

Quebec Farmers'

# Advocate

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QFA gears up for the

## Slaughterhouse and processing plant in motion

Amy Taylor  
Centre local de  
développement du Pontiac

SHAWVILLE, QC — The Outaouais Valleys Fine Meats Co-op was recently established by a group of forward thinking producers to solve the problem of the lack of local slaughter and processing capacity.

For roughly the past 25 years, Pontiac County has identified the need for a small service slaughterhouse and worked hard to raise the necessary funds, only to have the project fall apart. This time, a solid commitment from funding partners exists, if the producers can raise their share of approximately \$500,000. A concerted effort has been mounted, and a sales team has been assembled to reach this attainable goal. If all goes according to plan, the



The Pontiac slaughterhouse project: Directors and end users united at the 2005 edition of the LIPA Open House event at Rolling Acres Farm, Shawville, QC.  
1st row: Bob Griffin, Yves Lévesque, Paula Hamilton, Stephen Hamilton, David Smith MP, Amy Taylor, Roger St-Cyr, Ivan Hale.  
2nd row: Tyler Fraser, Jeff Zinner, Guillaume Ménard, Bob Young, Mary Hamilton, Laird Hamilton, Gib Deary, Ron Hodgins, Dan Graveline.  
3rd row: Josh Scherf, John Kilgour, Bill Fairbairn and Darryl Moffat.

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## Slaughterhouse and processing plant in motion

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The need for a regional service slaughterhouse and processing facility has been evident for years, and recently proven viable in a feasibility study/business plan. This document identified strong support from producers, and significant market potential within the Outaouais Region and beyond.

The closest federally inspected slaughterhouse for residents of the Pontiac is located in St-André Avellin, two hours east of Shawville, in the Petite Nation region of the MRC Papineau. The animals are trucked to the facility to be killed, and the carcasses are then returned to the Pontiac to local butchers for processing. Not only is it very inconvenient to transport the one or two animals per year that the slaughterhouse is targeting from individual area producers, but the expense is rather astronomical when compared to the possibility of having a processing facility in their own area.

This is where the proposed slaughterhouse and processing facility comes into play. Not only would it be convenient to drop animals off, but the processing facility can make specific arrangements with the end user of the meat regarding their butchering specifications. A refrigerated trucking service would also be available to transport the processed meat. The aim of the slaughterhouse is to provide area producers with the opportunity to add value to their livestock through processing.

*“This is a golden opportunity for Outaouais livestock producers to take full control of the marketing of their fine meats.” Says Co-op Interim President Gib Drury. “They will be able to sell their products at full value rather than give them away.”*

A regional slaughterhouse and processing facility would be more convenient for Outaouais producers and 58 percent of those surveyed in the feasibility study research identified their intentions to expand their production due to the new facility and possibility for added value to their primary product of either beef or lamb

The Outaouais Valleys Fine Meats co-op has been formed with 3 classes of social shares: agricultural producer shares, employee shares and community support member shares. The shares have been set at \$500 each and are currently available for sale. This initial co-op membership entitles the member to one voting right, as well as one Gold Hook. A gold hook is the right to process either one beef or three lambs annually at the facility. Additional silver class hooks are available for sale at \$100 each and give additional Right to Process priorities. Those with either Gold or Silver hooks have priority over non-members for scheduling the processing of animals.

An additional way to invest in the facility involves the purchase of preferred shares. Once an individual has purchased a social share, they are entitled to purchase preferred shares at the nominal value of \$1000 each. After the fifth year of operation, if the financial situation of the co-op permits, five percent interest will be payable on the investment.

*The provisional Board of Directors for the Cooperative was elected on August 4, 2005, formed from an ad-hoc committee consisting of Pontiac Beef Improvement Club members, Gatineau*

*Outaouais Beef Improvement Club members, UPA Pontiac and Gatineau South English representatives, as well as individuals from the Outaouais Regional Beef Syndicate.*

For more information, or to purchase shares, hooks or promotional packages, please contact any member of the sales team or the Board of Directors.

