

Quebec Farmers' Advocate



Vol. 46, No. 7 – August 2026

Publication Mail No.: 40033773

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Canada aims to grow more



With the aim of “putting more Canada” on Canadian plates, the federal government has put forward its first-ever National Food Security Strategy. It's goals are to expand Canada's agricultural sector while making groceries more affordable at the checkout counter. *The Advocate* takes a look at what it means for producers. **See story, Page 5.**

“We are an agricultural superpower, yet for most Canadians, it doesn't feel like that at the checkout counter.”

— Prime Minister Mark Carney as he unveiled Canada's first-ever food security strategy in June

Farming with intention

Outaouais rancher honoured for stewardship

Brenda O'Farrell
The Advocate

On paper, the Drury Farm is a beef cattle operation in the Outaouais region that has grown. But a closer look shows that its expansion is a product of clear intention.

That intention has been recognized, with its current manager, Victor Drury, named the winner of Quebec's Environmental Stewardship Award, presented by *Les Producteurs de bovins du Québec* earlier this year.

On Aug. 19, Drury will attend the Canadian Cattle Association's semi-annual meeting in Winnipeg. This is where all the top provincial cattle producers will gather and the best in Canada will be honoured.

Being named an environmental steward means a producer goes beyond the standard conservation practices. These farmers set a positive example.

“It's certainly nice to be recognized,” said Drury, a second-generation producer who manages a herd of about 300 Red Angus cows, an operation that

his father, Gib, started in 1974. But the award has not changed much in terms of the day-to-day operation of the farm, he admits.

The farm includes 900 acres of pasture and another 950 acres rented for hay. The cows winter outdoors. How they manage the wintering sites, do not use any chemicals, monitor the nutrient content of manure, maintain watercourses, managed runoff – along with a long list of practices – are all part of how this farm measures up.

For Drury, the farm his father started was built on basic principles of taking care of the land, a tradition he continues.

That tradition is what is being recognized with the award, but Drury is quick to share the recognition.

“The whole process is good visibility for the whole beef industry,” he said.

Victor Drury discussed his farming operation during a QEA Farm Form last month. Read the details on Page 13. Or, watch the videoconference on the QEA's website at quebecfarmers.org.

Quebec lifts 20-year moratorium on new farmland

Unveils new enviro rules

Andrew McClelland
The Advocate

— Local Journalism Initiative

Quebec has adopted its new agri-environmental rules, ending a two-decade-old moratorium on agricultural land expansion and opening the door to as much as 200,000 additional hectares of farmland across the province.

“With this new framework, our objective is clear: better protection of the environment, while giving producers simpler, more predictable rules,” said Quebec Environment Minister Pascale Déry, who unveiled the new *Règlement sur les pratiques agroenvironnementales* (Regulation respecting agri-environmental practices, or RPAE) alongside Quebec Agriculture Minister Donald Martel on July 6th.

See NEW RULES, Page 17.



Just the facts

3.8%

That is the percentage increase in the cost of food purchased in grocery stores in Canada in May, which represents a faster rate of increase than the 3.2-per-cent jump recorded in the overall Consumer Price Index for the month.

Source: Statistics Canada

429.4 million

That is the number of tonnes of soybeans grown across the globe in 2025. This production level represents a 22.4-per-cent increase over the 350.8 million tonnes produced in 2016.

Source: U.S. Foreign Agricultural Service

86 million

That is the estimated size of the U.S. beef herd in May 2026, marking the lowest level since 1961. This low level pushed cattle futures to a record high — US\$2.51 per pound.

Source: Dairy Herd Management magazine

25%

That is the amount of the globally traded nitrogen used in fertilizer that travels through the Strait of Hormuz.

Source: Canada The National Food Security Strategy, June 2026

50%+

Just over half of the cost of producing an acre of a crop stems from fuel and fertilizer.

Source: Canada The National Food Security Strategy, June 2026

HAVE HAY, WILL TRAVEL



THE ADVOCATE

Hay season is in full swing across the province. This wagon was spotted heading north on St. Dominique Road in Les Cèdres in late July, filling the air with the scent of summer like only fresh hay can.



Mission

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

Vision

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

Shared Values

Members of the QFA believe in:

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

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

Vol. 46, No. 7: 2026
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Legal deposit: National Library of Canada
Dépôt légal: Bibliothèque nationale du Québec
ISSN#0714-9518
Publication Mail No: 40033773

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

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Sales Director Charles Couture / ccouture@laterre.ca / 450-679-8483 ext. 7290 • Sales Representatives Sylvain Joubert, Marc Mancini.

QFA memberships, which include a free subscription to the Advocate, are \$68.99 (\$60 + \$3 GST + \$5.99 QST) for one year OR \$137.97 (\$120 + \$6 GST + \$11.97 QST) for two years.
Send cheques to: The Quebec Farmers' Association / 555 Roland-Therrien, Suite 255, Longueuil, QC J4H 4E7 / Phone: 450-679-0540, ext. 8536 / Fax: 450-463-5291
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New rules for Quebec farmland sales

Measures aim to curb speculation

Andrew McClelland

The Advocate

– Local Journalism Initiative

Quebec's Ministry of Agriculture has published two draft regulations aimed at tightening oversight of farmland transactions across the province, part of a broader push to slow speculative buying and keep agricultural land in the hands of working producers.

Framing the initiative as a follow-through on the "Act to ensure the sustainability of agricultural land and its vitality" (Loi visant à assurer la

pérennité du territoire agricole et sa vitalité) adopted in March 2025, provincial Agriculture Minister Donald Martel announced the measures July 10.

The new rules would require additional disclosures at the *Registre foncier du Québec* whenever certain land transactions are registered – most notably, separating out the portion of a sale price attributable to farmland itself from the portion tied to buildings on the property.

That distinction, the ministry says, should give regulators a sharper read on where prices are actually moving and make it easier to flag transactions

that look like speculative pressure rather than ordinary agricultural sales.

"Today, our government is responding to a clear request from the agricultural community – to better track what's happening in the farmland market in order to better protect it," Martel said. "We want to support the next generation, fight speculation and keep our land in the hands of those who farm it."

"Better tracking of land transactions is a concrete response to protect our agricultural territory and ensure the vitality of our regions, without adding extra paperwork," he added.

The regulations build on Bill 86, which already requires would-be buyers to seek authorization from the *Commission de protection du territoire agricole du Québec* (CPTAQ) in two situations: when the buyer is an investment fund, or when the buyer isn't a registered farm operator and the land in question sits within 1,000 metres of an urban perimeter in certain regional county municipalities.

Under the new rules, some organizations that work directly on protecting or developing agricultural land would be exempt from that authorization requirement, cutting down on administrative



BOB POOL/STOCK.ADOBE.COM

New disclosure rules will require buyers and sellers to separate the value of farmland from the value of buildings when registering a transaction with the *Registre foncier du Québec*.

steps for groups already aligned with the law's goals.

A new fee schedule for CPTAQ land-acquisition applications is also part of the package, intended to ensure the commission handles requests on an equitable footing.

What's in the draft regulations:

- Since Bill 86 took effect, CPTAQ authorization is required to acquire farmland when: (1) the buyer is an investment fund; or (2) the buyer is not a registered farm operation and the land sits within 1,000 metres of an urban perimeter in certain regional county municipalities.
- Some organizations supporting farmland protection or development would be exempt from the authorization requirement.
- New fee schedule introduced for CPTAQ acquisition applications.
- The two draft regulations are open for public comment for 45 days (from July 8) following their publication in the *Gazette officielle du Québec*.
- If the draft regulations are adopted before the general elections scheduled for the fall, they would come into effect on Oct. 2, 2027.

Quebec egg producer gets \$1.6M boost to its sunny-side-up approach

Frederic Serre

The Advocate

– Local Journalism Initiative

One of Canada's leading egg graders and producers is about to see its production increase in the wake of a \$1.6-million injection by the federal government, which will allow St. Hyacinthe-based Lovo to build a new campus and increase its processing capacity.

Quebec Agriculture Minister Donald Martel announced the funding July 9, saying the new egg industrial campus will allow Lovo to "accelerate the market launch of value-added egg products, consolidate its operations, and support the growth of a company deeply rooted in Quebec's agricultural economy."

Founded in 1987 and formerly known as Groupe Nutri, Lovo is a family-owned operation that has quickly

grown to become one of this country's largest egg producers, marketing 2.4 billion eggs a year.

Lovo chief executive officer Sébastien Léveillé said the new campus will house the company's administrative offices, an egg grading plant and a processing plant equipped with innovation spaces, including a research and development department. He praised the financial boost, saying the new campus represents a turning point in Lovo's history.

"This project will enable us to process more products here in Quebec, develop new food products, and continue our growth while remaining deeply rooted in the realities of local agriculture," Léveillé said. "With this campus, Lovo is taking a decisive step forward by establishing a truly integrated agri-food innovation platform."

In addition to the funding, Lovo is

eligible for a loan of up to \$20 million through the ESSOR program, administered by Investissement Québec on behalf of the Quebec government.

Martel said the new campus is not only a project that will strengthen Lovo's relationship with the community, but "it's also an investment in what we produce and process here and what we put on the plates of Quebecers. The new campus will strengthen our local egg supply and processing chain. This is exactly the kind of project that enables Quebec to achieve greater food self-sufficiency."

When it changed its name, Lovo was chosen to reflect "a people-centred vision of the future," said Léveillé, adding that it was derived from the words "love" and "ovo," which is Latin for egg.

"The name is intended to be a caring response to the current gloomy climate. Seventy-nine per cent of Canadians

believe that things will be worse for the next generation. The company is banking on the sunny side of life: an act of vitality and confidence."

According to Léveillé, "eggs are a healthy ingredient, a comfort food and a convenient source of protein. They encourage us to view each day as a blank canvas to be filled with life and memories. We want to help people do that even more."

"Life on the sunny side is at the heart of everything we do," Léveillé said. "It drives our industrious and outgoing approach we proudly bring to our daily interactions with our farm-owner families, customers, colleagues, and communities. In an uncertain world, eggs can ground us in everyday life. Comforting, nourishing, and delicious, eggs give us the energy to live life on the sunny side."

