

ACTIVITY REPORT

2018-2019

ENSEMBLE
POUR
ET FAIRE
NOURRIR
GRANDIR
L'OUTAOUAIS-
LAURENTIDES





Message from the President

If you really think about it, everything changes, all the time. This reality reflects the context in which I initiate this presidency that the Board of Directors of the Fédération UPA Outaouais-Laurentides entrusted to me.

Farmers in our region, as elsewhere in Quebec, Canada and other Western countries, must learn to deal with new consumer expectations. The public demands high standards for animal welfare, environmental protection and pesticide use.

These demands impose an increasingly heavy burden on farmers. Climate change, trade wars, free trade agreements and the constant evolution of technology complete the picture: we are in transition... until the next change!

Learning to live in transition is also a challenge that we face within our own organization. The Federation lived through more changes in a span of several weeks than that encountered in nearly two decades. With a new president, a new director, and a largely renewed team for Democratic Life, we can certainly speak about upheaval.

Faced with a changing reality, we always have the choice to say 'Yes' or 'No'. To refuse is to resist and to risk losing equilibrium. To accept this is to commit ourselves to cultivating flexibility in order to follow

the wave, to be propelled by its momentum and to move forward. Because resistance requires energy that we do not have the luxury of wasting, I am one of those who say, 'Yes'.

I intend to help redefine ourselves and equip us to be able to move towards renewed governance, an organization closer to its members and one that is able to pull together when facing the challenges of the hour.

To make them comfortable, new shoes must be "broken in" and not left in the closet. In this regard, I am proposing that we take action as a way to move forward. More than just the commitment of each individual member, I also need a collective commitment to action and to adapting to the transformations yet to come.

Is there, in fact, another way than that of being open to new ideas as a way to express our confidence in the future, in our next generation and in the sustainability of our agriculture?

Stéphane Alary

President



Message from the Regional Director

A few months ago, the place occupied by agriculture in my daily life was limited to my plate, three times a day. But I already admired those who fill up our fridges and our cupboards, I already had agriculture at heart. As a woman of the heart, this was the impetus that governed my decision to accept the challenge of becoming the Regional Director for the Fédération UPA Outaouais-Laurentides.

In making this decision, I agreed to take on some sizable challenges within an environment where many changes have taken place in a very short time.

I know, however, that I can count, to motivate myself to advance, on the admiration which I have for those who work in agriculture. This will only grow as I stand shoulder to shoulder, working with them. This will be my fuel, a super fuel that will always be available when I have to refill.

On a few occasions already, I have met producers who are totally dedicated to their profession; people who give their time without counting the hours. I also perceived their need to share their experiences, to put their ideas together, and to take their place. This sense of vitality is an inspiration to me.

I know that I can rely on the team of dedicated, experienced and clever employees. These colleagues will be my vehicle. A powerful and well-honed racing car which I can be proud of!

With this team, and the elected officials on the Board, I am already getting to work. My goal is to help build an operating framework that will allow the Federation's board members to achieve their aspirations. It is also about maximizing the ability of the team of employees to offer services tailored to the needs of producers and the demands of the new realities they are facing.

I would like to offer you my management experience, my energy, and my desire to see your projects completed for the coming year. I would like to express my sincere wish to see the best in each of us combined and mobilized in support of these achievements.

Nathalie Messias

Regional Director

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019

New Blood at Head Office

Departures, arrivals, a team that has renewed itself almost from top to bottom... At general management, the year was marked by the departure of several stalwarts. After a career spanning 35 years with the UPA, and 19 years managing the Federation, René Ledoux has retired. Ditto for Luc Fuoco, Advisor to affiliated syndicates, after a career of 29 years. The land use planning advisor, Guillaume Charest-Hallée, decided to take up the challenge of international cooperation with UPA DI after 7 years in the position. The arrival of a new regional director and new employees has resulted in a renewed team, with the expertise of newcomers and the experience of long-time employees.



From left to right: Cynthia Guindon, Lise Nadon, Nadine Brisson, Sophie Augurusa, Suzanne Laplante, Manon Vial, Martin Charron, Luc Maisonneuve, Xavier Lagueux, Marie-Claude Thibault, Nathalie Messias, Nathalie Villeneuve.

Who's Doing What?