### **Interim Board of Directors of the Slaughterhouse**

Gib Drury	President	1-819-45-2991	Alcove
Bob Griffin	Vice President	1-819-648-2230	Grand-Calumet
Ron Hodgins	Secretary-Treasurer	1-819-647-6001	Shawville
Ivan Hale	Director	1-819-459-2264	Alcove
Bob Younge	Director	1-819-647-5284	Shawville
Pat Kavanagh	Director	1-819-648-2251	Vinton
John Lapierre	Director	1-819-689-2164	Chapeau
Bill Fairbairn	Director	1-819-459-2433	Wakefield
Membership Sales team			
Eric Smith	Shawville	1-819-647-5015	
Bruno Alary	Luskville	1-819-455-2389	
Hubert McClelland	Cantley	1-819-827-1793	

Public meetings have been scheduled across the Outaouais region in the coming weeks to present the project and provide opportunities to purchase shares & hooks.

### **Schedule of Public Meetings**

September 30 <sup>th</sup>	7:30-10:00pm	Luskville	Salle Communautaire	French
October 3 <sup>rd</sup>	7:30-10:00pm	Quyon	Beach Barn	English
October 4 <sup>th</sup>	7:30-10:00pm	Low	Heritage Hall	English
October 5 <sup>th</sup>	7:30-10:00pm	Shawville	Agricultural Society	English
October 6 <sup>th</sup>	7:30-10:00pm	Chapeau	Municipal Hall	English
October 7 <sup>th</sup>	7:30-10:00pm	Buckingham	Centre Communautaire	Bilingual

## **31-month-old cow causes uproar in the US**

**Andrew McClelland**  
**Advocate Staff Reporter**

Another Canadian cow is causing excitement in the US beef industry this month, as a 31-month-old cow that was exported south of the border has many American beef producers claiming that BSE regulations are not protecting their country's industry.

On August 4, A Wisconsin packing plant imported, slaughtered and processed a Canadian cow whose documentation indicated that it was less than 30 months of age. But when Canadian officials performed an audit of the animal's health certificate, it was revealed that the cow was in fact 31 months old. At that age, certain specified risk materials (SRMs) that are not allowed into

the human food chain—such as brain tissue and the vertebral column—must be removed before processing.

However, the processing facility, Green Bay Dressed Beef of Green Bay, had already shipped the beef that may contain portions of the vertebral column. A total of 1856 pounds of beef had already been delivered to wholesalers in Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

On August 19, Green Bay Dressed Beef initiated a recall of 37 boxes of possibly dangerous beef. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) e-mailed a health warning and recall notice the following day, declaring the situation only warrants a Class 2 health risk. The health risk is particularly low, say officials, because there is only a very minimal chance that any of the beef products were eaten, and an even lesser chance that any health problems would result from its consumption.

However, as Rob McNabb, assistant general manager of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA), told the *Advocate*, authorities initially took interest in the case because it was discovered after slaughter that the cow was pregnant.

“It was not a routine audit of the health certificate that precipitated the investigation,” said McNabb. “It was not indicated on the certificate that the cow was pregnant, and the accredited veterinarian should have noticed. The USDA are now in possession of the foetus and are treating it as an SRM.”

But the USDA's reassurances have not quelled the anger of R-CALF USA, the US's most powerful protectionist group of stockgrowers. In a recent press release, the group cited the incident as another reason to impose a long-term ban on Canadian cattle being brought in to the US.

“R-CALF is still pursuing a permanent injunction against [outside cattle] in US District Court,” said president and co-founder Leo McDonnell. “The effect would be a ban on cattle and beef from any country with BSE-infected cattle until more stringent risk mitigation measures are put in place.”

The organization wants those strict measures put in place because of what it calls “inexcusable loopholes” which allow certain cows to slip through the cracks of the USDA's regulations. While R-CALF claims that 40,000 cattle have been shipped across the border since the embargo on Canadian beef was lifted on July 14, it also says that 1.7 million are expected in the next year. And with R-CALF claiming that the margin for error seems to be 1 in 40,000, the protectionist group is doing all it can to convince government close the border again.

“Not only do we have to wonder whether some Canadians are falsifying their age certificates, but we also have to be concerned with USDA's ongoing trail of repeated failures to assure compliance with its own BSE rules, which is resulting in unnecessary and avoidable risks to both US consumers and the US cattle herd,” said McDonnell.