News



DUSAN PETKOVIC/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Expanding food-processing facilities across the province will contribute to increasing the number of locally sourced products across the province.

Quebec to invest \$80M in food processing

Frederic Serre

The Advocate

– Local Journalism Initiative

Food processing companies in Quebec looking to modernize their facilities received some good news in July with the announcement that the Quebec government will be offering \$80 million over the next two years to assist firms in the sector to boost their productivity.

The announcement came July 17, with provincial Agriculture Minister Donald Martel saying he was relaunching the Food Processing Program because “the food processing industry is a major economic driver for Quebec,” and the government “intends to continue its efforts to support the growth and competitiveness of this promising sector.”

Martel said the projects supported by the program, referred to by its French name, *Programme transformation alimentaire*, or PTA, will focus in particular on the automation and robotization of processes, market development and the implementation of environmental solutions.

“They help strengthen businesses’ production capacity, consolidate Quebec’s supply chains and increase the number of locally sourced products processed in Quebec,” he said.

As of July 20, businesses were able to begin submitting applications for financial assistance under the PTA for the 2026–2027 fiscal year. Projects will be accepted on a rolling basis until available funds are exhausted.

The maximum financial assistance granted to a single applicant may reach \$525,000 for the entire duration of the program, which will end on March 31, 2028.

In parallel with the PTA, the Quebec government is deploying other financial mechanisms to support major food processing projects. Several initiatives have been jointly supported by MAPAQ, the Ministry of Economy, Innovation, and Energy, Investissement Québec and other government partners.

In 2025–2026, several large-scale food processing projects received government support totalling \$155.8 million.

These investments are helping to increase production capacity, modernize facilities, and develop products with higher value-added.

“I am proud of the tangible results we are seeing on the ground,” said Martel. “Across Quebec, our food processing companies are investing, innovating and producing more here. By supporting their projects, we are strengthening our food self-sufficiency and creating wealth in all regions. I encourage entrepreneurs to keep up this momentum and take advantage of the Food Processing Program to bring their projects to fruition.”

“We welcome the relaunch of the Food Processing Program, a measure eagerly awaited by our industry that directly addresses the needs of businesses,” said Sylvie Cloutier, president of the Quebec Food Processing Council.

Cloutier said the investment will help accelerate modernization, automation, and innovation projects, while processing more Quebec agricultural products “right here at home, benefiting our food self-sufficiency, the competitiveness of our businesses, and the economic vitality of all regions of Quebec.”

Here are six processing plants in Quebec that received grants

Abattoir de Luceville: Located in St. Luce, just east of Rimouski along the Gaspé coast, Abattoir de Luceville received \$870,000 to finance an ambitious modernization project that has allowed the company to increase its capacity. The only facility in the region offering slaughter services for beef, pork, lamb and bison, the slaughterhouse provides services to more than 1,200 livestock producers in the Bas St. Laurent region.

Alimentation Dynamic: This meat processing plant in Terrebonne received \$2.6 million to add new automated machinery, increasing its production by 20 per cent. The family-owned company specializing in the

processing and distribution of pork, beef, chicken, veal and lamb.

Alimentation Dynamic also received financial assistance from the PTA, while the modernization of the Montpak International plant in Laval, which produces Famille Fontaine brand meats, was also undertaken. This initiative increases the local processing of meat from Quebec farms.

Olymel’s La Fernandière plant: The expansion and modernization of the La Fernandière plant in Trois Rivières, owned by Olymel, will enable on-site processing of products. The \$18.3-million upgrade, which will, in part, be financed through a \$15-million loan from Investissement Québec,

will allow the site to produce higher-value-added foods for the Quebec and Canadian markets, while generating economic benefits locally.

Les Produits d’érable Bromont: This company in the Eastern Townships received \$3.15 million toward the construction of a new plant specializing in the manufacture of maple-based products. The facility will enable the company to produce value-added products for the Quebec and export markets.

The company plans to process up to 1.5 million pounds of maple syrup annually and create 18 specialized jobs by 2029.

Putting more Canada on Canadian plates

National Food Security Strategy outlines bigger future for ag industry

Brenda O'Farrell

The Advocate

– Local Journalism Initiative

It's broad. It's ambitious. And it aims to add billions to the country's economy. It's the federal government's National Food Security Strategy.

Unveiled in June and backed by \$3.2 billion in government investment over 10 years, the policy targets to increase the amount of food grown by Canadian farmers, expand the country's food processing and packaging capacity, and reduce the cost of groceries.

"Canada's first-ever National Food Security Strategy will help grow and process more food here and put more Canada on Canadian plates – lowering costs, creating jobs and building a food system that is more resilient, more competitive, and more our own," said Prime Minister Mark Carney in a statement as the government introduced the 27-page strategy.

"Canada is one of the world's great food producers. But too much of what we grow is processed elsewhere, and too many Canadians still rely on imported food at higher prices," Carney continues. "Canadian farmers deserve more options to sell their produce, and Canadians deserve more options for where to buy their food."

The strategy outlines a four-pronged approach to better harness what Carney described as Canada's "agricultural superpower." It aims to increase grocery store competition, boost in-Canada processing of food, grow more fruits and vegetables throughout the year and remove regulatory barriers.

The result looks to increase the country's food exports while simultaneously reduce its reliance on processing its agricultural output in the United States.

"Canada is the world's ninth largest exporter of agri-food products, exporting approximately \$100 billion worth annually, with wheat and processed grain products alone accounting for almost \$22 billion," the strategy states. "Canada is, however, also the world's 11th largest importer of agricultural products and agri-food."

The thrust of the strategy aligns with the message imparted by Alrene Dickinson, one of the Canada's highest profile investors, who spoke at the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute forum in Ottawa last fall.

Best known for her role on CBC's *Dragons' Den*, Dickinson is the founder



GORODENKOFF/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Among the aims of the National Food Security Strategy is to boost the amount of vegetables grown year-round in Canada, which means increasing the amount of in-door growing facilities.

and general partner of District Ventures Capital and a member of the Prime Minister's Advisory Council on Canada-U.S. Relations. She has been travelling the country advocating for greater food sovereignty.

"We talk about sovereignty all the time. What could be more important than food sovereignty?" Dickinson said in an interview with *The Advocate* last year. "If we don't have food sovereignty, we don't have sovereignty."

The U.S. is Canada's largest trading partner in the agricultural sector, with just over 61 per cent of our farming exports going to our southern neighbour. Canada also sources more than half of its agricultural and food imports from the U.S., according to the federal government.

Boosting Canada's food processing sector

Canada's food processing sector is much smaller compared with other countries.

According to figures put forward in the strategy, "the GDP of Canada's food processing sector is only 10-per cent larger than the GDP of Canadian primary agriculture." In France, food processing GDP is 30-per cent larger than its primary agriculture sector,

while in Germany and the U.S. it is 70-per cent larger.

"Despite its current size, Canada does not process nearly as much of the food that is grown or harvested in Canada as it could. Instead, this food is exported to other countries to be processed. This decreases our food sovereignty, and it also means that we lose out on potential economic gains of processing the food in Canada.

Part of the problem is the lack of processing capacity.

For example, the strategy points to the meat sector.

"Although Canada is a leader in animal production, there is not enough domestic processing capacity to match it," the strategy highlights.

"For example, in 2025, 24 per cent of live hogs and 20 per cent of live cattle were exported to the United States. At the same time, Canada relies on imported beef (26% of consumption) and imported pork (30% of consumption) to meet demand."

Among the measurable goals outlined in the strategy is to increase the growth rate of the food processing industry from 1.6 per cent to 2.75 per cent per year by 2035.

It also aims to increase the proportion of the domestically produced

processed food from 70 per cent to 80 per cent by 2035.

Growing more fruits and vegetables

The strategy also aims to build on successes of growing food in controlled environments, including greenhouses.

As an example it pointed to GoodLeaf Farms, which operates in Alberta, Ontario and Quebec. It expanded its facilities in Guelph, Calgary and Montreal. Now, these three facilities produce a total of 5 million pounds of leafy greens per year.

Each sector must be looked at with an eye at boosting effectiveness. And potential in specific sectors need to be highlighted.

"Canada is a major grower of tomatoes and exporter of fresh tomatoes with over \$724 million in fresh tomato exports in 2025. At the same time, Canada imports significant quantities of processed tomato products to meet Canadian consumer demand, with over \$511 million in imported processed tomato products in 2025."

Among the statistics cited, it points out that 88 per cent of fresh fruits and nuts and 40 per cent of vegetables consumed in Canada are imported – with 40 per cent sourced in the U.S.



John McCart
QFA President

One year ago, on Aug. 10, 2025, Eastern Canada was in the middle of a drought. Many farms were dealing with withered crops and dry pastures and wells. The impact on yields and revenue was enormous. For cattle producers who missed pasture and hay, the cost of feeding became very expensive.

Fast forward to the spring of 2026. Farmers did not know what to expect for the upcoming growing season and the announcement of a strong El Nino, which forecast shifting weather patterns, was a little bit disturbing.

Mixed weather brought varying start times to the planting season. My corn and soybeans were planted a few days later than I wanted, but it was something I could live with. Western Canada along with parts in the east received a lot more precipitation than normal. This meant that in some areas planting was not ideal.

I keep several rain gauges on my properties because the amount of precipitation can vary over a distance of as little as two kilometres. The first big rain of the season was on June 6th and June 7th. I received 26 millimetres compared with my close neighbour, who received 37 millimetres.

Back and forth we shared information as the storms kept coming. These storms brought with them anywhere from 25 to 50 millimetres of rain. Fields were wet. Then, on Saturday, June 20th, a large system passed over my area in the Lachute region. The visibility was so bad I could hardly drive back home to Grenville. When I arrived, however, there was sunshine. I had only travelled 15 kilometres.

Some areas harder hit than others

By the end of the evening rain had come to the farm and I received only 10 millimetres at home, and 21 millimetres at my other property located two kilometres to the northeast. My neighbours to the east, however, had received more than 75. That evening points further east and south received a lot more, with the Montérégie area receiving more than 150 millimetres.

Storms like these are becoming more frequent with varying totals making every situation different. These storms affect people everywhere, with no one

Is it too much to ask to keep crucial rural roads open?



