New Farmer Initiative
Quebec Region

Final report

Genevieve Grossenbacher
February 2015
Introduction

This report presents the results of the Quebec portion of a nation-wide preliminary consultation process that took place in the Fall 2014 and conducted by Genevieve Grossenbacher, in her functions as regional coordinator for Quebec for the New Farmers Initiative (NFI).

This report does not present the detailed views and opinions of all the interviewees; rather it presents an overview of these discussions to identify patterns and priority concerns and opportunities for new farmers in Quebec. As such, this report aims to present a brief background of agriculture in the province, presents the key programs currently available to the new farmers (especially in less formal sectors) and the main barriers they face, and summarizes the new farmer policies and programs that emerged, during the interviews, as having the most potential of supporting the new generation of farmers in Quebec and across the country, especially to new farmers who are not taking over their parents’ farm.

Consultation Process
A total of 16 key agricultural stakeholders were contacted by phone for consultations ranging between 45 minutes to 120 minutes each. A complete list of interviewees is available in Appendix I and a summary of these interviews can be found in Appendix 2. Most of the interviewees represented the small-scale horticultural and direct marketing sector- a relatively new sector in rapid growth in the province and often under represented. Unfortunately, representatives from the Ministère de l’agriculture, des pêcheries et de l’alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ) were not interviewed in time for the consultations. Also, individuals and organizations from the formal agricultural sector (dairy farmers, cash crop farmers, etc.) were under represented in terms of their relative importance in the province’s agricultural economy. That being said, hopefully the views of new farmers from the formal sector were heard through the Fédération de la relève agricole (FRAQ) consultation and through the close reading of MAPAQ’s 2011 Portrait de la relève agricole.

Acknowledgements
This research would not have been possible without the help of FarmStart and the availability and support of the several interviewees that contributed their time and insight. The NFI and the author of this report would like to acknowledge, and are grateful for, the important contributions of the interviewees listed in Appendix I.

1 http://www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/fr/Publications/Portrait_releveagricole.pdf
Agriculture in Quebec: Trends

Overview of emerging and changing trends

The 2011 Census of Agriculture counted 29,437 census farms in Quebec, a 4.0% decrease since 2006 compared to a 10.3% decrease at the national level. According to MAPAQ, from 2011 to 2013 only, Quebec lost an average of 8.6 farms/week, bringing the number of farms in Quebec down to 28,540. There has also been a move towards larger farms, farms that have also seen a slight increase in their gross farm receipts (1.5% according to the 2011 census).

In 2011, Quebec reported the lowest average age of farm operators in the country at 51.4 years (vs 49.3 years in 2006) whereas the national average is 54 years (vs 52 years in 2006). Quebec was the only province where farms with the 55-plus operator comprised less than 50% of all farms (48.8%). As the number of younger farmers continues to shrink, Statistics Canada expects that significant amounts of farm assets will be bought by remaining farmers (increasing the number of larger farms) or may also be purchased by beginning farmers private investors and immigrant farmers.

Animal husbandry generates two-thirds of the province's agricultural revenue. Of the animal farms, dairy farms are the most numerous and the ones generating the highest value (see table 1). According to the 2011 Census of Agriculture, Quebec is the largest dairy producer in the

Table 1: Value of farm revenues per agricultural sector (Qc)

![Table image]

Source: Statistique Canada, compilation du MAPAQ.

---


7 ibid.
country (38.4% in 2011 vs 37.4% in 2006)³, accounting for over one-third of dairy cows from coast to coast.

In regard to crop production, corn and soybeans provide 43% of the revenues. Maple taps and berries (namely blueberries, cranberries, raspberries and grapes) are areas showing important growth.

Although still relatively small, the organic sector is one of the fastest growing sector, with 1,037 farms representing 3.5% of all certified or transition farms in the province (vs 2% nationwide).

New Farmers in Quebec

DEFINITIONS

- **Relève (new young farmer):** a farmer who is less than 40 years old and who owns at least 1% of his/her agricultural entreprise.
- **Relève apparentée:** new farmer who comes from a farming background.
- **Relève NON apparentée:** new farmer who does NOT come from a farming background

With **22% of farmers** being part of the relève in Quebec (vs 16% at the national level and in Ontario and BC), new farmers in Quebec are younger than in the rest of Canada⁹, **averaging 33 years of age**. In Quebec, we cannot help but increasingly notice that there is a changing face of agriculture when it comes to the relève. From the 7,236 new farmers surveyed by MAPAQ in 2006¹⁰, 63.5% came from a farming background (relève apparentée) while 36.5% did not come from a farming background (relève non apparentée). The relève non apparentée has been surpassing the relève apparentée in growth since 2005¹¹, especially in more remote areas such as Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Nord-du-Québec and Outaouais (as opposed to Bas Saint-Laurent and

---


¹⁰ The 2006 MAPAQ new farmer survey may have been slightly biased against the relève apparentée who largely operates outside of the traditional agricultural sector, and, as such, is not part of as many groups/organizations and is therefore harder to survey.