But for Rob McNabb and the CCA, the 31-month-old cow has helped more than it has hindered US protectionists and their cause.

“R-CALF are switching tactics because they lost on the injunction, so this little blip can be used to their advantage,” said McNabb.

“It’s certainly the opinion of the USDA and the CCA that a situation like this, while it is avoidable, is almost always detected by the measures and regulations we have in place. It’s just a question of finding out why this wasn’t detected.”

## A corn war would hurt Quebec producers

The UPA supports the measures taken by corn producers, who are requesting the imposition of rights on corn imported from the United States, but hope that the government will find a solution that will be less harmful to agriculture in general.

“We have been working for years to ensure that corn producers are fairly paid,” declared Laurent Pellerin, the UPA’s president. According to the UPA, American subsidies are resulting in a decrease of at least \$25 per tonne on the price paid to Quebec and Canadian corn producers. Some are even saying a loss of \$40 to \$80 per tonne because the problem seems to have worsened in recent years. In many cases this can result in a loss of \$600 per hectare. “This is significant,” said Pellerin, who said that he remains confounded by the federal government’s reaction, suggesting that Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada seem to recognize the problem but have not proposed any definite plan to find a solution.

“We are an animal production province,” added the UPA President, who is concerned about the increase of the price of corn that could increase production costs and make local breeders less competitive.

Laurent Pellerin would like Ottawa to find a way to compensate grain producers rather than having to come to the rescue of all the Canadian breeders. The *Association québécoise des industries de production animale* (AQINAC), whose members import most of their corn from the United States into Quebec, already expects an increase in production costs. “We are in consultation to understand the impact on the industry,” explained Yvan Lacroix, Director General of the AQINAC.

“It would be disastrous for us,” said Clare Schlegel, President of the Canadian Pork Council, who predicts, in the case of a commercial war, an increase of the price of corn and consequently in the price of barley, at a time when the Canadian pork industry is struggling to compete with its American counterpart. It should be pointed out that the American breeders are benefiting from the low cost of grain in their country.

### American corn

Quebec imports between 250,000 and 300,000 tonnes of corn per year from the United States. Therefore, the majority of corn consumed in Quebec is local. Nevertheless, the AQINAC estimates that the local price would be increased. The impact would be an increase ranging from \$6 to \$7 per pig produced taking into account an increase of approximately \$40 per tonne in the price of corn. Still, according to the industry, there would be an increase of four to five cents per kilo in the price of poultry.

The new Canadian ethanol plants could also change the situation as many of them are counting on corn from the United States to diversify their sources of supply.

*Thierry Larivière*  
*LTCN 2005-09-08*

## **Farm taxation: Blocking trails is not out of the question**

“Agricultural producers will not let another season go by without a reform to farm taxation,” declared UPA President Laurent Pellerin, on September 5<sup>th</sup>. However, the UPA general council did not give the word to block the snowmobile and ATV trails going through farmland. Pellerin explained that the general council’s tactic is to increase meetings with municipal councils, to explain the farmers’ point of view during the annual meeting of the *Fédération québécoise des municipalités* held at the end of September and to meet with rural elected officials.

“Having said that, farmers own their own farms. The UPA will respect their decision if they decide to ban ATV from going through their property,” added Pellerin. Two specialized federations (the *Fédération des producteurs de lait du Québec* and *Fédération des producteurs de cultures commerciales du Québec*) have already adopted resolutions to that effect. However, Pellerin talked about a “drastic change” if no solution is found before the end of September. The famous “last chance committee”—comprised of representatives from the ministries of Agriculture, Finance and Municipal Affairs as well as from the municipal unions and the UPA—has yet to meet even though it was supposed to put an end to the farmers’ tax inequity by mid-September. The council of ministers has not yet decided who will sit on the committee. The government is still doing its homework as it is studying various scenarios before calling a meeting. “One thing is for certain: the solution will not be imposed,” stated André Ménard, Press Secretary for the Minister of Agriculture. A meeting could take place in the next few weeks.