JOHN MCCART, THE ADVOCATE

The bridge on Montée Clark, northeast of Grenville, was wiped out following a large rainstorm in June.

seemingly safe from them.

When rain hits this fast and hard, damage is to be expected. But some times the incredible happens. Because of the 75-plus millimetres to the east, the rising waters on the Ruisseau des Vases, which is also known as the Muddy Branch, which runs through my area, rose significantly as all its tributaries released an enormous amount of water. It caused an already compromised bridge on Montée Clark, a side road near me, to be washed out early Sunday morning, cutting off a vital north-south access road. It was another example of the devastating effects of these once-in-100-year storms. And there is always a new area being hit.

I refer to the washed out bridge as being already compromised because in 2018 there was a landslide that backed up the water on this watercourse and the culvert on the road crossing was deemed unsafe. The bridge at that time was closed.

It always comes down to cost

In my capacity as local president of the UPA, there were many meetings with the local farmers who depend on the road, municipality representatives and

officials with the provincial Transport and Public Security ministries. Everyone agreed at that time that the bridge was vital and needed to be repaired. But who was going to pay for it?

The farmers absolutely needed it repaired to move crops, feed and milk. The detours were at least eight kilometres through narrow mountain roads with steep, dangerous hills.

A plan was proposed and the bridge was repaired temporarily by Transport Quebec. A new temporary bridge was laid across the compromised culvert. This was years ago. The concept of temporary can sometimes be poorly defined. The plan to reconstruct the crossing was in the \$3-million range, with 70 per cent covered by the Public Security Ministry. The municipality at the time could not – or would not – pay the difference, so nothing else was done.

On the morning of June 21, the bridge was damaged even more. The structure is now irreparable. The abutments have washed away and a replacement is needed now!

And so here we are, eight weeks later, with nothing done except a lot of talk. The farmers who use this road, who

absolutely need to cross this watercourse, are left without a solution. A dairy farmer needs to transport 4,000 tonnes of silage from the fields to the bunker for his dairy herd. Harvested grain needs to be transported back to the farm for storage. The milk needs to be picked up every second day. Cattle need to be moved. Feed needs to be delivered. The list goes on and on.

The clock is ticking

As the harvest of corn silage starts in about six weeks, the thought of a detour of hundreds of loads on a dangerous road is out of the question. There are not enough tractors or silage trailers in the area to do this efficiently and safely.

Elected officials with both the municipality and the provincial government need to step up their game. It seems so easy for government to waste money on useless projects like Northvolt, but cannot seem to find the funds for local businesses and farms to keep something as simple as roads in service.

As more and more of these weather events occur, a proactive policy must be put in place to deal with the disasters that follow.

As rabies cases mount, so does response

Vaccine bait distribution campaign set for 111 municipalities

Frederic Serre

The Advocate

– Local Journalism Initiative

The Quebec government has launched a month-long vaccination campaign to make sure pet owners get their animals vaccinated in the wake of confirmed cases of raccoon rabies in two cats – the first reported to authorities in the small Montérégie municipality of Godmanchester and the second in St. Anicet, where three people received preventive treatment following risky contact with the animal.

According to the Quebec Agriculture Ministry, known by its French acronym MAPAQ, the first case was reported on July 23, and the second one on July 31.

Health authorities believe the two cases, even though they were reported close together, represent two separate incidents during which a cat was infected following contact with a rabid raccoon.

First reported in Quebec between 2006 and 2009, raccoon rabies re-emerged in 2024, having spread from the U.S. state of Vermont. It is currently active in several municipalities in the Montérégie and Estrie regions.

The number of people treated for rabies after being exposed to the virus has surged in the province since the resurgence of this outbreak. By the end of July, 459 people had received treatment in 2026. The total for 2025 stands at 578 people, which is nearly double the previous year's figure.

Confirmed cases represent only a fraction of the infected animals, the Quebec government notes. In the wild, animals may be infected without their infection being detected.

MAPAQ issued a public alert July 29 – six days after a stray cat was found to be carrying the disease in Godmanchester, which, according to MAPAQ, is “spreading among wildlife in certain regions of Quebec, and can be transmitted to domestic animals.”

“Transmission between wild and domestic animals is a very real risk. Continued vigilance is essential to limit the spread of raccoon rabies and protect the health of both people and animals,” MAPAQ said in a statement.

On Aug. 3, MAPAQ issued a second alert for residents of the Eastern Townships, Montérégie, central Quebec and Montreal regions, announcing it will conduct a vaccine bait distribution campaign from Aug. 3 to Sept. 13. This



DO MI NIC/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

A vaccine bait distribution campaign to immunize wildlife from rabies will be conducted in 111 towns – two in the Eastern Townships, 97 in Montérégie and 12 in central Quebec.

vaccination campaign aims to continue efforts to immunize raccoons, skunks and foxes – particularly this year's young – against rabies. At this time of year, young raccoons make up more than 45 per cent of the population and are old enough to eat the vaccine bait and become immunized.

During this period, vaccination teams will cover an area of 5,500 square kilometres to distribute nearly 815,000 vaccine baits in wooded areas, along riverbanks, at the edges of farm fields and abandoned buildings, and near trash cans. The vaccine baits will be distributed by hand. In total, 111 municipalities will be covered – two in the Eastern Townships, 97 in Montérégie and 12 in central Quebec – as well as nine parks in the Montreal area.

The vaccine bait resembles a greenish ketchup packet or a khaki-green ravioli and emits a sweet odour that attracts the target species. Due to its colour, it blends into the environment and is difficult for humans to spot. Its outer casing is designed to withstand the elements and the impact of aerial drops.

To find out what to do if you come across a vaccine bait, visit the Québec.ca website under the section “If you find a vaccine bait.”

To report an animal, call the Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs at 1-877-346-6763 (Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) or fill out the online form at [Quebec.ca/raccoonrabies](https://quebec.ca/raccoonrabies) (any time).

BLUE SKIES AND GREEN FIELDS



MAURENE O'FARRELL, THE ADVOCATE

Ah yes, if it could always just be blue skies and green fields, farming would not be so difficult. So take in the view when you can.

Trends in agriculture



PIYASET/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

There are three things everyone needs: Clean air, clean water and nutritious food. We have to keep that in mind. And mind that we protect our ability to provide them.



Chris Judd
The Advocate

What will our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren inherit?

Do people worry about the future?

I have dedicated much of my life to helping people understand that we are but the caretakers of our grandchildren's world. Today's generation has enjoyed probably the best times of all. We have gone from the horse and buggy to rockets that have taken man to the moon and back. We can enjoy foods from all over the world.

Not too many generations ago, people thought that the world was flat. When Christopher Columbus first set foot on America, he called the natives "Indians" because he thought he had landed in India. Our ancestors came to "the new country" because on a bad year, the kings and their armies stole grain, animals, food and land from the peasants to keep themselves "eating like kings!"

How are we doing?

It could be argued we are repeating mistakes of the past

The new land's first export were "beaver skins" for kings and other European aristocracy to wear.

What did the Europeans bring to America?

New diseases that our First Nation people couldn't cure. Then, we shipped "square timber" and other wood to build with to Europe, because Europe had used up most of its forests.

From greed to pollution

So, what about pollution?

When people were spread out through the country on farms and in small villages, pollution and disease had not yet taken hold. There wasn't much pollution from a "turf fire." Extensive burning of coal didn't begin until people gathered in cities, where they heated their houses with it and industry began using it. Soon, coal-fired boilers on trains became more efficient than those that used wood to fire the boilers.

Then, oil was discovered in Canada.

The world didn't realize how polluted we were until COVID-19 shut

down airplane traffic and most other oil-burning activities. Then, mysteriously pollution in the world's most populated cities cleared up as vehicles came to a halt. Even the hole in the ozone layer healed over.

China, the world's most polluting country, was the first to notice. It has announced that by 2030, it will be "carbon neutral" and totally energy self sufficient. China is also now the world leader in production and use of electric cars. It is also the world leader in electric battery technology.

Meanwhile, the U.S. president has given up the battle on climate change. The U.S. needs precious metals to make batteries, so are trying to take over or annex countries that have oil reserves. It seems like the U.S. has been influenced by both big oil and big pharma.

And wildfires flare

The number of wildfires in the world has spiked in the last few years, as has the temperatures in the world. As the fires burn on and an increasing number of acres of farmland turns into desert,

there still remain some "climate change deniers," even in our governments.

Even though wildfires are consuming millions of acres of forest every year and more homes and people are being lost to those fires, it is probably "desertification" of farmland that will cause starvation in the world. Our own province of Quebec has estimated that the most productive part of our county – a band of land close to the Ottawa River – will be the first part of Quebec to become too dry to grow crops.

Many of our smartest scientists have already declared that "microplastics" in our water and food are slowly increasing and finding their way into our bodies! New "forever chemicals" have been approved for use in some "crop sprays" in the U.S. Those chemicals never go away and are life shortening. It is sure that some investors are becoming rich from profits tied to those chemicals, but do we need them?

Mankind only needs three things to be healthy; Clean air, clean water and clean, nutritious food. Can we do that?



AFRICA STUDIO/STOCK.ADOBE.COM

In 2025, Canada imported about US\$1 billion in dairy-related products from the U.S., about half of which came from imports of butterfat and cheese. That same year saw a reported US\$340 million worth of these goods shipped from Canada to the States.

Dairy farmers not twigging to Trump tariff threats

Joshua Allan

The Advocate

– Local Journalism Initiative

As U.S. President Donald Trump took aim at Canadian dairy products and the supply management system last month, the reaction from the dairy farmers in Quebec, for the most part, has been no reaction at all, according to industry representatives.

"I actually haven't heard anything because I think that's still just speculation," said Jérémie Mercier, a dairy farmer and regional president of the *Union des producteurs agricoles de la Montérégie*.

"In fact, we're getting used to the president's antics," Mercier added.

But for Glenn Switzman, a member of the UPA's regional council, while the new tariff threats from the U.S. administration hardly come as a surprise, they're nevertheless frustrating.

"People's livelihoods are involved," said Switzman, who represents anglophone farmers on the regional council, adding that the U.S. president has been acting as though he has "a burr up his saddle."