¹¹ It will be interesting to see if this trend maintains past 2005 but anecdotal evidence seems to suggest so.
Montreal). Yet, as you can see below, distinctive differences characterize these two relève types who, in addition to sharing similar opportunities also face quite distinct challenges.

In a nutshell

**RELÈVE APPARENTÉE**
- Mostly men in the dairy and supply management sector.
- Above 25 years of age with college-level agricultural education.
- Relève apparentée seems to make a decision earlier, plans longer and tends to get more support when starting up.

**RELÈVE NON APPARENTÉE (NEW TRENDS)**
- Women are increasingly starting their own businesses, especially in less formal sectors (organic, transformation, and niche markets).
- Above 25 years of age who are university graduates and did not complete agricultural education.
- Run farms that are not governed by supply management and focus on non traditional sectors, such as emerging crops and direct marketing.
- The “new” relève is increasingly entrepreneurial, jumping into business without having ever owned a business.

Véronique Bouchard from La ferme aux petits oignons, who co-runs a successful organic and direct marketing vegetable farm with her husband François Handfield near Montreal, is one of the many new farmers who fit the emerging profile of the relève non apparentée.
Table 2: Summary of the main differences between relève apparentée and relève non apparentée in Quebec

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Relève apparentée</th>
<th>Relève non apparentée</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Primarily men (80.4%)</td>
<td>Mostly men (68.5%) but women are increasingly starting their own farms (or co-farming), especially in less formal sectors (organic, transformation, and niche markets).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector of activity</td>
<td>Mostly dairy farming (91% are apparentée in this sector vs 8.4% for non apparentée) or farming governed by supply management (chickens/eggs)</td>
<td>Mostly animals husbandry other than dairy and chicken (75.6% are non apparentée in this sector vs 24.4% for apparentée) and maple syrup. Since the study was done, there has been an explosion of start-up farms in ecological vegetable production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Usually a college-level degree in an agricultural field</td>
<td>Usually a university degree, and for 2/3 of the relève, in a field that is not related to agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishment age and planning</td>
<td>Average is 19 years old and planning is done over a 5 year period.</td>
<td>Average is 22 years old and planning is done over a slightly shorter period than the relève apparentée.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of start-up</td>
<td>3.1% of apparentée acquire an existing business in part or in full.</td>
<td>Relève apparentée tends to start their own business (61.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financing</td>
<td>Get most financing through the Financière agricole du Québec (FADQ), primarily through establishment grants. Also tends to have more financial gifts or inheritance from family and access to quota loans.</td>
<td>Get most financing through the Financière agricole du Québec, but use different services than relève apparentée, such as loan guarantees. And evidence seems to suggest they have access to less capital from FADQ. Also tends to rely more on loans from financial institutions (32.8% vs 19.4%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to services</td>
<td>Tends to use more traditional farming services (MAPAQ, DEP, DEC)</td>
<td>Tends to use newer services (Agri-réseau, club conseils, non-profit groups)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-farm income</td>
<td>Non apparentée tends to spend 44.4% of time off-farm vs 35.1% for apparentée. For both, off-farm income takes 40.1% of time and brings 46% of revenue (suggests that it is better paid work).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12 All data comes from the November 2010 report produced by the Union Paysanne "Analyse du portrait comparatif de la relève apparentée et non apparentée", which was the result of a cross-comparison analysis of MAPAQ’s 2006 new farmer census data.
Programs & Services for New Farmers

Although Quebec offers relatively more programs and services to all new farmers compared to other provinces, new farmers in Quebec are still faced with a range of barriers that jeopardize their long-term establishment and the sustainability of their agricultural businesses. Rather than giving a full portrait of the array of programs and services offered in Quebec, this report aims to highlight some of the most used programs as well as some of the more innovative programs and services that have surfaced in recent years as well has point of concerns regarding some that have disappeared.

LAND

Currently, Quebec farmers are primarily supported in accessing land through the following programs:

- A handful of incubator/start-up farm projects such as the Plate-forme agricole de l’ange-gardien, l’Incubateur d’entreprises agroalimentaires de Mirabel, Ferme Bord-du-Lac, etc.
- The relatively new land linking work of organisations such as Banque de terre and a few Regional County Municipalities (RCM Papineau, Collines-de-l’Outaouais). Note that the RCM Collines-de-l’Outaouais has developed a powerful database to evaluate farm land (size, soil type, etc.) and is working on making the tool available online in the years to come- though the tool does not allow to identify which land is on the market.

Below are a few other land access programs/initiatives that are worth noting.

**CPTAQ: Protecting Farm Land**

The Commission de protection du territoire agricole du Quebec (CPTAQ) was founded in 1978 with the Loi sur la Protection du Territoire et des Activités Agricoles (LPTAA), to preserve agricultural land and agricultural activities and guarantee the coming generations of farmers access to agricultural land favourable to the development of agricultural activities.