### **Optimism**

Quebec’s Ministry of Agriculture (MAPAQ) significantly sped up the process for the tax reimbursement to farmers. As of August 25, MAPAQ had paid back some \$35 million to 10,500 farmers compared to slightly more than \$2 million last year. “The tight deadline and the ultimatum given by the UPA to the MAPAQ, which would have had to pay interest for payments

exceeding the 65 days stipulated in the law, paid off,” pointed out Pellerin. “However, the fundamental problem is not solved. We cannot keep asking farmers and MAPAQ to advance some \$90 million for the reimbursement of taxes for the benefit of municipalities,” he added. Laurent Pellerin still seems convinced of a happy ending for farmers. “In case of a deadlock within the “last chance committee”, the Minister of Municipal Affairs assured me that the Quebec government will make a decision in line with the party’s position,” he said. The Liberals are already applying the \$1,500 per hectare ceiling. In addition, the Ministry of Finance committee report is still on the table. The committee proposes that farmers pay approximately 30 percent of their tax bill to their municipality, with a ceiling of \$1,500 per hectare, the balance being paid to the municipalities by the government. In doing so, Quebec would be in line with the other Canadian provinces, which are already using similar programs. Finally, Pellerin pointed out that some 250 municipalities or MRC-adopted resolutions to support the position defended by the UPA.

### **Divergence**

Municipal unions would prefer to see an improvement to the current Tax Reimbursement Program for farmers. On the other hand, Pellerin believes that, throughout the process, we have to ensure that municipalities are adequately compensated in the long term.

*Jean-Charles Gagné*  
*LTCN 2005-09-08*

## **Public hearings on expansion of Highway 30**

A new chapter has unfolded in the ongoing Highway 30 saga. The *Bureau des audiences publiques sur l’environnement* (BAPE) has recently started hearings on the construction project of the Jean-Leman section, the third section in the highway’s expansion.

After the customary public hearings, which were held from April 13 to May 28, the BAPE is stepping it up a notch. The first hearings on August 30, which attracted no less than 280 people, were followed by four more sessions on the Wednesday and Thursday, both in the afternoon and in the evening. The break of several months did not slow down the opponents of the project. “The public hearings give us the opportunity to express loud and clear our opposition and to shed some light on this unjustified environmental attack,” declared Viviane Coriveau, president of the *Comité citoyen pour l’autoroute 30 sur la 132* (northern route). According to the organization’s report, the construction of Highway 30 in farmland will affect three rivers, nearly 500 hectares as well as causing the destruction of many woodlots and wetlands. “The government is getting ready to impose on the local people a road section to which they will not have access, that will destroy their environment, and cause pollution with the fumes of thousands of additional vehicles every day,” added Coriveau.

## Consensus

“Nobody came to tell me that they agree with this section and even the Candiac developers are against it. The reasons vary, but everyone is against it,” stated Corriveau. The opponents felt tied by the commission, which tried to bring the discussion back to the Jean-Leman section rather than to the route being in the agricultural zone. Mrs Corriveau believes this first part is antidemocratic. “Why are they preventing us from linking up with the section in the agricultural zone?” she asked.

“We have to talk about it”, said Pierre Caza, Director of the Planning Department at the Saint-Jean-Valleyfield UPA. The time given to the city of Candiac to present its project has frustrated many people. “We have the feeling that we are facing two developers who are defending their own project. The city wants to send the Jean-Leman route further into farmland, thus enclosing even more farmland than with the route proposed by the ministry. However, everybody agreed that this would threaten the sustainability of farmland,” added Caza.

## The full plan

The expansion of Highway 30 is divided in three parts. In the West, the new section between Châteauguay and Vaudreuil-Dorion is not facing much opposition and work is already in progress. However, things get more difficult for the section between Candiac and Sainte-Catherine. The Liberal party’s choice to build Highway 30 in the agricultural zone (southern route) rather than on Highway 132 is causing discontentment. Finally, the third section, called Jean-Leman ramp, is the final result of the route going through farmland between Candiac and Sainte-Catherine. The BAPE’s current inquiry is about the Jean-Leman ramp. Hearings will resume on September 29 at 7:00 p.m. at the Saint-Constant Railroad Museum. During the hearing, the commission will receive the reports from the organizations and individuals who asked to be heard. Afterwards, the BAPE will have to submit its report to Minister Mulcair no later than December 29. The document will become public 60 days later. “The BAPE’s report is not decisive itself. It sheds light on the Minister’s decision,” explained Jean-Sébastien Filion, Communication Advisor at the BAPE.