CYNTHIA GUINDON, Advisor to affiliated syndicates:
UPA Laurentides-Pays-d'en-Haut • UPA Argenteuil • Beef • Sheep • Dairy

LISE NADON, Administrative Assistant:
Head office of the Federation

NADINE BRISSON, Secretary:
Local Syndicates • Specialized Syndicates • Management of the list of producers

SOPHIE AUGURUSA:
Agri-environment • Urban Agriculture & Local Markets • UPA Argenteuil

SUZANNE LAPLANTE, Advisor to affiliated syndicates:
UPA Collines de l'Outaouais • UPA Pontiac • UPA Vallée-de-la-Gatineau • Agricultural Training Agent, Outaouais

MANON VIAL, Advisor to affiliated syndicates:
UPA Basses-Laurentides • UPA Deux-Montagnes • UPA Laval • UPA La Lièvre • Secretary, Young Farmers • Maple Syrup • Sécurijour

MARTIN CHARRON, Advisor to affiliated syndicates:
UPA Papineau • UPA Sainte-Scholastique-Mirabel • Apples • Grains • Communications & Public Affairs

XAVIER LAGUEUX, Land Use Planning Advisor:
Agri-environment • Highway Safety • Wildlife

MARIE-CLAUDE THIBAULT, Assistant Director:
Democratic Life • Economic Dossiers

NATHALIE MESSIAS, Regional Director

NATHALIE VILLENEUVE, Communications & Public Affairs Advisor:
Open House Day and other agriculture promotion activities • Media Relations • Website & social media



New President and Vice-President

A dairy producer in Luskville, and president of the UPA Collines de l'Outaouais from 2014 to 2019, Stéphane Alary took up the challenge of being president of the Federation last summer.

François Handfield, an organic vegetable producer and president of UPA Laurentides-Pays-d'en-Haut, is the new vice-president.



The end of a long chapter

After 19 years, Richard Maheu ended the longest term as a president in the history of the Federation. Active in the UPA since the early 1990s, a dairy, sheep and maple producer, Mr. Maheu sat for several years as a member of the Confederation's executive and chaired Agri-Traçabilité Québec and the UPA Professional Defense Fund.

Moved by his interest in land use planning, he contributed to the creation of the Federation's Land Planning Policy and played a key role in the eventual route of Autoroute 50.

As director of the Federation, Mr. Ledoux accompanied Mr. Maheu throughout his presidency. He managed the significant growth of the Accounting and Income Tax Department as well as the Agricultural Employment Center over the past two decades. Under his leadership, the Democratic Life team was created as part of the changes instigated by the UPA of the future.

Upon his arrival, about 20 people were employed by the Federation. That number had almost doubled by the time he left. This growth involved the move to the 15 Grande-Côte building in Saint-Eustache in 2006 and the expansion of the offices in 2019. The latter project also bears the signature of Mr. Ledoux.

An emotionally charged 50th anniversary for those expropriated in Mirabel

Still standing, still alive. This was the theme that marked the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the announcement of the construction of Mirabel Airport on March 27, 1969. Some 150 people, including many members of expropriated farm families, attended the ceremony at Sainte-Scholastique. On April 15th, these same people attended an emotionally charged announcement of the return of the last expropriated lands by the federal Minister of Transport, Marc Garneau. Marcel Denis, president of the UPA Sainte-Scholastique-Mirabel, involved since the beginning of the 2000s in this issue, received a long and warm round of applause on this occasion.



*"Being the son of those
who were expropriated, this is
all the baggage I've been carrying
for years, the stories that have been told
to me by other members of expropriated
families, who have come back
here today."*



— Marcel Denis, at the announcement of the return of the last lands
at Mirabel, on April 15th.



Federal Minister Mélanie Joly announced the complete transfer of the
Maison Jean-Paul-Raymond property over to UPA Sainte-Scholastique-Mirabel
during the commemorative ceremony on March 27th.

How Are You Doing?

The idea was the brainchild of Josée Frappier-Raymond, then president of UPA Deux-Montagnes: all producers must be made aware of their psychological health, they have to be shown that they are not alone and that help is available. A postcard project was born, in which all the other local syndicates participated. Some 2,300 producers, all members of the Federation, received the card at home, which was also distributed in digital format and has been disseminated on all of the Federation's platforms. "You take care of business so that things go well on the farm. But do you take care of yourself?" can be read on the back of the postcard, in addition to the list of resources that provide assistance in the region.

Some Personnel for the Outaouais, Please

An action plan has been set in motion for psychological health in the Outaouais. The UPA is working jointly with the Écoute agricole des Laurentides organization, to obtain support for a project to hire a rural social worker in the region and to raise the \$180,000 needed for its funding.



How Are You
Doing?



Democratic Life on the Drawing Board

Democratic Life is about the actions we take to defend our vision and our common goals. Our efficiency of action and the dynamic nature of our democratic institutions depend on the health of our democratic life.

The Federation has taken the means to give its Democratic Life a second wind, orchestrating an active process of reflection with a new democratic life committee composed of 11 members that represent the diversity of the region. The reflection process has been fuelled by the results of a survey of about 60 directors from the region that was carried out in January 2019. The producers' sense of belonging to the organization, the governance of our entities and communications are the building blocks on which the committee will focus its work.