The CPTAQ is an independent organization that works in collaboration with the Ministry of agriculture of Quebec (MAPAQ) and that has the power to authorize, as it sees fit, the non-agricultural use, the subdivision, the alienation, the inclusion or the exclusion of a lot or the cutting of maple trees on agriculture zoned land. In addition, the CPTAQ has built in...
provisions (article 59) to allow regional bodies (MRC) to develop on agricultural land and it also gives municipalities the power to decide how to use unstructured areas (ilôts déstructurés)- zoned agricultural land that is too small/fragmented to be put back into agricultural use- for residential use.

Because non-residents cannot, directly or indirectly, make an acquisition of farm land except with the authorization of the commission, and must also provide an affidavit declaring the reasons for the acquisition of the farm land, the intended use of the land, etc., the CPTAQ has singlehandedly been the most important factor limiting land grabs by foreign investors in Quebec.

Challenge
While there seems to be a consensus that the CPTAQ is important and has been instrumental in protecting agricultural land in the province, many feel that the CPTAQ, is not strong enough to offset the pressure of cities like Montreal and Quebec, who have some of the most fertile land, but where agriculture is declining, to de-zone. Conversely, the CPTAQ is considered too severe in some cases, especially in regards to remote regions and smaller, more diversified farmers, who may never apply, due to the constraints and timeline of the authorization process, or never receive an authorization. Many are calling for the CPTAQ to review the LPTAA and make it better adapted to the needs of small scale and diversified producers while also making de-zoning more difficult on some of the best land.

Quebec’s First Agricultural Land Trust: Cadet Roussel Farm Land Trust
Established on December 10th, 2010, the Cadet Roussel Farm Protec-Terre Land Trust is Quebec’s first agricultural land trust. Managed by Protec-Terre, an non-profit organization created in 1999, the land trust was created to by Cadet-Roussel farm (30 ha) located in Mont-Grégoire, formerly owned by Jean Roussel, as a means to preserve and conserve the land in perpetuity. Created on ecological, agricultural and philanthropic grounds, the land trust hoped to also ease access to land. This land is now also earmarked for organic or biodynamic agriculture for current and future generations of farmers to cultivate according to certified organic farming methods in effect in Quebec. The land belongs to the trust while the farmer, under a right established for this purpose, receives free use of the land for the purpose of organic or biodynamic agriculture. The farmer retains ownership of all buildings and plantations that are on the land.

Banque de terre: Facilitating Access to Land
Banque de terre is an innovative program that aims to help new farmers access land and also maintain the vitality of agricultural regions. In a nutshell, Banque de terre helps link new farmers wanting to access land with farmland owners in 3 of Quebec’s 97 RCM, namely in Brome-Missisquoi (RCM Montérégie-Est), Argenteuil (RCM Laurentians) and Val-Saint-François (Eastern Townships). Through a personalized approach and through their
work with key agricultural organizations in Quebec (MAPAQ, UPA, FADQ, etc.), Banque de terre helps pair new farmers with landowners through custom or rental agreements, partnership opportunities, farm transfer, farm purchase, and mentoring. Their field coordinator is responsible for contacting owners and aspiring farmers and offering services tailored to their needs. They can also provide legal level for the conclusion of an agreement.

FINANCES

Financing opportunities available to new farmers in Quebec include the following. For a more extensive list of financing available to new farmers in Quebec, check out: http://www.craaq.qc.ca/Repertoire-des-programmes-d_aide-financiere-accessibles-pour-la-releve-agricole

**Ministry of Agriculture (MAPAQ)**

Despite the fact that some of the best programs offered stopped in March 31, 2013, MAPAQ still offers a few small grants and subsidies that, although not primarily geared to new farmers, help them, including:

- **Prime-vert à l’établissement**: a grant for farmers to adopt selected and more environmentally-friendly practices- 50,000$-125,000$ depending on the admissible practices.
- **Programme proximité** (as part of Growing Forward 2): To encourage direct marketing, agro-tourism, local transformation, etc.- 50% of the costs are covered up to 50,000$/project.
- **Services conseils** (consulting services): 50-90% of consulting services in management, agro-environment or technical/agronomic support obtained through Agri-conseils. Up to a maximum of 20,000$ -30,000$/business over 5 years (amounts vary per region).
- For a detailed list of available MAPAQ funding: [http://www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/fr/Productions/md/programmesliste/Pages/Programme2.aspx](http://www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/fr/Productions/md/programmesliste/Pages/Programme2.aspx)

*CHALLENGE: Many of the most successful MAPAQ grants (establishment grant, diversification, organic transition, improving infrastructure) were abolished in 2013.*

**Financière agricole du Québec (FADQ)**

The FADQ offers a few interesting and well-liked grants, loan guarantees as well as income and harvest insurance*. Here are a few highlights of what the FADQ offers new farmers:

- **Establishment Grants** (*prime à l’établissement*): 20,000$-40,000$/farm operator based on education.
- **Start-up grants** (*aide au démarrage*): 10,000$-25,000$ paid over 2 fiscal years.
- **Subordinated loans**: Loan up to 5,000,000$ over 30 years based on residential mortgage rates plus a prime of 0.30-0.60%. Also offer up to 500,000$ for up to 5 years at a rate of prime + 1% (renewable).
• **Agri-stabilité**: a Canada-wide program offered in Quebec through FADQ to stabilize farm income.
• **Assurance-récoltes**: A harvest insurance program mainly for traditional farming sectors.