On July 20, the U.S. administration unveiled an extensive list of Canadian goods that would be tariffed at 50 per

cent as of Aug. 19. Trump had named Canada's supply management system as one of the three key trade irritants behind this action. Canadian dairy products are included among those listed to be tariffed.

However, this trade irritant largely ignores one key fact: "Right now, Canada buys a lot more milk from the U.S. than the U.S. does from us," said John McCart, a former dairy farmer and current president of the Quebec Farmers' Association.

In 2025, Canada imported about US\$1 billion in dairy-related products from the U.S., about half of which came from imports of butterfat and cheese. That same year saw a reported US\$340 million worth of these goods shipped from Canada to the States.

It is important to note that the majority of Canadian dairy exports to the U.S. are not finished products, but rather "very, very specific ingredients," Mercier clarified. This is why one would be hard-pressed to find a carton of Natrel or Québon milk in an American grocery store.

Under the current Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA), the U.S. dairy industry has access to about 3.6 per cent of the Canadian dairy market for finished products, tariff free.

Dairy products shipped to Canada that surpass this threshold are hit with a substantial tariff of just over 200 per cent – a point that Trump has criticized on multiple occasions.

However, the U.S. has regularly fallen well short of meeting this tariff-free threshold. The U.S. Dairy Export Council illustrated this during a testimony before the U.S. House Committee on Agriculture this past June. According to the council, in 2025 the U.S. fulfilled 64 per cent of its industrial-use cheese tariff-free export quota to Canada and just 34 per cent of its fluid milk quota.

"Trump was always screaming about how it's not fair," McCart continued. "He can't get his own facts straight."

For Mercier, it isn't surprising that this system, which has been in place since 1972, is a thorn in the U.S.'s side.

"Supply management is constantly under scrutiny from the United States," Mercier said. "We're starting to get used to being told that we'll have to open up, that there are people who want to get rid of supply management."

Canada's supply management system follows consumer trends closely in order to determine how much domestic demand will be "this month, next month, in the fall, next year, two years from now," McCart explained.

"When there's no supply management, somebody thinks they can take advantage of quantities of scale by producing a lot, buying up a lot of land and milking a lot of cows and building up big barns," he continued. "That might work for a while until everybody gets the same idea, and then all of a sudden you end up with a glut in the market."

McCart added that giving the U.S. dairy industry more access to the Canadian market would effectively crush Canadian dairy farms, 98 per cent of which are family-owned and have an average of about 100 cows.

Numerous dairy farms in the U.S., conversely, operate with thousands of cows. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration also allows the use of the hormone Bovine somatotropin (rBST), which extends the cow's lactation period to produce more milk.

That hormone has "never been allowed up here in Canada," said McCart. "Quality control in Canada is without a doubt (at) the top level. Every farmer that produces milk has to follow a very strict set of guidelines."

"The prices may be a touch higher, but there's stability," said Switzman of the current system, adding: "Our quality of milk is beyond reproach (...) It's something to be proud of."

Opinion



Brenda O'Farrell
Editor-in-chief
QFA Advocate

In a world that is being engulfed in wildfires, where a war in the Middle East has no conclusion in sight, where artificial intelligence is set to revolutionize economies, where middle-power allies are learning to flex their economic clout, where tariffs have become the economic baseball bat carried by a bully looking to extort lunch money from everyone in the schoolyard, where grift and gangsterism in the White House is put on full display like it is just part of the gilded faux-fashion of the Oval Office, would it be that outlandish to wonder if the crumbling relationship between the U.S. and Canada will come down to milk?

It could.

In fact, it might end up being one more thing on the list history will struggle to explain when it looks back at the Trump era.

But then again, it could go down as one of those David-versus-Goliath-type battles that every Canuck could be keen enough to pull out their slingshots for.

And how triumphantly poetic it would be for the story to be told generations from now of how Canada stood its ground defending the family farm in the face of the alternative – massive industrialized conglomerate-driven food factories that are throwing the U.S. farming sector into crisis?

Kentucky whiskey might look back at the next few years and shudder at its good fortune at being a mere footnote in the story of how Canadians expressed their outrage towards the U.S. administration when it measures the contempt we mustered in the face of U.S. economic warfare that, this time, came in the form of an attempt to force us to pour American milk on our Cheerios.

The question we need to ask ourselves is: What is behind the Trump administration's growing obsession with Canada's supply management system?

The answer is where we will find our willingness to fight. Because the answer reveals one of the little-known and uniquely Canadian approaches that, in many ways, encapsulates our approach to taking care of each other.

Canada is alone in the world to opt to

Could it all, in the end, come down to spilled milk?



STOCKMEDIASELLER/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

The question we need to ask is: What is behind the Trump administration's growing obsession with Canada's supply management system? The answer is where we will find our renewed willingness to fight.

manage its supply of key agricultural sectors, namely dairy, poultry and eggs. In a nutshell, the system is built on three pillars – production, pricing and importing.

In the case of dairy, it establishes production limits on milk, sets minimum prices and restricts imports.

Production limits are set based on regularly reviewed estimates of how much milk will be needed, and then allots a production quota to farmers to meet that need. The price is then set based on the cost of producing it, which includes everything from feed to diesel fuel. This ensures the long-term investment farm families must make – in everything from land, to livestock to farm machinery – is factored in to ensure their operations' financial viability.

Restricting imports allows us to keep

other countries that produce more than their domestic markets require from flooding our market and influencing prices here.

Yes, the system has its critics. But before getting to that, let's look at how the U.S. system works.

In the States, the production of food is viewed through the same lens as the production of any other commodity. Over the years this has led to a situation where the small family farm has been squeezed out as farm operators looking to increase profits have expanded their milk production exponentially. This has driven prices down, and forced small farms out of business. To be profitable, they have created a get-big-or-get-out approach to farming. But it has now reached the point that to sustain itself, these operations have to continue to grow. But therein lies the

problem. There is a limited need for milk. And it has a limited shelf life. All this overproduction means U.S. farmers are forced to waste milk or find new markets to sell it.

In recent years, the U.S. government has been filling the gap by providing billion-dollar bailouts to its farming sector. In essence, cheap milk in the U.S. is subsidized by taxpayers. But the Trump administration wants to end that. So it is looking to Canada to sell U.S. milk. Without new markets, the withdrawal of government bailouts would see massive industrial dairy farms that were once deemed to be too big to fail collapse, devastating rural America.

Do we want to allow that approach to put Canadian farmers out of business?

If we have learned anything in the last 18 months, it's that we need to be less dependent on the States. Elbows up.

Slow rollout of cell towers continues

10 regions to get 17 new installations – 228 still to come

Frederic Serre
The Advocate
 – Local Journalism Initiative

Quebecers longing for reliable cell phone service in 10 regions of the province will soon be connected as part of an investment by the Quebec government to build 17 new towers, paving the way for eventually 228 more.

France-Élaine Duranceau, minister of Cybersecurity and Digital Affairs, made the announcement July 6, saying \$27.7 million will be spent on 17 new towers as the first of three parts of a \$228-million investment to expand cell phone coverage throughout the province. The program was first announced in 2022 as an effort to increase reliable cell phone service and strengthen public safety.

The regions involved in this new phase include the Laurentians, Lanaudière, Outaouais, Mauricie, the Eastern Townships, the Bas St. Laurent, Chaudière-

Appalaches, central Quebec, the Côte-Nord, and the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

The rollout of the first two phases, which call for the construction of 211 cell towers by December 31, 2026, is proceeding as planned, the minister said.

The first phase, launched in 2022, called for the deployment of 84 cell sites across nine administrative regions. To date, 52 sites – or 62 per cent – are operational.

The second phase, launched in 2024, aimed to add 127 cell sites across 11 administrative regions. As of today, 35 sites – or 28 per cent – are currently operational.

“Today, we are taking another step forward to give even more Quebecers access to the cellular network,” Duranceau said. “Connectivity isn’t just a matter of technology – it’s a matter of quality of life, safety, economic development and the vitality of our regions.”



NICK BEER/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

The first phase of the initiative launched in 2022 called for the installation of 84 cell sites across nine administrative regions. To date, 52 sites – or 62 per cent – are operational. The second phase launched in 2024 was to add 127 cell sites across 11 administrative regions. Today, only 35 of those sites – or 28 per cent – are operational.

Funds aim to help protect Quebec's caribou population

Frederic Serre
The Advocate
 – Local Journalism Initiative

Efforts to help preserve Quebec's caribou population have received a \$25-million boost from Ottawa as part of a five-year program that will be coordinated with the province's Indigenous communities and the Quebec government, which is already investing a total of \$59 million to the cause.

Announced on June 30 by federal Environment Minister Julie Dabrusin and Quebec Environment Minister Pascale Déry, the funding is aimed at protecting all 17 species of caribou throughout Quebec, adding that caribou are a species of ecological and cultural importance in Canada, “central to the identity and culture of Indigenous

peoples, and to which the public has a strong attachment.”

The program will include measures to restore habitat management, including the protection of habitat from natural disturbances, habitat restoration, and the designation of protected or conserved areas, as well as population management, including the management and maintenance of existing maternity and conservation enclosures, the development of infrastructure, and the monitoring and management of predators.

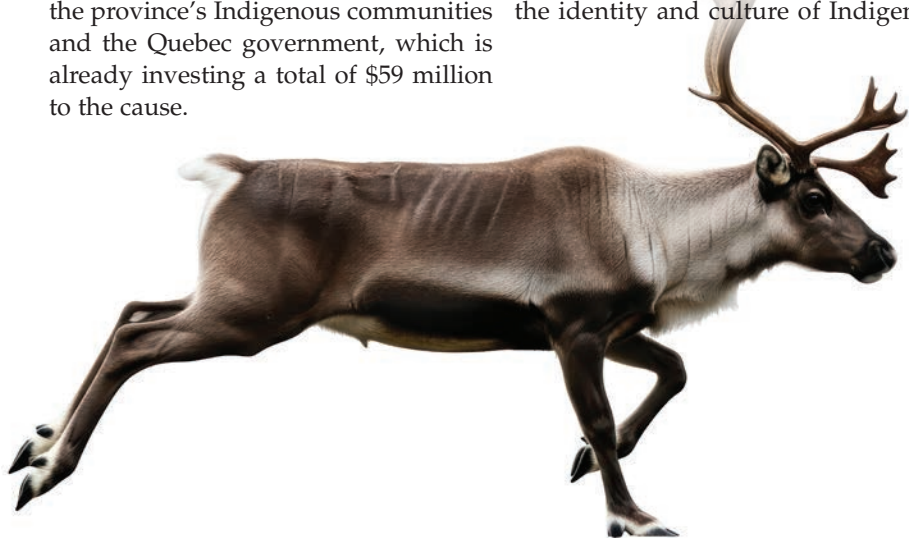
The ministers stressed that it is imperative to have the involvement of Indigenous communities because they hold the knowledge of caribou, adding that the federal government is committed to providing \$15 million over five years to Indigenous communities in Quebec for measures aimed at restoring caribou or their habitat in the province.