*Julie Mercier*  
*LTCN 2005-09-08*

## Maple syrup: an authorized buyer caught red-handed

Dascom Maple Farm, a buyer authorized by the *Fédération des producteurs acéricoles du Québec* (FPAQ) sold many thousand of dollars worth of maple syrup on the black market through René Roy of Sainte-Cécile-de-Whitton.

The facts of the deal were revealed during the last day of the inquiry of the *Régie des marchés agricoles et alimentaires du Québec* (RMAAQ) in the René Roy case, which took place in Sherbrooke on August 25<sup>th</sup>.

Roy was caught in the fall of 2004 with cash and maple syrup barrels belonging to two false maple syrup producers, who were in fact two retired police officers acting undercover on behalf of the FPAQ . The investigators were also able to take pictures of the storage owned by Roy.

During the hearing, the manager of the *Les Jardins du Granit caisse populaire* and the manager of *La Guadeloupe National Bank* submitted Roy's bank statements dating back as far as 2001. The two bankers received subpoenas from the FPAQ's lawyer, Louis Coallier, forcing them to submit the documents to the RMAAQ.

## **Big bucks**

Authorities learned that Roy's account at the National Bank was receiving money from three companies. The first, Atkinson Maple Supplies from Oro, Ontario, issued cheques for a total of \$26,000 to Roy. Then, Destal, a company located in Charleston, New Hampshire issued cheques for a value of \$292,000. The last company, Dascom, whose head office is located in Alstead, New Hampshire and owns storage facilities in Saint-Zacharie, Quebec, is an American buyer authorized by the FPAQ and issued cheques totalling \$363,000.

As for the *caisse populaire*, the money in Roy's account came primarily from his account at the National Bank. The *caisse populaire* manager submitted copies of the cheques and withdrawal slips as well as statements of transactions made at the automatic teller.

## **Interrogation**

At the end of the hearing, the FPAQ's lawyer, Louis Coallier, interrogated René Roy, who admitted that he bought between 300,000 and 400,000 pounds of syrup during the year 2004. He estimated his transactions at 40,000 pounds for 2003. Roy also suggested that the Dascom, Atkinson and Destal companies are associated, and stated that he knew the manager of the Dascom storage in Saint-Zacharie, a man named Robert Poirier. However, the syrup was transported by Americans from New Hampshire.

Roy was expected to bring the register of his transactions with maple syrup producers, but he declared that he had destroyed it. Coallier asked him the names of the producers who sold him syrup, but he remained silent.

According to Bernard Perrault, Director of Marketing at the FPAQ, the authorized buyer Dascom could lose its right to buy maple syrup from the federation. As for René Roy, the regulation makes provision for fines that could reach \$2.40 for each pound of syrup that was not bought from the sales agency.

The manager of the National Bank mentioned that she had not finished her search of documents due to a lack of time. She was still missing seventy-nine other deposits made in the account of *Équipement d'érablière des Appalaches*, a company owned by René Roy. The RMAAQ will examine these additional statements.

Strangely enough, the National Bank sent a \$1,300 invoice to Roy for the research done on his bank statements, although he did not personally ask for the audit. His lawyer mentioned he would try to reach an agreement with the FPAQ for the payment of this expense.

According to Charles-Félix Ross, FPAQ Secretary, more than two hundred requests for investigations were submitted to the RMAAQ regarding maple syrup producers who sold syrup on the black market. Of this number, there were 70 out-of-court settlements and the producers involved agreed to pay \$500,000 from their future crops. In Ross' opinion, the settlement between the parties proves the good faith of these producers and shows there is no need to make their names public. However, there are still 130 investigation requests before the RMAAQ.