*CHALLENGE*: Many fear the some of the FADQ funding might be soon reduced.

*OPPORTUNITY*: Agri-stabilité and Assurance-récoltes (ASRA) are currently both being revised to potentially better address the needs of small-scale and diversified growers.

**Fonds d’Investissement pour la relève agricole (FIRA)**
FIRA is an innovative fund that offers patient capital to facilitate access to land to new farmers who wish to start-up, expand or transfer farms. The main products they offer are:

- **Down Payment Support**: A subordinate loan that cover up to 12.5% of the down payment (25%) of an agricultural property and they also offer up to three years without capital or interest fees.
- **Land Rental-Purchase**: A land rental agreement whereas the FIRA can buy a property (100 000$ minimum) and rent it back to a new farmer for a period of 15 years. The farmer has the right to purchase the property or leave at any point during that period.

**Centre locaux de développement (CLD) and SADC**
Local financing available to new farmers. Until they were cut, CLD managed *Jeunes Promoteurs* (18-35 years old entrepreneurs), a successful grant that ensured a minimum wage to new farmers for 1 year as they create their business plan and start-up their operation. SADC also offer programs that can vary between regions such as a loan without interest for the first 2 years to farmers under 35.

*CHALLENGE*: Austerity measures enacted by the provincial Liberals led to the decision of cutting funding to regional CLDs (Centres locaux de développement), leaving it up to individual RCMs to keep the organizations or shut them down. Some RCM, like Vaudreuil-Soulanges, have already expressed they will keep the CLDs but they will have to provide/find their own funding which may or may not affect services.

**TRAINING**
Compared to many other provinces, Quebec is lucky to count on a growing formal and informal training sector, for traditional as well as for emerging sectors (organic, diversified vegetable farming, etc.), including:

**FORMAL EDUCATION**
- **Formal Educational Programs** (many of which now also offer organic agriculture courses): Cégep de Victoriaville/CETAB+, ITA-La Pocatière, ITA-McGill Agricultural School, ITA- Saint-Hyacinthe, etc, Cégep
d’Alma, Cégep de Lanaudière à Joliette, Cégep de Sherbrooke, Cégep de Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, and Cégep de Matane.  

INFORMAL EDUCATION/TRAINING  

• **A handful of incubator/start-up farm projects** such as the Plate-forme agricole de l’ange-gardien, l’Incubateur d’entreprises agroalimentaires de Mirabel, Ferme Bord-du-Lac, etc.  

• **Specific farmer networks**: Équiterre, Coopérative pour une agriculture écologique (CAPÉ) and the Réseau des joyeux maraîchers: thriving networks offering technical training, farm visits, conferences and who can also provide mentorship opportunities for small-scale organic and direct market new farmers.  

• **Online services**: Agri-réseau, agri-rencontres.  

• **Specific workshops & training**: Collectifs régionaux en formation agricole- they offer specific workshops and farmers can also request specific workshops for groups of 10+ geared to their needs.  

• **Consulting services**: Agri-conseils, Groupes-conseils agricoles du Québec (available in each region)- the latter being a regional farmer-led grouping of farm management experts specializing in farm start-up planning, farm transfers, growth planning, management, administration and accounting, benchmarking, etc.).  

• **Research Center**: Institut de recherche et de développement en agroenvironnement (IRDA).  

POLICY  

Once again, compared to a few other provinces, Quebec farmers tend to be have access to and can be members of more organizations in all sectors of production, many of which also carry out policy work, such as:  

• **Union des Producteurs Agricoles**- all registered farmers are *de facto* members.  

• **Fédération de la relève agricole (FRAQ- linked to UPA)**- focusing exclusively on new farmer issues.  

• **Union Paysanne**  

• **Equiterre**  

• **Coopérative pour une agriculture de proximité écologique (CAPÉ)***  

*These organizations were created within the past 2-15 years to better address the realities of the new generation of new farmers (relève non apparentée) who tend to be smaller-scale, diversified and concentrate on non traditional/emerging niche markets (organic, local, direct marketing).  

---  

13 [http://www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/Releveagricole/Pamphlet_reconnaissance_des_acquis_RE.pdf](http://www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/Releveagricole/Pamphlet_reconnaissance_des_acquis_RE.pdf)
Main barriers facing new farmers

As mentioned, although Quebec, comparatively to other provinces, offers a lot more programs and services to new farmers, both apparentée and not apparentée, new farmers in Quebec are still faced with a range of barriers that jeopardize their establishment and the sustainability of their agricultural businesses. Here are the top three barriers identified and recurrently mentioned in the regional consultations conducted in Quebec in the Fall 2014.