Quebec caribou populations

Quebec is home to 17 caribou populations divided into three ecotypes – forest, migratory and mountain. The Quebec government has implemented a series of measures, including the relocation of the most vulnerable populations to captivity, which has helped slow their decline and even led to population growth in some cases, notably in Charlevoix and the Gaspé Peninsula, where numbers are on the rise.

In addition to these actions, numerous protected areas have been established and safeguarded throughout Quebec, thereby contributing to the preservation of caribou populations and their habitats.

“It is by working together, in collaboration with Indigenous peoples, that we will be able to ensure the survival of this iconic species,” Dabrusin said.





The Forum Report

Every farm should have a good apple tree

Permaculture expert offers advice, insight and benefit of his experience

Andrew McClelland

The Advocate

– Local Journalism Initiative

For Stefan Sobkowiak, the goal of a good fruit tree is disarmingly simple: it should grow like a weed.

"Plant what grows like a weed," said the fruit producer from the Haut St. Laurent region. "You'll never go wrong with that. How hard do you work at growing weeds in your field? Probably not very hard."

It's the kind of plainspoken wisdom Sobkowiak has spent more than three decades refining, first as a biologist and landscape architect who taught fruit production and natural history at McGill University, and later as the owner of Miracle Farms, a 12-acre property in St. Anicet, Que., that has become one of the largest and most closely studied permaculture orchards in eastern North America. He has also developed a large following on YouTube.

Sobkowiak bought the farm in 1993 as a conventional monoculture apple orchard, converted it to organic almost immediately, and eventually grew disillusioned with what he saw as the limitations of that model.

Organic has its drawbacks

Since 2007, several acres have been reworked into a diverse, self-sustaining "food forest," combining apples with pears, plums, cherries, berries and nitrogen-fixing companion trees – an approach documented in his feature-length film, "The Permaculture Orchard: Beyond Organic."

Always passionate and energetic about sharing what he has learned, Sobkowiak started a YouTube channel in 2013. It now boasts more than 221,000 subscribers.

Sobkowiak related that history and his production philosophy during a videoconference for QFA members in June. The evening's focus was narrower and more practical: How to get a single, reliable apple tree established on any farm, of any size.

"The goal for today is really that there would be apples on every farm," Sobkowiak said, noting that one mature tree can yield a literal metric tonne of fruit. "They're old, they're big, and they're productive.... It's really a thing of beauty and well worth the effort."

Expensive lessons

Much of what Sobkowiak knows, he



COURTESY OF STEFAN SOBKOWIAK

Stefan Sobkowiak of Miracle Farms addressed Quebec Farmers' Association members via videoconference on June 25th, sharing three decades of hard-won lessons on choosing, planting and training apple trees for Quebec's climate.

said, came the hard way.

"How do I know this stuff? Well, I know it from killing a lot of trees. I know it from making just about every mistake. I'm up to over \$60,000 of mistakes. So my education has come at a pretty good cost."

That cost included one brutal early lesson: "When we had the coldest winter in 70 years ... I lost 25 per cent of the trees," he recalled. "It was a very tough introduction to orcharding." The experience shapes his advice to this day: always choose a tree hardy for one zone colder than your own.

"It's just like buying insurance," he said, "because this year is not an indication of what will be next year."

Sobkowiak steers farmers firmly away from familiar grocery-store varieties, like McIntosh, which he called "one of the most sprayed apples out there," in favour of disease-resistant heirloom cultivars selected in an era before fungicides were widely available, like Spartan.

"Those are trees that have been selected and grew at a time when they didn't have all the sprays that can be used," he explained. "So the tree naturally had to be disease-resistant enough

to give a reliable enough crop."

Sobkowiak also touched on own complicated relationship with organic certification, a system he abandoned around the year 2000 despite having built his farm on it. Diversified operations, he argued, were penalized under rules requiring separate certification for each crop and animal raised on a property.

"The entire organic certification system wasn't in the favour of small farms," he said. "And when we replanted, organic did not allow for permanent plastic mulch. I could put plastic mulch down in the summer and rip it up in the fall and then I could stay organic – that didn't make sense to me."

Eventually, Sobkowiak came to realize that selling directly to members who could see his practices firsthand made formal certification less essential.

"I asked my members: 'Is it OK if we're no longer certified organic?' And everybody said, 'Well, that's fine. We come, we see what you're doing.'"

His conclusion, offered with characteristic frankness: "I would say absolutely go organic when you're dealing with a third party and people don't know who they're buying from. But if you're dealing direct with the eater,

just be transparent. There really isn't an advantage to it in that sense."

For Sobkowiak, working with, rather than against, the land is the key. That means practices like grafting new, better-tasting varieties directly onto existing wild apple trees rather than tearing them out.

"If you have an area you've wondered about pulling out the wild apple trees, remember– it's really not difficult to learn how to graft. Every time I teach someone how to graft, they do one or two and then say: 'Really? Is that all I have to do?'"

After 30 years of testing new cultivars and honing his techniques, Sobkowiak still feels fruit tree cultivation and planting is a gift to future generations, more than a get-rich-quick scheme or business model.

"These are my grandchildren's trees," he said. "Don't look at them as for you. Put them for your grandchildren, and put trees that will absolutely do well."

To see the hundreds of instructional videos Sobkowiak has shared on YouTube, go to www.youtube.com/c/stefansobkowiak

To watch his presentation during the QFA Farm Forum, go to quebecfarmers.org



Gatineau Hills producer keeps profitability with rotational grazing

Andrew McClelland

The Advocate

– Local Journalism Initiative

For Victor Drury, cattle farming in the Gatineau Hills is a family project that started with five cows and a poorly built fence.

“My father is a first-generation farmer – there was no farming background in the family,” Drury explained. “He bought five cows from the sale barn and had only fenced three-quarters of the field. So the cattle immediately left the farm and they had to tranquilize them and drag them back into a trailer.”

That inauspicious start in the 1970s has grown into a 900-acre cow-calf operation split between father and son near Rupert, in the municipality of La Pêche in the Gatineau Hills region. The farm is the Quebec winner of the Canadian Cattle Association’s Environmental Stewardship Award, with a chance at the national title later this summer.

Drury shared the story of the operation, and the sustainable practices behind it, during a recent videoconference hosted by the Quebec Farmers’ Association. His father, Gib Drury, is a longtime QFA member, past president and current treasurer of the organization.

The herd today runs about 280 cross-bred Red Angus cows serviced by 17 Red Angus bulls, kept outdoors year-round through Quebec’s winters. Cows calve in April and May, and calves are sold the following spring as yearlings rather than finished on the farm. Each year Drury keeps back 50 heifers as breeding replacements, selecting from dams with easy calving histories and calm temperaments.

The Drury operation runs almost entirely without external inputs. No growth hormones, no medicated feed, no herbicides or chemical fertilizers – a philosophy Gib set early on and Victor has kept.

“He just didn’t like the idea of using a bunch of chemicals,” Victor said, referring to his father. “So we never have.”

Instead, the farm leans on rotational grazing across about 900 acres of owned land and another 950 rented, moving roughly 280 cow-calf pairs between more than 70 permanent paddocks split across two home farms, with animals grouped by age to simplify bull rotation.



COURTESY OF VICTOR DRURY

Victor Drury runs a cow-calf operation in the Gatineau Hills with his father, Gib, using rotational grazing and winter bale grazing to cut input costs and manure-management time. The farm is this year’s Quebec winner of the Canadian Cattle Association’s TESA sustainability award.

Winter management is where Drury has done lots of his own experimenting. While his father’s herd still winters on fixed sites with manure collected and composted each spring, Drury has spent the past five years bale grazing instead – feeding hay on fresh ground every time, moving through four or five paddocks each winter without repeating a site for years.

“We used to spend about two months managing manure, and we’ve cut that down to about two weeks with the current system,” Drury said. “You really only sacrifice the actual shadow where the bale was, and only for the first summer. By the next fall, you’re getting plants growing up even where the bale sat.”

The farm has also built partnerships that pay for practices Drury says he would likely keep anyway. A regional bird-watching group – *Développement Ornithologique Argenteuil* – surveys the fields several times a year and flags where ground-nesting birds are active, so Drury can simply leave those paddocks for later in his rotation.

A conservation program compensates the farm for delaying hay cutting on those fields, and pays for use of a chain-drag bar that flushes birds out ahead of the mower.

“It doesn’t really change what we’re doing,” Drury said of the arrangement. “At worst, it’s a neutral for us, so it seems to work as a partnership.”

Genetics and temperament get as much attention as grass. Every animal is tracked individually – birth dates, weaning weights, docility scores – and Drury culls hard for calm dispositions.

“I don’t keep any animals that I can’t handle on foot in a barn or in a field,” he said. “Flighty animals, animals that charge me at birth, I just don’t keep around.”

The farm sells no meat directly, moving all its cattle live, mostly through direct relationships with feedlots and grass-finishers rather than the sale barn.

“I much rather look at the markets, finding out what my cattle are worth,” Drury said. “If you have a good product to sell, people are inclined to come back and buy from you again.”

Feed self-sufficiency follows the same logic. Drury makes nearly all of his own forage, renting hay ground on 28 different properties around the area and producing roughly 4,500 round bales a year, mostly dry hay, with haylage made only in seasons when the weather won’t cooperate. First cut typically begins in early June and can run into late September. Renting hay ground rather than buying more pasture was a deliberate choice – it let the family put its own acreage entirely into permanent pasture while importing forage, and the nutrients that come with it, from elsewhere.