*Yves Charlebois*  
*LTCN 2005-09-08*

## **No illegal entry for yellow margarine in Quebec**

Manufacturers of yellow margarine have not tried to bring their merchandise into Quebec illegally after September 1, 2005. "I have not heard anything about any attempt to bring in coloured margarine in Quebec," declared André Ménard, press secretary of the Quebec Minister of Agriculture, on September 6. He stated that the government is still ready to apply its regulation on the colouration of margarine, which was not revoked by the recommendation of a special committee formed by the Agreement on Internal Trade.

"I cannot confirm if manufacturers of coloured margarine will ship any into Quebec," said their spokesperson, Sean McPhee. He hopes that the Quebec government will publicly declare that it will apply the recommendations of the trade panel.

### **Reprisals**

The use of reprisals, already mentioned by McPhee, will not necessarily be seen in the near future. According to the Agreement on Internal Trade, Alberta (on behalf of margarine manufacturers) could ask to take retaliatory measures one year after the decision of the special group, therefore, not before June 23, 2006.

The Internal Trade Committee will have to assess if the retaliatory measures in the same economic sector will have an effect similar to the measure contested by Alberta. A special group could be asked to determine if the retaliatory measures are deliberately excessive. The application of retaliatory measures having a similar effect could be quite complicated as the committee has not determined the impact of the measure. The group pointed out that it is not necessary to perform a detailed economic study on the impact of the measure. A special group could determine if the contested measures affect, or could affect internal trade. "Based on statistics from the Dairy Farmers of Canada, the trade panel tried to quantify the results associated with the loss of opportunity. This data revealed that in Quebec, the share of the

margarine market combined with that of butter is approximately ten percent lower than the national market. According to Alberta, this ten percent difference represents losses of \$19 million per year for the Canadian margarine industry.

*Jean-Charles Gagné*  
*LTCN 2005-09-08*

## **A new MAPAQ form for the floor price of cull cows**

MAPAQ must send a new form to ensure the payment of the floor price of 42 cents per pound for cull cows. According to the ministry, this new form is mainly used to obtain missing information on a small quantity of animals and not to outsmart those trying to cheat the program. Some animals from Ontario were brought in Quebec to benefit from the program.

“The new form targets only a small group of animals for which we were unable to obtain pertinent information,” said Marc Dion, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Regional Directorate of Regional Affairs. Dion explained that in order to benefit from the assistance program, the animals had to have the *Traçabilité Québec* identification and be part of a Quebec herd as of December 1, 2004.

“We could not trace back all the animals. It is a small percentage, between five and ten percent. We are asking for simple things such as a proof of herd registry. I intend to minimize the hassles for producers. At the beginning, we gave priority to the payments for animals on which we had all the information. Now, we have reached the point where we are missing some information on a small group of animals,” added Dion.

The Assistant Deputy Minister explained that MAPAQ has so far paid out \$5.9 million of the \$6 million budgeted by the government to support a floor price of 42 cents per pound. The program made provision for the payment of 16 cents per pound for animals slaughtered between December 1, 2004 and April 30, 2005. Afterwards, the payment was reduced to ten cents per pound for the period between May 1 and August 31. The registration period for the program is therefore over and the ministry will soon begin the payment of the federal portion set at \$11.4 million.

Dion indicated that fraud is not the reason for the new form. He said that there are only a few cases of animals imported from Ontario or elsewhere. “It was not a major problem. In all, there might have been one or two operations that did this.”

*Pierre-Yvon Bégin*  
*LTCN 2005-09-08*

# **This fall is the last hope for municipal taxation**

**Laurent Pellerin**  
**UPA President**

It was a priority in the government's electoral program. During the electoral campaign, Premier Charest recognized the problem. Then, the issue was supposed to be part of the budget. From there, a special committee examined the question and tried to find all sustainable solutions. Afterwards, during the last UPA general congress, the Minister of Agriculture made more settlement promises. Then, last May, it was the Minister of Municipal Affairs' turn to announce a solution for this fall with the creation of a "last chance" committee.

The agricultural sector is fully justified in its demands for a final outcome to this problem. The UPA, for its part, never let down its guard and intensified its actions to ensure that municipal taxation remained a priority in the government's agenda. At the beginning of the year, the operation "We pay our taxes... our fair share" also contributed to driving things forward. Bill 93 that followed, even though it did not solve everything, officially recognized the transfer of the tax burden and corrected part of the problem, notably by the introduction of an 85 percent reimbursement beyond a value of \$1,500 per hectare.