Access to land

In Quebec, only 2% of the land can be used for agriculture. The best land is located on the St-Laurence low lands- lands that also have the most densely populated areas. There is a currently small but quickly growing trend for Quebec investment groups (PANGEA, etc.) to buy up land and lease it back to farmers, thus eroding the control farmers have on the first link of the food system: land. The UPA estimated that 32,000 acres of land have been acquired by 7-10 private investment funds since 2008. Moreover, many individuals are buying recreational land and then hiring a “pet farmer” to maintain it until they retire on the property or sell. That being said, the main aspects of access to land that were repeatedly mentioned were:

- The rapidly growing price due to speculation, urban sprawl, recreational hobby farms, and land grabs by private investors. Anecdotally, land prices seem to have increased 100,000$-350,000$ in the past 15 years in Outaouais, for instance.
- The fact that is can be difficult to access small parcels of land in Quebec, mainly due to the CPTAQ.
- Accessing land collectively.
- More and more, farmers are pushed to more remote and isolated areas to farm, further from services, support, market and human resources, many times is areas where good land is hard to come by (land tends to have pockets of varying types of land and topography).

Access to capital, especially patient capital

The main concerns with access to capital were:

- Access to patient capital for land and infrastructure.
- Lack of cashflow and access to liquid capital at certain times.
- Lack of capital to recruit enough and qualified labour and pay them a decent wage (above minimum wage).

Access to financial/business management training - especially for small-scale diversified farmers.
Main Policies Identified To Help New Farmers

There were many policies highlighted and mentioned during the consultations. Here is a snapshot of the ones the author believes may help make the most significant change in Quebec (or bring the rest of Canada on par). For a more extensive list of the policies identified and to see more concrete policy asks raised during the consultations, please refer to Annex 2.

Access to land

- **Re-evaluate agricultural zoning policy** - although this is something that is done at the provincial level, it is important: Make severances/smaller parcels on agricultural zoned land easier for farmers and aspiring farmers, but harder for non-farmers, especially near urban centres and on land 1-4. Also, enable multiple stakeholders to purchase land and allow for the establishment of multiple family dwellings on farmland.

- **Provide incentives for long-term tenure of farmland and help create alternative tenure arrangements** such as community land trusts, land banks, and collectively owned farmland. An Agricultural Gift Program (similar to the Ecological Gifts Program) to provide for the cost of putting a covenant or easement on agricultural land could be a step to help land trust start up.

- **Develop measures that prevent land speculation and that support farmers**, in the process of exiting farming, retire in dignity without solely depending on the sale of their farms for retirement livelihood. Tax credits for farm transfers as well as a retirement savings plan for existing farmers could be a step to help with the latter.

- **Ensure that Canada and its provinces enact a unified set of farmland ownership restrictions** (similar to CPTAQ) to ensure that land is owned by residents of the province (to prevent land grabs by foreign investors) and to limit how much land domestic private investors can buy each year.

Access to capital

- **Develop FIRA-like programs across the country** that offer patient capital, subordinated loans and rent-to-own and that also allow for capital repayment breaks. These are not costly measures and is easy to implement. Develop more flexible programs of patient capital.
- Develop micro-loan and micro-grant programs for start-up and establishment of enterprises (like Financière agricole offers) and make sure these grants/loans also value hands-on experience in their criteria.

- Direct payment program that would ensure a minimum income to new farmers in start-up years.

- Registered farm savings program for new farmers and for transfers as well as for existing farmers.

- Develop collective financing models that would enable multiple stakeholders to purchase land.

- Slowly transition towards eco-conditionality contracts (away from subsidies and towards grants rewarding certain measures, etc.)

Financial/business management training:

- Expand realm of Agri-conseils so they also offer management/business services and fund them beyond 2018.

- Offer subsidies to farmers who use financial management services.

- Develop an online centralized list of all programs, services, grants, etc., offered to new farmers (with staff who can answer and direct people regionally- perhaps at Agri-conseils).

- Fund market studies for emerging markets and to determine market capacity/saturation.

Other:

- More agricultural employment grants (and with better timelines) to recruit good qualified employees, especially during the start-up phase (year 0-6).

- Identify the best programs/services offered to New Farmers in each province and use them as a benchmark/standard for national new farmer programs (and adapt models for non traditional agricultural sector)- similar to what was done for developing the Canadian organic standards.

- Fund a National survey on new farmers cone and carried out by survey experts (documenting the profiles of successful farms/those who have abandoned, barriers, opportunities, etc.)
A Few Quebec Policy Initiatives To Watch Out For

LAND
• FRAQ/UPA: Try to stop private investment funds, such as PANGEA, to buy up land and lease it back to farmers and to slow speculation of land prices. They are also asking the Quebec government for a 3-year moratorium on land grabs in which private investment funds would be limited to purchases of 100 acres/year maximum. Read more: http://www.lapresse.ca/le-soleil/affaires/agro-alimentaire/201412/01/01-4824302-lupa-reclame-un-moratoire-sur-lachat-de-terres-arables-par-des-fonds.php
• CAPERN (March 16-17, 2015): Quebec's first commission on land grabs. For a snapshot of the main people heard and to read memoirs and watch some videos of the commission: http://www.laterre.ca/capern