“We’re importing fertility to the farm every single year,” Drury said.

For Drury, the low-input, high-observation approach isn’t really about winning an award – though he is not against it.

“I am blessed that I got the opportunity to continue with the farm my parents started,” he said. “I couldn’t imagine wanting to raise my family anywhere else in the world.”



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It's time to renew your membership. Reminder cards will not be mailed out. So we are asking that you clip out the form below. Fill it out and send your cheque in the amount indicated and mail it in. **We are counting on your support.** Show your pride in being part of Quebec's English-speaking community. **It only cost \$68.99.**

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Cynthia Gordon, Bringham

Gibb Drury, Alcove

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from the Cover



PIERRE LAHOUD/CREATIVECOMMONS

Quebec's new agri-environmental rules opens up to 200,000 hectares of farmland while introducing new protections for waterways and soil.

NEW RULES: Emerging sectors – insect farming, aquaculture, indoor crops – now regulated

From Page 1

"This shows it's possible to strike a balance between protecting the environment and growing our agriculture," said Martel, adding that the new land-opening provision "represents a major gain for the farming sector" after more than 20 years of pressure from producers.

The regulation, developed jointly by the *Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs*, MAPAQ and the *Union des producteurs agricoles*, replaces the province's older Agricultural Operations Regulation (REA), which stays in effect until the end of this year. The RPAE takes effect gradually starting Jan. 1, 2027.

Alongside the land-expansion measure, the new framework introduces stronger protections for waterways, including mandatory riparian buffer strips along rivers and ditches, new soil-conservation requirements for all Quebec farms, and tighter controls on fertilizer use aimed at reducing phosphorus and nitrogen runoff into aquatic ecosystems and drinking water sources.

The rules will also, for the first time, bring emerging production sectors – insect farming, land-based aquaculture and building-based crop production – under regulatory oversight, along with new requirements for managing animal waste and fertilization.

Paperwork was a frequent complaint for producers dealing with the old REA. Quebec says the new

regulations were adjusted following consultations with the farming sector to ease the administrative burden on agricultural businesses, with some measures scaled according to farm size, production type and regional realities.

A related change will also raise the threshold under which certain waterway-clearing work qualifies for a simplified compliance declaration to 1,000 linear metres, up from 500 – a change long sought by agricultural and municipal groups.

The REA it replaces has been Quebec's central agri-environmental rulebook since it was adopted in 2002. Its core aim was protecting surface water, groundwater and soil from contamination linked to farming activity – particularly runoff and leaching from stored or spread animal manure and other fertilizing materials.

In 2003, the REA was tightened further with a moratorium blocking any expansion of cultivated land in watersheds already considered degraded, effectively freezing farmland growth in those areas for more than two decades. That moratorium is the one being lifted by the new RPAE.

Two oversight committees will be created to monitor the RPAE's implementation and maintain ongoing dialogue with the agricultural sector, with the Quebec Ministry of Environment and MAPAQ rolling out support tools for producers and their advisers in the coming months.

Climate of change



Farm risk management needs 'major overhaul'

Help cannot just be reactive, it needs to be proactive: Farmers group

Christopher Bonasia
The Advocate
– Local Journalism Initiative

As Canada's agriculture ministers move towards negotiations for the next Agriculture Policy Framework, the sector needs a "major overhaul" of its approach to business risk management.

"We need to do something really major to move risk management upstream," said Brent Preston, president of Farmers for Climate Solutions.

Last month, territorial, provincial and federal agriculture ministers released the Halifax Statement following their annual meeting in the Nova Scotia capital. The statement outlines a set of four priorities: to guide economic growth and competitiveness, diversify markets and increase trade, advance research and innovation, and enhance sector resilience. These priorities will broadly set a course for the ministers to develop the next Agriculture Policy Framework that will influence the country's agricultural sector performance from 2028 to 2033.

The Halifax Statement was developed in a context of significant international competition and trade tensions with the United States, and so it focuses on fortifying economic performance. Its reception among farm groups has been mixed – the *Western Producer* reported that organizations like Grain Growers of Canada and the Canadian Cattle Association said the statement generally reflects some of their priorities, but what really matters is whether it will result in meaningful change.

One issue that has been mentioned in several discussions about the statement is how the next Agriculture Policy Framework will address business risk management programs.

In an interview with *The Advocate*, Preston specifically highlighted business risk management as a key issue policy-makers need to address.

Although he said the Halifax Statement mentions advancing "proactive risk management and climate adaptation" under its priority of enhancing sector resilience, it "certainly doesn't make a strong commitment to a major overhaul."

While business risk management programs are currently designed to be reactive – by supporting farmers after an event impacts their business – there needs to be a new approach to addressing risks proactively. This change is critical because BRM programs already receive the largest share of public funding for agriculture through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and as weather becomes increasingly unpredictable and damaging for farmers, that expense is increasing. Eventually, the current approach will become unaffordable, Preston said.

However, he also noted there is resistance in the industry for inflicting any kind of major changes to these programs because they have become vital for many businesses experiencing major crises.

While there is a lot of talk about making minor changes – like changing eligibility or application processes – there needs to be more conversation about how to ensure these programs stay affordable in the long run.

"We can't wait for crop failures and disasters and then just pay out any more," Preston said. "We need to look at the root causes – look at the threats that we're facing from climate change, from increasing input costs – and work on preventing those losses from happening."



TONY SAVINO/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Risk management programs need to be re-examined because as weather-related damage grows they will become unaffordable.



Looking ahead: Animal care, sustainability on dairy farms

Brooke McNeil

Knowledge Transfer Specialist

Nicolas Barbeau-Grégoire

Knowledge Mobilization Expert

and

Simon Jetté-Nantel

Economist, Lactanet

Today's consumers are increasingly values-driven and are seeking more information and transparency around how their food is produced. Research shows that animal welfare and environmental sustainability are important considerations for many Canadians when making food choices. This growing demand can contribute to existing pressures for on-farm change, but it also presents a valuable opportunity for the Canadian dairy industry to strengthen consumer trust and enhance long-term sustainability and profitability.

Animal welfare remains a cornerstone of the Canadian dairy industry, supported by science-based standards outlined in the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle. Released in 2023 by the National Farm Animal Care Council, and incorporated into proAction, the national quality assurance program for the Canadian dairy sector, the code reflects evolving research and expectations. As a result, many producers are now evaluating construction and renovation options for animal housing to meet updated requirements and enhance cow comfort, health and overall performance.

Across Canada's dairy industry, sustainability is also front of mind, with a goal of reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 – balancing emissions produced on farms with those removed from the atmosphere. There are several ongoing research initiatives on methane and GHG emissions reduction – many of which Lactanet is a key partner in. The planned outcomes of these initiatives include identifying best management practices, developing decision-support tools and supporting the industry in working toward the net-zero goal by 2050 target.

Meanwhile, producers continue to explore practical ways to boost on-farm efficiency, recognizing that more efficient practices can help reduce GHG emissions while also improving profitability.

To make informed, practical and impactful on-farm decisions, it is

essential to have a clear understanding of the latest requirements and the options available to meet evolving targets. Consulting with your herd advisers and provincial organizations is strongly encouraged, especially before moving forward with any changes or investments, as they can provide trusted, region-specific and farm-specific guidance. They can help ensure you stay informed on new standards, evaluate your options and identify the best fit for your operation. In addition, using clear and credible resources and tools can support learning, improve understanding of new requirements, and complement on-farm decision-making.

Explore the following resources and tools to help strengthen animal welfare and environmental sustainability on your farm.

Animal Housing and Care:

- **Constru+:** This online portal, developed by Lactanet, houses insight-packed resources on housing facilities to help guide you in decision-making and planning with specific recommendations and real farm examples.
- **Factsheets on proAction updates:** Dairy Farmers of Canada recently released two new factsheets outlining updates to proAction requirements aligned with the latest revisions to the code – one focused on calf housing, and the other on dry and lactating cow housing.
- **Canadian Dairy Hub:** This online platform, led by Dairy Farmers of Canada, contains a wide variety of science-based resources within four main categories: Animal Welfare, Environmental Sustainability, Animal Health and Herd Management.

Environmental Sustainability:

- **Best Management Practices Guide to Mitigate Emissions on Dairy Farms:** A practical guide from Dairy Farmers of Canada that helps you identify where and how on your farm you can reduce emissions and increase carbon sequestration.
- **Environmental Impact Subindex:** The Lifetime Performance Index (LPI), one of Canada's national selection indexes, includes an Environmental Impact Subindex for the Holstein breed. This subindex is aimed at reducing the environmental footprint of your herd through

Floor Design

Flooring quality and design impacts cows' behavior, walking comfort and hoof health.

Optimal flooring must offer **adequate traction** to prevent slipping, **be flat and even** to avoid excessive wear and trauma to the hooves, and allow for **easy cleaning**.

Floor renewal and repair solutions:

- Texturing (scuffing, etching)
- Groove cutting
- Rubber installation
- Cleaning

Preferred locations to install rubber floors:

- ✓ Holding areas or areas where cows stand waiting to be milked
- ✓ Return or exit lanes around the milking centre where cows make sharp turns (20-30° angles) or encounter steep floors (>2%)
- ✓ Transfer lanes where cows walk long distances
- ✓ Stained floors

Characteristics of high-quality rubber:

- ✓ Compressibility and thickness
- ✓ Textured and anti-slip properties
- ✓ Durability and long lasting

Impact on hoof health

Closely monitor for lameness and hoof lesions in cows after changes to the floor's surface and floor sections.

Properly Grooved Concrete Floors

Feature a flat and even surface between the grooves, with smooth-edged grooves forming a 90-degree angle with the floor. Align the groove pattern parallel to the length of the aisle and the direction of cow traffic.

Distance (center-to-center) Parallel: **3 1/4 inch**

Groove width: **3/4 inch**

Groove depth: **1/2 inch**

Diamond Pattern

Incorporate grooves at an angle to form a diamond pattern for increased traction in high-risk areas like crossover alleys and turning areas.

