatoes in Step 3 of the preparation. Measurements and amounts given were approximate, so I just made them up, which means you can, too.

On my return home I went straight to the general store to get cherry tomatoes. They only had one kind and one brand, grown in Quebec, so I don't feel so bad. And hey, that means they won't get slapped with a tariff. If you can find the mixed ones, yellow, red and the various colours, they seem to come in now, that is preferable both from an aesthetic and taste perspective. And then look forward to using your own, just five months from now.

*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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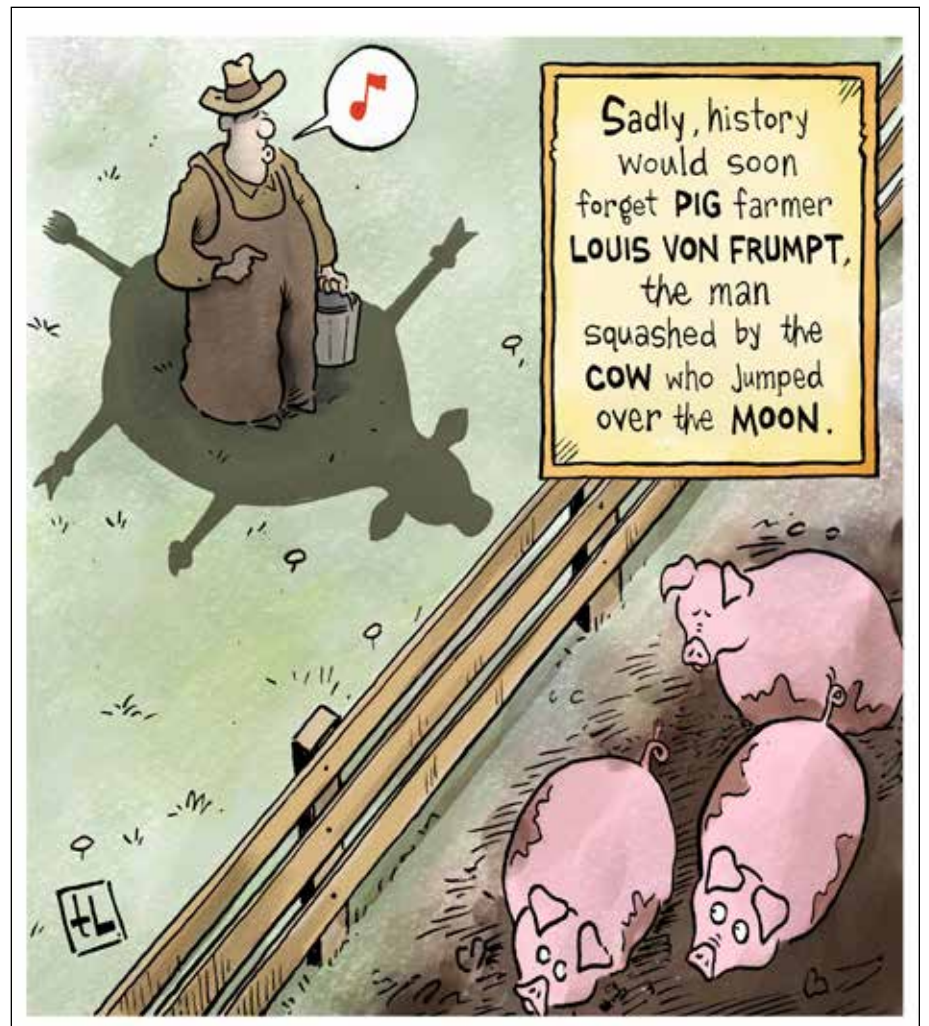
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# PASSION IN DAIRY

## APRIL 2 & 3, 2025

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