PRODUCTION
• Union Paysanne: Policy work to increase limits below quota (hors quota) and help small-scale farmers diversify and scale-up within their means by increasing the maximum animals they can own without needing quota. Doing so would only require minor legislative change but would have huge impacts and promote diversification/small-scale/part-time farming/entrepreneurship. See what the Union Paysanne suggests as guidelines: http://archives.unionpaysanne.com/publications/Vers-une-Gestion-de-l-Offre-2-0-au-Canada.pdf

FINANCING
• CAPÉ/UPA: Working to revamp Agri-Stability to better support small farms and ecological farms by making it a program that is both income-based (vs production-oriented) and universal (accessible to smaller farms). They are asking for AgriStability contributions to be increased for net annual sales under 1,000,000$. They are also asking for Agri-Quebec to increase its contribution to AgriStability by 3,18% and to do so in different levels based on sales (4% increase for 5,000-100,000$ annual net sales, 2% for 100,000-1,000,000$ net sales)
• Union Paysanne: Policy work to get government to move away from subsidies and focus on eco-conditionality contracts (ex.: farmers would get money based on the services they provide to the environment such as organic farming, etc.)
NEW FARMERS

NEW FARMERS INITIATIVE: POTENTIAL ROLE

Based on some of the consultations and the author’s own analysis, here are some roles the New Farmers Initiative could take on:

NATIONAL NEW FARMER SURVEY
- Work with key allies and census professionals to create a national survey for new farmers to determine trends and identify policy areas that need to be improved, focusing on all new farmers but making sure to focus on the relève non apparentée which is often overlooked in existing surveys (if this could even involve statistics canada, it would be ideal).

POLICY & RESEARCH
- Identify a policy area (ex.: land access) to tackle each year and help launch/promote a campaign that focuses on that.
- Through the new farmers network, identify main policy areas to focus on and further develop a policy platform to better support new farmers.
- Create a multi-stakeholder research group that can feed the policy work. For instance on land access, documente different and emerging land access models, identify best practices, and analyze different programs and services looking at land access (banque de terre, etc.)

NETWORKING & TRAINING
- Coordinate regular meetings (phone, in-person) between active stakeholders working on new farmers issues across the country- focusing on, when relevant, on policy updates/campaign development, etc.
- Host regular in-person new farmers network meeting to offer training, knowledge exchange, networking and policy development space for active stakeholders working on new farmers issues across the country.
- Keep offering webinars to give tools new farmers tools to succeed- focusing on training for relève non apparentée.

FARM LINK
Revamp and further develop Farm link as a platform to link aspiring farmers and land owners, with a particular focus on getting regions (ex.: counties) on board and offering tools to get farm owners thinking about transferring/selling their farm to new farmers. It could be interesting to explore if FarmLink could become a national agricultural land platform (similar to MLS) or at least feature all the land linking programs.
Conclusion

This report presented the findings that emerged from a consultation process focused on the challenges and opportunities for new farmers in Quebec. Potential policy and programming solutions are identified and summarized in this report. This Quebec-specific information will be compared to the findings that emerged from other regional reports so that nation wide trends can be identified and acted upon by the New Farmers Initiative.

In a nutshell however, although Quebec offers relatively more programs and services to all new farmers compared to other provinces, new farmers in Quebec are still faced with a range of significant barriers that jeopardize their long-term establishment and the sustainability of their agricultural businesses, namely in terms of access to land, access to capital and financial management.

That being said, Quebec offers an array of inspiring and innovative programs and services to new farmers which could be used as a benchmark/standard for national new farmer programs (and adapt models for non traditional agricultural sector)- similar to what was done for developing the Canadian organic standards. Also, close attention needs to be paid in the coming years to the agricultural sector as austerity measures in Quebec might limit, impede and jeopardize many existing programs/services offered to new farmers.
Appendix 1:
List of Individuals Consulted (Fall 2014)

The New Farmers Initiative and the author of this report would like to acknowledge, and are grateful for, the important contributions of the following interviewees for their time and contributions in helping identify what the main barriers new farmers face are and identify potential policies to counter them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ann Levesque</td>
<td>Agriconsels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>François Handfield</td>
<td>Coopérative pour une agriculture de proximité écologique (CAPÉ/RJME)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julien Venne</td>
<td>Plateforme agricole de l'Ange-Gardien (PFAAG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yveline Martin</td>
<td>Club Agri-conseils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabelle Joncas</td>
<td>Equiterre- CSA network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benoît Girouard</td>
<td>Union Paysanne (UP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jocelyne Jourdain</td>
<td>Groupe Conseil Agricole- Laurentides-Outaouais (GCAQ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serge Préfontaine</td>
<td>CETAB+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leslie Carbonneau</td>
<td>Banque de terre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magali Delomier</td>
<td>Fédération de la relève agricole (FRAQ/UPA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clémence Briand-Racine</td>
<td>Cégep de Victoriaville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emmanuel Roy</td>
<td>CLD Collines-de-l'Outaouais</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Lecomte</td>
<td>Fonds d'investissements pour la relève agricole (FIRA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marc Fortin</td>
<td>Fonds Coopératif pour la relève agricole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marjolaine Carrier</td>
<td>Fonds Coopératif pour la relève agricole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Thompson</td>
<td>Organic CSA farmer-Our Little Farm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you!
## Appendix 2: Compilation of the Policy Asks that Emerged in the Quebec Consultations