Distance (center-to-center) Diamond: **4-5 inches**

Mistakes to avoid

- ✗ Avoid concrete surfaces between grooves that are bulged, convex, uneven, or abrasive
- ✗ Avoid concrete grooves with sharp, rough edges and exposed aggregates
- ✗ Avoid concrete irregularities
- ✗ Avoid creating a floor surface that is either too rough, leading to injury, or too smooth, leading to slipping
- ✗ Avoid improperly secured rubber flooring

Wet concrete grooving demands precision and perfect timing. Errors can lead to poorly formed grooves that injure hooves.

Constru+

Canada Québec

This project is funded by the Sectoral Development Program within the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership between the governments of Canada and Québec.

Lactanet

TREATMENT PEN AND HOOF CARE EQUIPMENT

- Near the pen of animals to be monitored or behind the robotic milker
- Near medication, disinfection, and washing equipment

Barn Design for Dairy Cattle

Lactanet Canada - English channel

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selection of Methane Efficiency, Feed Efficiency and Body Maintenance Requirements.

- **Methane Efficiency (ME):** Reduce methane production by selecting for higher ME without impacting production traits.
- **Feed Efficiency:** Identify and select animals that have better feed conversion independent of production levels and body size.
- **Body Maintenance Requirements:** Categorizes the feed requirement for maintenance based on the metabolic body weight of the animal.

- **Sustainability Index:** Lactanet's Sustainability Index is a benchmarking

tool that uses milk recording data to assess your herd's overall sustainability performance. It combines multiple indicators, like health, longevity, production and heifer management, into a single percentile ranking, allowing you to compare your farm with others and identify opportunities for improvement.

Through understanding evolving expectations and making informed changes, producers continue to demonstrate commitment to animal care and environmental sustainability, playing a vital role in positioning Canada's dairy industry to maintain and build consumer trust for generations to come.

Markets react well to latest USDA report

Ramzy Yelda

Senior Market Analyst, Producteurs de grains du Québec

The Chicago Commodity Exchange reacted favourably to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's latest report on global grain supply and demand, but the report was rather neutral.

As expected, the USDA lowered U.S.

corn and soybean yields, but increased seeded acreage of both grains. Corn production is almost unchanged; soybean production is increasing slightly.

Corn stocks in 2026 declined by 75 million bushels (MBU) to 1,945. Seeded area increased, from 95.3 million acres to 96.7 million acres; yields decreased, from 183 bushels per acres to 180.7 bu/ac; production increased by 13 MBU to 16,013 MBU. Exports are up by 75 MBU.

The 2027 stocks decreased by 137 MBU to 1,653 MBU. The average producer price increased by \$0.10/bu to \$4.50/bu, compared with \$4.15/bu in 2025-26.

Soybean inventories in 2026 decreased by 5 MBU to 325 MBU. The seeded area increased, from 85.4 MA to 86.8 MA; the yield decreased from 53.0 to 52.7 bu/ac; and production increased by 44 MBU to 4,519 MBU. Crushing is up by 30 MBU.

The 2027 stocks increased by 10 MBU to 320 MBU.

For wheat, the yield decreased very slightly, from 47.9 bu to 47.8 bu/ac. Production lost 5 MBU, resulting in a similar drop in inventories, to 717 MBU in 2027 compared with 920 MBU in 2026. The average producer price increased by \$0.20/bu to \$6.20/bu compared with \$5.06/bu in 2025-26 (all wheats combined).



Tournée des Grandes Cultures du Québec focuses on grains

The 12th edition of the Tournée des Grandes Cultures du Québec was held Aug. 19 in four participating regions: the Montérégie, Centre-du-Québec, Rive-Nord and Estrie. The event brings together industry experts and producers to sample and assess corn and soybean fields across Quebec's primary production regions to estimate crop yields.

The results will be presented Aug. 21 at Domaine Saint-Simon.

This year's program included demonstrations of lumberjack sports. A few presentations were given, including one on the concrete impact of climate change on grain markets and growing conditions, with the official presentation of the tour's results at the end.

The Tournée is an important source of public information for producers when it comes to marketing their grain.

Fall Zoom call

Join the *Producteurs de grains du Québec* team for the *Rentrée parlementaire* event, held by Zoom. The virtual information session is open to all grain producers on Tuesday, Sept. 16, from 9 a.m. to noon. In addition to news on hot topics, there will be two presentations.

The first presentation, given by Julien Saguez, a biomonitoring researcher with CÉROM, will cover various detection tools for field crop pests.

The second presentation will deal with how the Engineers Act applies to agricultural projects. It will be given by engineer Julie Blanchard, an illegal practice prevention adviser for the Ordre des ingénieurs, and Patrick Marcoux, a lawyer.

The Zoom call is a great opportunity to get informed, ask your questions and be better prepared for the coming season. We strongly encourage you to register in advance for this free activity.

Portes ouvertes Mangeons local event

Save the date: the Portes ouvertes Mangeons local event, organized by the *Union des producteurs agricoles*, is back. Set for Sunday, Sept. 7, the event promises a family outing that is as fun as it is educational.

This year, the Producteurs de grains du Québec invites everyone to two locations.

The first is Ferme Valsy, at 1561 2nd Rang Nord, Saint-Édouard-de-Fabre in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region, where the Caravan will welcome you with piles of free popcorn.

Discover the different grains produced in Quebec – and don't forget to enter the draw for a gift basket containing local grain-based products.

The PGQ communications team will also be at the Ferme-école MASKITA of the Institut de technologie agroalimentaire du Québec (ITAQ), at 3230 Sicotte Street, in Saint-Hyacinthe.

The PGQ booth will again be handing out popcorn free of charge, and you will be able to play a fun game matching various types of grain to their names. There will be a draw for a gift basket, and you will learn everything you wanted to know about the wide variety of grains produced throughout Quebec and how they can be used. Don't leave without your free copy of our recipe booklet!

Portes ouvertes Mangeons local is THE family outing to bring the summer season to a close. We look forward to seeing you there!



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.



The Resourceful Naturalist



Paul J. Hetzler
ISA Certified Arborist

Even though I live in the country, during the latter part of the summer when it's cool enough to sleep with the windows open, I can hear the neighbours arguing as I go to bed. Their back-and-forth bickering is full of baseless accusations – a real “he said, she said” kind of thing. It doesn't keep me awake, but I wish they would resolve their conflict.

These neighbours are not people. They are katydids, or bush crickets.

You may never have seen a katydid, as they are active mainly at night. But you might have heard them, especially if your neighbourhood has a few trees, where they like to hang out. Though their calls can vary by region, katydids typically make an eight-pulse call, broken into three phrases. To many people it sounds like “Ka-ty-did, she did-n't, she did.”

I suppose it's more a case of arguing with themselves, but when one individual makes this accusation, another will echo it from a distance away, so it sounds much like a conversation.

In most insect species, the males are the ones that make noise or otherwise put on a show to attract mates. And indeed, it's Mr. Katydid that does the Katy-did, no-she-didn't routine. What's unusual is that Ms. Katydid also calls, though her response is a one-note tick, which probably translates to “Humph,” as I'm sure she gets exasperated by her suitor's circular arguments.

Katydid are native to just about everywhere on the planet but Antarctica – more than 6,000 species in all – with the greatest diversity found in tropical rainforests. North America is home to more than 200 species. The southeastern U.S. has more katydid species than other part of the continent, but there are plenty of bugs to go around. Even though many species live in trees, some have even adapted to hot, arid conditions.

Related to grasshoppers

Similar in size and shape to their cousins the grasshoppers, katydids stand out mainly because of their long, wispy antennae and their typically bright green colour. If you've ever picked up grasshoppers as a kid, you know they're as tough as they look. These

Maybe Katy did, maybe she didn't

The call of this bush cricket sounds like an argument in the night



MANOJ KUMAR TUTEJA/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Much like a grasshopper, katydids have long, wispy antennae and are typically bright green.

feisty, well-built critters that will spit goo on you and are apt to bite you as well. But the katydids I've seen look more frail, with their gossamer antennae and the translucent bodies of the juvenile stages.

Speaking of breakable, I just learned about the lichen katydid, a bizarrely delicate, see-through insect from northwestern South America. It is so improbably fragile that it has been described as having been crocheted. Most katydids are green to blend in with tree leaves or other vegetation. These katydids went a step further to mimic lichens, which are a symbiotic amalgam of part fungi and part algae that “took a likin'” to each other. They grow on trees, but do not harm them, as lichens get all their food from the sun. Lichen katydids blend in so well with actual lichens that you probably won't see them until they move.

I didn't realize how many katydids live in trees until I stayed a few weeks in a house built into a steep hillside. The screens in the third-storey front bedrooms, which were essentially in the treetops, were swarmed by these green

insects on summer nights. Although they feed on many types of plants, including trees, katydids in most areas are not considered pests. One exception is the Mormon cricket, a type of katydid that can devastate crops in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba when their populations surge upward. Katydids play an important role in the food web, and are a key source of protein for many birds and other small animals.

Not all tunes the same

Not all insects make “music” the same way. Cicadas, among the noisiest out there, use a Rube Goldberg-like scheme that's almost too complicated to believe. Katydids went for a simpler plan. Like crickets, they rub their front pair of wings, or forewings, together (they have two sets of wings), known as stridulation, to create their quarrelsome calls. Unlike crickets, whose calls serve as a pretty accurate thermometer, katydids can't tell you the temperature.

But they might predict frost. An old Abenaki friend told me that katydids begin calling about six weeks before

the first frost; this way one can tell whether or not it will be a late fall. I don't know if such lore originated with First Nations peoples (which seems likely), but it has become a widespread belief. For a while I used to mark on the calendar when the first katydid called, and in my scientifically-unsound sample, the katydids were correct within a few days.

Recently I came across a story attributed to the Cherokee in which a hunter mocked a katydid for its short lifespan, and the katydid replied by predicting the hunter's death that night, which came to pass. It's not clear if the katydid caused his death or merely foretold it, but I'm not taking any chances. You'll never catch me mocking a katydid. Being sixty-something is enough to make me aware of mortality. I hope to enjoy katydid song for many summers to come, but in the event I'm faced with a life-threatening health crisis, I won't accuse them of having a hand in it.