We talked about agriculture during the election campaign

An election campaign is a golden opportunity to be seized in order to get agricultural issues prominently placed within the regional media space. As in 2018 at the provincial level, our organization can congratulate itself for taking up the challenge with flying colours during the 2019 federal campaign. The results speak for themselves: 5 producer/candidate meetings in 5 weeks involving 11 local syndicates, 110 producers, 19 candidates and the 5 main political parties. These activities were covered by local media and given traction using video reports by the Federation on social media.



FOLLOWING THE TRAIL OF IMPORTANT TOPICS

Crop Insurance for Hay

The drought in 2018 triggered a series of actions that echoed at every level of the organization. A regional Hay Crop Insurance Committee was tasked with analyzing the losses incurred by producers. Representations were then made to La Financière agricole via the provincial committee, in which the president of the Federation participated. These actions have borne fruit. Offsets for producers were enhanced to make record payments of \$60 million for the province. Changes to the program were also made for 2019. Producers in the Mont-Laurier region, however, believe that they have not received compensation commensurate with their losses. The regional federation has therefore supported them in a complaint to the Protecteur du citoyen.





Property Taxes

In 2019, the value of farmland along the North Shore of Montreal increased by 25 % to 75 %, resulting in tax increases of over 200 %. The regional federation accompanied all the local syndicates in calling for an agricultural tax rate and solid argumentation was developed to support this.

Although the results of these efforts to date are not up to what we had hoped for, elected representatives are more sensitized to the producer's requests. Educational work still needs to continue in order to further raise awareness amongst our decision makers on the issue of fairness in taxation and the importance of providing solutions.

Note that Bill 48, recently tabled in the Quebec National Assembly, proposes to cap farmland valuations at \$30,000/ha, which offers a glimmer of hope to Laval producers whose average land value already exceeds this threshold.

Growing Cannabis

While several municipalities within its territory have adopted regulations or are planning to regulate the production of cannabis, the Federation has made it known to decision makers that it is premature to set up a regulatory framework for this type of production that is still largely unknown and not yet completely explored in Quebec. Acting without thinking can create harmful precedents for other crops without effectively addressing the potential nuisances raised by some citizens. The Federation intends to lobby for cannabis to be fully recognized as an agricultural product and its production properly documented and regulated.



PROMOTING AGRICULTURE

Cultivating Curiosity and Passion Amongst Youth

The idea sprouted in the minds of a few producers in the UPA Laurentides–Pays-d'en-Haut in the winter of 2018. In the fall of 2019, the *Je me cultive, de l'école à la ferme* project (I'm cultivating, from school to farm) is now underway and more than 300 students will have benefited during the school year. This educational program offers youth activities related to agriculture and forestry, in the classroom and on the farm. The program was awarded the *COLAB Impact collectif* 2019 award, worth \$5,000.

Table forêt Laurentides and École-O-Champ are project partners, and they contribute to the quality of these activities through their expertise in forestry and agricultural education.

Promoting Our History

At the start of the 20th century, farms near urban centres such as Montreal began selling a significant portion of their production. The development of agricultural trade had begun... To promote the history of agriculture in Quebec, from the beginning of agricultural syndication through to the current issues of international trade, the Federation has reactivated the exhibition entitled *Agriculture in Quebec, from yesterday to today*. Developed by the UPA Confederation a few years ago, it is now available on Coroplast panels to raise public awareness about the richness of this story during our organization's public activities.



Open House on Urban Agriculture

For the first time, the public was invited to visit urban agricultural enterprises in Montreal as part of the Open House event on September 8th. The participation of these farms in the event was made possible thanks to collaborative work initiated in recent years with Laboratoire sur l'agriculture urbaine (AU/LAB). Lufa Farms; La Centrale Agricole; Vignes en ville; La Ligne verte: maraîcher; as well as the Laboratoire d'agriculture urbaine du Palais des congrès were able to showcase a new facet of the agricultural world that will become increasingly important in the future.

On the Island of Montreal, some 30 enterprises are engaged in urban agriculture, which represents 20% of the farms in the Laval and Montreal area.



SERVICES FOR PRODUCERS

CEA: A YEAR DOMINATED BY RECRUITMENT EFFORTS

Local Labour

At the Centre d'emploi agricole (CEA) Outaouais-Laurentides, the number of placements for local seasonal employees literally exploded during the year thanks to the FermEmploi program. This initiative by AGRICarrières allows employers to recruit staff free of charge, to receive a follow-up from Emploi-Québec and a wage subsidy. FermEmploi has helped to fill jobs in greenhouses, dairy production and with agricultural machinery operators.