### 1. ACCESS TO LAND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Ask</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Re-evaluate policy for severances/smaller parcels on ag-zoned land</td>
<td>when new or start-up farmers are buying it with the intention of farming long-term, as a first step, allowing them to build equity in their farm. This calls for innovative planning and the investigation of alternative land access strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for and creation of alternative tenure arrangements such as land</td>
<td>Support for and creation of alternative tenure arrangements such as land trusts, land banks, and collectively owned farmland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subordinated loans, rent-to-own, and venture capital program for new</td>
<td>Subordinated loans, rent-to-own, and venture capital program for new farmers (similar to FIRA in Quebec or like CHMC). Could potentially be managed by Farm Credit Canada: In order to facilitate access to land and increase the cash flow during the start-up period, offer rent-to-own program (farmers rent and can choose to buy anytime over a 15 year period) OR subordinated loans, the latter being offered with an interest repayment break for the first 3 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term and core funding for farm linking programs</td>
<td>Long-term and core funding for farm linking programs like Banque de Terre, Land for Good - they offer succession coaching (sometimes for family and non-family transfers), match-making between farmers and landowners (can be for lease, sale or farm business transfer), resources about how to get into farming, serve as base for new farmer services across sectors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public fallow land made available to new/young farmers</td>
<td>Public fallow land made available to new/young farmers (similar to Terrevive in Italy): Government could sell/lease unused/fallow land and give right of first refusal to farmers under 40 as well as 0 tax rate mortgages and 19% deduction on land to farmers under 35 who commit to farm for 20 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragovernernmental agricultural land reserve creation</td>
<td>Paragovernernmental agricultural land reserve creation (similar to SAFER in France or SADAQ as proposed by an institute in Quebec): Would receive governmental funds to buy land and lease them to new farmers based on set criteria. Ideally, citizens would also be have a seat on the Board and would contribute funds to the organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put a cap on the price land can sell above market value</td>
<td>Put a cap on the price land can sell above market value to stop speculation on farmland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Gift Program</td>
<td>Agricultural Gift Program (similar to the Ecological Gifts Program): A program that provides for the cost of putting a covenant or easement on agricultural land by providing a charitable tax receipt for that cost. Right now, it costs $60,000 to put an easement on a farm, and the process is complex. The Ag Gifts proposal would simplify the process and decrease its cost while providing a charitable receipt for the farm owner for the difference between the speculative and farm value of the property. The easement and gift would cover the entirety of a farm property with Class 1-3 farmland. Questions to explore are: what would stop a landowner from putting an easement on farmland? Note: income is needed for a charitable tax receipt to be useful, so for farmers a capital gains tax break would be needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Protection Policy</td>
<td>Land Protection Policy: Better protect agricultural land (class 1-3) across the country, especially near urban centers and that Canada and its provinces enact a unified set of farmland ownership restrictions to ensure that land is owned by residents of the province (to prevent land grabs by foreign investors). Also limit how much land domestic private investors can buy each year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax credit (eliminate capital gains) on farm property for farm transfer to</td>
<td>Tax credit (eliminate capital gains) on farm property for farm transfer to new farmer (whether the buyer is a child or not).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement savings program for farmers</td>
<td>Retirement savings program for farmers to discourage speculation due to crisis sales, decrease cost of farmland and encourage farm transfers to undercapitalized new farmers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Financing & ACCESS TO CAPITAL

## 1.1 Programs

**Registered farm savings program for new farmers and for transfers** (similar to Quebec's Desjardins Savings Plan or US Individual Development Accounts [http://cfed.org/programs/idas/], Practical Farmers of Iowa - Savings Incentive Program): Designed like a Registered Education Savings Plan to be a tax free savings account and paid into monthly for aspiring farmers to put money into to help them save for a mortgage. Government would match funds (at a given rate) when the money is withdrawn for a farm purchase. Checks and balances would be built in, ex.: for people who buy a farm only to turn and sell it (tax their capital gain) or for those who change their mind about farming (money taxed when withdrawn and no access to the governmental matching portion).

**Debt Forgiveness Program** Forgiving student loans to those who become a farmer, like New York's Young Farmers Loan Forgiveness Incentive Program. Could also explore debt forgiveness to farmers who transfer their farm to new farmers. Radical version is to forgive farm debt to stabilize income and increase margins, making farming a more viable and resilient career, could be done with community-based measures like Occupy's Rolling Jubilee.

## 1.2 Grants

**Establishment grants for start-up expenses** (similar to Quebec’s program): The amount awarded may vary from $20,000 to $50,000 depending on the recipient’s level of training. There can be an additional $10,000 to $25,000 offered for businesses operating on a part-time basis (to encourage training). Note: The grants should be inflation-indexed and should ask for a combination of 6 years of post-secondary education and work experience on a farming operation (to encourage both education and hands-on experience).