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

Are your cows really able to access water during heat stress?

Daniel de Oliveira

William H. Miner

Agricultural Research Institute

Heat stress changes more than respiration rate and milk production. As environmental temperature and humidity increase, cows also change how they compete for essential resources, like feed and water. While producers often focus on fans and sprinklers as the primary solutions, behavioural changes associated with heat stress can quietly reduce access to feed and water for certain animals in the pen. Understanding these behavioural shifts is important because the cows most affected are often not the dominant, high-performing individuals that are easiest to observe.

Heat stress occurs when cows accumulate more heat than they can dissipate. This commonly happens during periods of elevated temperature and humidity, and is often evaluated using the temperature-humidity index (THI).

Traditionally, heat stress was thought to begin around a THI of 68 to 72, which roughly corresponds to environmental conditions near 20 to 25°C depending on humidity. However, more recent work suggests cows may begin responding behaviourally at even lower thresholds. As heat stress develops, cows increase standing time, respiration rate and water intake, while reducing feed intake and rumination activity. These responses are attempts to reduce metabolic heat production and improve heat dissipation, but they also contribute to reduced milk production, impaired reproduction, altered feeding behaviour and an increased risk of health disorders.

One of the most consistent behavioural responses to heat stress is increased competition around cooling-related resources.

A study from the University of British Columbia, led by Dr. Daniel Weary, evaluated drinking behaviour in indoor-housed lactating dairy cows exposed to increasing THI conditions. Cows spent more time at the waterer, visited waterers more frequently, drank more water, and engaged in substantially more aggressive interactions as THI increased. Many of these behavioural changes became more apparent around THI values near 64 to 65, corresponding roughly to conditions around 18 to 20°C under moderate humidity.



KUCHUR POLINA/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Managing access to feed is as important as ensuring water access during hot weather.

These findings suggest cows may begin altering behaviour before obvious signs of heat stress or major production losses are observed.

The most important finding from that work may have been how subordinate cows responded.

Cows with lower competitive success altered the timing of their drinking behaviour during hot weather, shifting water consumption away from the hottest and most competitive parts of the day. During periods of elevated THI, dominant cows continued concentrating water visits during peak hours, while subordinate cows increasingly delayed water access until later evening periods when competition declined. This suggests that heat stress affects not only total water consumption, but also which cows can comfortably access water when they need it most.

From a management standpoint, this is important because water availability is not necessarily the same as water access. A pen may technically contain adequate water space, yet timid or subordinate cows may still avoid heavily crowded areas during periods of high competition. Similar patterns have already been demonstrated at the feed bunk, where subordinate cows alter feeding behaviour to avoid dominant animals, often consuming feed later in the day when sorting has already occurred.

Under heat-stress conditions, these behavioural shifts may further reduce

the consistency of intake and compromise cooling opportunities for vulnerable cows.

Practical management strategies should, therefore, focus not only on cooling capacity, but also on reducing competition around key resources. Overstocking becomes more problematic during hot weather because cows concentrate their feeding and drinking activity into narrower periods of the day. Feed bunk space recommendations vary depending on stocking density and management style, but lactating cows under heat stress conditions generally benefit from approximately 24 to 30 inches (60 to 76 cm) of linear bunk space per cow whenever possible, especially in fresh and high-producing groups. Likewise, maintaining stocking density at or below 100 per cent of stall capacity can help reduce competition for stalls and cooling resources during periods of elevated THI.

Water access also deserves special attention during hot weather. Industry recommendations commonly suggest at least two accessible water locations per pen, with approximately 3 to 4 inches (7.5 to 10 cm) of accessible trough perimeter per cow. Waterers should be positioned near feed areas and exit lanes from the parlour, where cows naturally seek water after eating and milking. High refill rate and cleanliness become especially important during summer because water intake can increase dramatically during hot periods.

Management of feed access is equally important. Increasing feed push-up frequency, delivering fresh feed during cooler parts of the day, and minimizing long periods where feed is present but physically inaccessible can help stabilize intake patterns. In overstocked pens, even small reductions in effective feed or water access may disproportionately affect timid cows.

Observation of cow behaviour can also provide valuable information before major production losses occur. Pens with elevated crowding around waterers, excessive standing after milking, uneven feed access, or timid cows waiting to approach resources may already be experiencing meaningful heat stress effects even when environmental conditions appear only moderately elevated.

Heat stress management should not be viewed solely as a ventilation issue. It is also a competition and access issue. During hot weather, cows change how they interact with feed, water and each other. Reducing competition and improving access to these resources may help stabilize intake behaviour and improve cow comfort during periods of environmental stress.

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.



Cookin' with the Advocate

Thai Crunch Salad with Peanut Dressing



CYNTHIA GUNN, THE ADVOCATE

Cabbage, carrots and rice noodles are among the ingredients that sets this salad apart.

INGREDIENTS FOR THE PEANUT DRESSING

- ¼ cup (natural) peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons unseasoned rice vinegar
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2 cloves garlic, roughly chopped
- (1-in) square piece fresh ginger, peeled and roughly chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 tablespoons fresh cilantro leaves

INGREDIENTS FOR THE SALAD

- 4 cups chopped Napa cabbage
- 1 cup shredded carrots
- 1 red pepper, thinly sliced into bite-sized pieces
- 1 small English cucumber, halved lengthwise, seeded and thinly sliced
- 1 cup cooked and shelled edamame (optional, can replace with slivered snow peas)
- 2 medium green onions, white and green parts, thinly sliced
- ½ cup loosely packed chopped fresh cilantro
- 1-2 cups prepared rice noodles (optional)

PREPARATION

For the dressing, combine all of the ingredients except for the cilantro in a blender and process until completely smooth. Add the cilantro and blend for a few seconds until the cilantro is finely chopped. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

For the salad, combine all of the ingredients in a large bowl and toss. If serving right away, drizzle the peanut dressing over top and toss; otherwise, serve the dressing on the side so the salad doesn't get soggy.

Salad, salad and more salad

From old standbys to new twists, indulge the season and your veggies

Cynthia Gunn
QFA's Food Writer

The variations on the theme of "salad" are literally countless. I mean, think about it. "Salad" basically means anything with vegetables as a main ingredient. Usually. Where the vegetables are raw. Usually. Where the dish is served cold. Usually.

Even without the "usually," if you think outside of your normal box of what salad is, you could eat a different one every day for months, if you were so inclined.

Canada Day in my village used to be the occasion for a giant community potluck of donated salads and desserts, served alongside barbecued chicken breasts. Sadly, the village grew and that tradition is no longer followed. But I remember the vast array of colours and dressings and vegetables that would appear in every type of vessel imaginable. As you moved down the line, you would spot a couple that you hoped would not be gone by the time you got to them. But no matter, even if that dish was emptied, it would be whisked away to be replaced with another, either someone's never-fail-salad or a new fanciful one that came out of their imagination.

I often thought, "I have to remember to try and replicate that one."

About a decade ago I was hired by a friend to make the salads for a large family reunion that she was hosting. She had asked me to make about eight different salads to cover an array of tastes. What a cornucopia of colours and smells filled my kitchen for a couple of days while prepping!

I am posting one of the recipes I turned to for that day, from chef, blogger and cookbook author Jennifer Segal, who has many salad recipes to spark your imagination. I make some changes from the original. For example, I add snow peas from the garden instead of edamame. I reduce the sugar in the dressing, and sometimes add rice noodles.

This is still the time of year to eat your fill of old standbys that are best when made with ingredients fresh from the garden. The black cherry tomatoes will be ripe any day here in southwestern Quebec. From that day forward to the first frost, fried halloumi cheese and bread on a bed of arugula topped with chopped cherry tomatoes, garlic lemon vinaigrette, and big handfuls of minced oregano and parsley, will grace my plate daily.

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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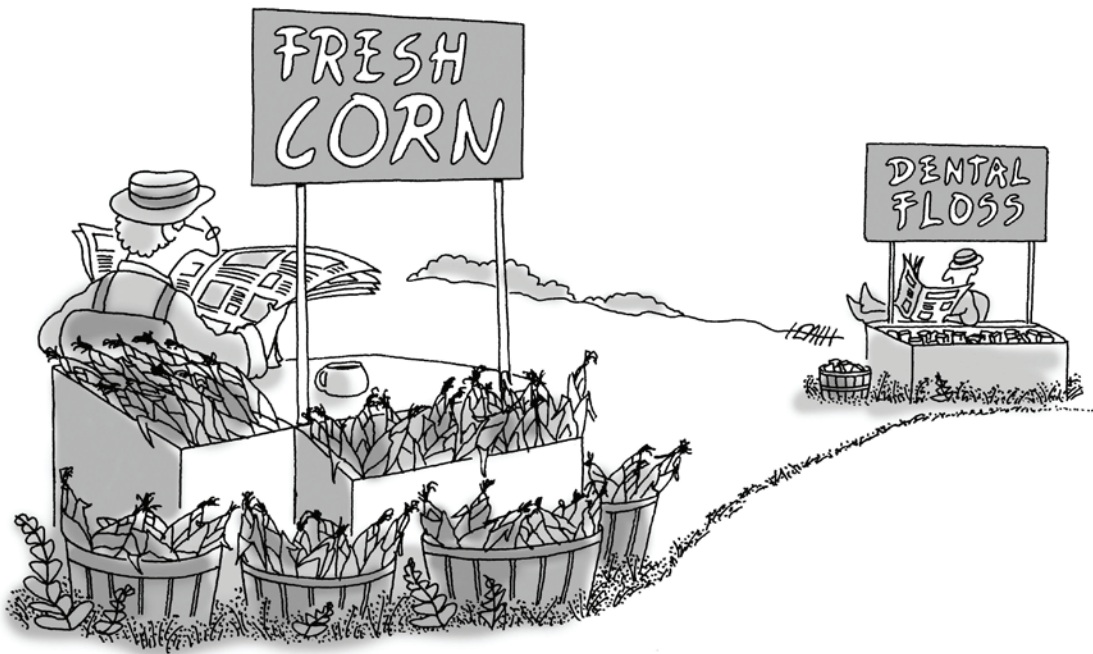
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