The CEA team is helping to develop a new program, AgriEmploi, which will focus on the local workforce for apple growers and market gardening, two of the region's dominant crops.

Foreign Workers

Despite the efforts made, the local workforce is still not sufficient and the number of agricultural enterprises using Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) is increasing dramatically. In the region, needs have surged for maple syrup farms in the Hautes-Laurentides and for dairy production.

The Outaouais-Laurentides Agricultural Employment Center (CEA) is at the forefront of this trend: it represents all the CEA's in Quebec at the Table de concertation pour les travailleurs étrangers temporaires, which brings together key players related to this issue.

Being close to decision makers has facilitated the channelling of requests from producers to adapt the Temporary Foreign Worker Program to their needs.



New Team

The CEA O-L has been given a new look along with new resources dedicated to support for human resources management and on-farm accident prevention. The restructuring of tasks has also helped to better meet the growing demand for temporary foreign workers.



From left to right: Émilie Caron, Director; Frédérique Proulx, support for HR management, agricultural training agent, project development; Mireille Larivière, secretariat and administrative support for various files; Tumba-Kesine Lunenga, farm safety mutual, local recruitment; Céline Labonté, temporary foreign workers.

The numbers do the talking

61 placements of local seasonal employees
a 74% increase over 2017-2018

60 % more temporary foreign workers
employed by our farming operations in the last two years

ACCOUNTING & TAXATION SERVICE (SCF)

From 1975 to Today

In 2019, Florent Lapierre, a Certified General Accountant, retired after 43 years of service with the Federation. His departure is an opportunity to measure the evolution of the service since Mr. Lapierre created it in 1975.

He and Chantale Mondou, an accounting clerk, were the only members of the SCF at the start. Today, 19 employees are part of SCF, namely three managers (including two partners), six accountants, one agri-economist, eight technicians and one secretary. Since October 2019, the service has a new string in its bow: Benoit Fullum, an accountant employed by the Federation for 17 years, has completed the training required to offer professional tax services.

With this expertise, the SCF can offer producers a quality service with enhanced effectiveness through its collaboration with other stakeholders in the farming community.



EACH YEAR

- **2 400** tax returns
- **1 000** financial statements
- **400** Agri requests
- **110** clients for payroll services
- **140** clients for bookkeeping services

IN 2018-2019

- **10 %** increase in business volume for SCF
- **3 times** more business volume for management advisory services compared to 2015



ENVIRONMENT

Wetlands and Watercourses

Since 2018, a unique expertise has been developed in our region related to the management of wetlands and watercourses catchments. This knowledge will be of considerable value over the next few years as MRCs will be required to develop a regional conservation plan for these environments. Producers will need support to better understand the legislative and regulatory frameworks linked to these plans and the challenges facing the agricultural community. With this in mind, the Federation has developed a pilot project for an advisory service to characterize wetlands and watercourses catchment areas. This initiative, and the leadership being exercised out in the field, make the UPA Outaouais-Laurentides stand out beyond its borders and within the larger organization.





The employees at 15, chemin de la Grande-Côte during a team building activity in June 2019.

Two teams that complement each other

The heart of the Federation's mission is to offer professional services adapted to the needs of producers in the region. This is the mandate of the team housed at 15, chemin de la Grande-Côte: forty employees offering their expertise ranging from accounting to public relations, through to human resources management, taxation and agri-economic advice. The Board of Directors, made up of producer representatives, ensures that this talent pool is placed at the service of the Federation's mission, values and principles.



From left to right: Christian Macle, Animal Production - other, Michel Genest, La Lièvre, Gilles Lacroix, Laval, Audrey Lemaire, Basses-Laurentides, Marcel Denis, Ste-Scholastique-Mirabel, François Handfield, Laurentides-Pays-d'en-Haut, Patrick Sullivan, Vallée-de-la-Gatineau, Stéphane Alary, President Anouk Préfontaine, Small-sized farms, Cheryl Layer, Collines de l'Outaouais, Guy Sabourin, Grains, Normand Foisy, Maple Syrup, Pascal Leduc, Dairy, Philippe Leroux, Deux-Montagnes, Jacques Gévry, Specialized Groups, Claude Lefebvre, Papineau, Tommy Lauzon, Young Farmers John McCart, Argenteuil, Stan Christensen, Beef

Absent from the photo:

Sylvain Cléroux, Greenhouses

Scott Judd, Pontiac

Sylvain Leduc, Sheep

Michel Sauriol, Strawberries & Raspberries

Alexandre Simard, Apples

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POUVOIR NOURRIR
POUVOIR GRANDIR
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