**Income-stabilization grant** (like in EU through the CEJA - who successfully campaigned for these changes in 2013) New farmers could get different grants based on the environmental, animal welfare and food safety standards they fulfill and young farmers under 40 receive an additional 25% top-up for the first five years of their business as income support.

**Income-stabilization program improvement** (similar to AgriStability- Agri-Québec in Quebec): Make changes to offer a program that is both income-based (not production-oriented) and universal (accessible to smaller farms). AgriStability contributions should be increased for net annual sales under 1,000,000$. Also, provinces/territories should institute programs similar to Agri-Québec tops up AgriStability payments (when a participating farmer’s current year program margin falls below 70% of his reference margin). AgriStability be increased also for allowable net sales under 1,000,000$. Agri-Québec to increase its contribution to AgriStability by 3.18% and to do so in different levels based on sales (4% increase for 5,000-100,000$ annual net sales, 2% for 100,000-1,000,000$ net sales)

**Minimum wage salary grant** (similar to Quebec’s support for self-employment - Jeunes Promoteurs): Minimum wage salary grant for first year while you develop your business plan and pursue training that comes with coaching/business planning support.

**Reinstate across the country programs similar to Quebec's MAPAQ programs** (and improve - more $, better criteria):

- Appui à l’investissement des jeunes entreprises agricoles - recently cut, but one of the most successful MAPAQ program which contributed to the success of many productive small farms in Quebec.
- Support for transition to organic, also accessible to organic farmers who were bringing land into production - mirrors French government goal to have organic represent 20% of agricultural production
- Program for direct market diversification - or other programs that support diversification (extension services, infrastructure, equipment, etc) over 5 years.

**Move towards a more entrepreneurial grant model based on eco-conditionality** (similar to EU CAP - 30% of payments are assistance for complying with sustainable agricultural practices; ALUS - pays land rent for taking sensitive marginal lands out of cultivation for riparian zones, hedgerows etc., while the farm remains active) Move away from the subsidy mentality and move towards "green contracts/eco-conditionality" mentality (ex.: where farmers would be seen as entrepreneurial and be given money based on specific criteria/standards they fulfill).
## TRAINING, EXTENSION & LABOUR

**Describe and support clear pipelines for the development of first-generation farmers** from primary-secondary school, to post-secondary training, internship/apprenticeship, on-farm employment programs, incubator farms, business management training, start-up and ongoing mentorship and extension.

**Subsidized Agricultural Consulting Services** (similar to Quebec’s Agri-conseils): Where up to 75% of ag consulting services (which could include both technical and financial planning/management, etc.) would be reimbursed by the government, with special subsidies targeting new farmers (ex.: 100% reimbursement for subsidies for the first 3-5 years of operation). **NOTE:** Expand realm of agri-conseils (so they also offer management/business services), fund them beyond 2018 and offer subsidies to farmers who use services (like in Qc: 75% of fees are covered). Ensure that Agri-conseils manages (online + staff) centralized list of all programs, grants, etc., offered to new farmers.

**Farm Employment Program:** Develop and agriculture labour employment program (similar to Summer Student but longer, better managed, better timelines, better funded and for ag. only) to offer significant (such as 5-8 months) subsidized employment/internships.

**Subsidize organizations and trainees for specific Ag. Training.** Similar to what Emploi-Quebec offers, organizations could become accredited (and subsidized) for specific trainings/courses and attendees could also see part of their registration costs subsidized.

**Core funding for mentorship & farmer-led training programs** like NOFA, ACORN’s Grow a Farmer, expanding upon existing programs like EFAO’s on-farm advisory service or the Organic Farming Institute of BC’s training program.

**Long-term core funding support (and longer term funding) to farm incubator programs** like ALBA (California), FarmStart’s Start-Up Farms (Ontario), and Le Plate-forme agricole de l’ange-guardien (Quebec)

**Creation of regional farm labour centres** (like volunteer centres but for paid labour)

## PRODUCTION

**Increase limits below quota:** Help small-scale farmers diversify and scale-up within their means by increasing the maximum animals they can own without needing quota. Use what the Union Paysanne suggests as guidelines: [http://archives.unionpaysanne.com/publications/Vers-une-Gestion-de-l-Offre-2-0-au-Canada.pdf](http://archives.unionpaysanne.com/publications/Vers-une-Gestion-de-l-Offre-2-0-au-Canada.pdf)

## OVERARCHING

**Identify the best programs/services offered to New Farmers in each province and use them as a benchmark/standard for national new farmer programs (and adapt models for non traditional agricultural sector)- similar to what was done for developing the Canadian organic standards.**

**Review all new farmer federal programs and adapt them to the reality of new farmers:** To make sure they are also adapted to smaller-scale and/or diversified new farmers.

**Funding for a National survey on new farmers cone and carried out by survey experts** (documenting the profiles of successful farms/those who have abandoned, barriers, opportunities, etc.)

**National study on land owners & awareness campaign on farm transfer with tool development and counsellor funding** (to raise awareness re. how to plan for a transfer, what it involves, etc.)