In addition, there is no doubt that the pressure put on the government accelerated the processing of reimbursement applications. So far, \$40 million have been refunded to producers compared to \$2 million last year. Moreover, the operation allowed a significant segment of the municipal sector to support our cause with more than 250 resolutions.

However, the issue will be solved once and for all when farmers will be able to pay their fair share of their tax burden directly to their municipalities without having to wait for a reimbursement from MAPAQ.

With this in mind, the general council reaffirmed its need to obtain a final conclusion before the end of this fall. We will take action by intensifying our efforts, maintaining pressure on the government, continuing awareness campaigns with the various political players and creating new alliances with the municipal sector as well as with new stakeholders, including snowmobiles and ATV regional associations. Nothing will be spared to remind our elected officials of their commitments.

This has been long overdue.

The "Normandeau" committee must quickly get to work to come up with a new bill, otherwise there is a high risk of seeing an increase in the already significant pressure on the government. Should we be surprised by the exasperation of some, who will have a hard time to convince themselves that they have to "share" their land with the community when, collectively, the distribution of the taxation burden is done to their detriment? Goodwill has its limits. For farmers, the situation has lasted long enough and a final solution is a must. And this fall appears to be the last hope.

## Wheat sales agency getting organized

Since the signing of the food wheat marketing agreement on July 26, the Wheat Sales Agency has been hard at work getting organized to receive the current crop. There are eight accredited regional grain centres in Quebec: Provalcid in Varennes, Nova Grain in Saint-Jean-de-Richelieu, *Les éleveurs Sainte-Madeleine* in Saint-Simon, X Grains in Saint-Denis-sur-Richelieu, Comax Celubec in Saint-Hyacinthe, Frigon Cyrille in Louiseville, *Coop Profid'or* in Saint-Jacques and *Éleveur Rive-Sud* in Contrecoeur. Two or three centres are also waiting to be accredited in regions where there are no services. It should be pointed out that the crop is later in the eastern and northern parts of the province.

The first statistics of the Agency show the participation of 801 wheat producers in Quebec with a total area of more than 21,000 hectares. The producers estimated their crops at 71,000 tonnes while the *Fédération des producteurs de cultures commerciales* (FPCCQ) believes that the total crop will be closer to 68,000 tonnes. The provincial average yield is approximately three and a third tonnes per hectare.

Without a doubt, Barrie is this year's most popular variety. In addition, this wheat variety, which is more resistant to fusariosis, has a good yield as well as a good reputation in flour mills. The second most popular variety of wheat is Blomidon (2,900 hectares), followed by Brio (1,800 hectares), Orleans, Aquino and Voyageur with less than 1000 hectares each.

Each centre will receive a given variety according to the proximity of the producers and the volumes available. We know, for example, that Bunge/Leblanc Lafrance from Sainte-Madeleine will focus on Blomidon. However, nothing is confirmed as of yet and the Federation does not want to publicly attract a variety to a particular centre. It is also part of the Agency's business strategy and there could be changes according to the delivery phases.

It should be pointed out that some producers who produce a particular variety of wheat, such as "health grain," will be able to deliver directly to small processors. We are thinking of some quickly expanding companies such as *La Milanaise*. Approximately 30 percent of the wheat will be stored at the farm and will not go through centres until it is delivered to flour mills or other buyers.

During this first season, the wheat will be separated according to varieties as much as possible and buyers will be able to obtain bread wheat or blended wheat according to the varying characteristics of the wheat. However, mixes were made in some silos due to the low volume involved in a given region and the unavailability of storage equipment.

The transportation of wheat to buyers will be done by trucks from the services centres, which will deliver it to flour mills. The two main flour producers are ADM and Robin Hood from Montreal. According to the FPCCQ, which manages the Agency, a good proportion of the deliveries will be planned many weeks ahead.

From now on, some smaller buyers, such as Quebec breweries that make wheat beer, will have to go through the sales agency to buy wheat.

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