

Rural Horizon

Winter 2007

Planting the seeds for the next generation of agriculture

'We reap what we sow' is a recognized cliché that reminds us of just how important today's decisions affect the future. Keeping that in mind, members of the federal, provincial and territorial governments are committed to working together to develop the next generation of agriculture and agri-food policy.

And, they want to hear from you! Whether you're a stakeholder in the industry or a Canadian citizen, political leaders are seeking input from you regarding the future of Quebec's agricultural landscape.

The Agricultural Policy Framework (APF) is a five-year federal-provincial-territorial agreement on agriculture that was created as a national approach to agriculture. The initial objective? To position Canada as the world leader in food safety and quality, innovation and environmentally-responsible agriculture production.



Today, Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector faces a new set of challenges and opportunities. With most of the APF agreements set to expire in the spring of 2008, discussions are underway to build a new generation of agriculture and agri-food policy. This new framework will build an enduring foundation that will benefit future generations.

In order to ensure that the many facets of the agriculture industry are included in all stages of policy development, three rounds of consultations will take place. This multi-phased, national consultation process began in December 2006 and will carry on into 2007, with a new policy framework to be implemented in early 2008.



Round One featured a series of working sessions that involved agriculture industry experts. As experts, they were invited to participate in detailed discussions and analysis of proposed policy options. They also had a hand in defining potential problems that could arise during public consultations and further, they helped formulate questions for the broader public consultations.

Round Two, set to run January-February 2007, will be made up of public consultations that will be hosted across the country. These will focus on collecting information from the public in a way that allows for an open exchange of ideas; it's all about encouraging public debate regarding the future of agriculture and agri-food in Canada. Discussions will also continue to take place on the business risk management (BRM) plan.

March 2007 will see the beginning of Round Three. This final phase will involve the analysis of data from Rounds One and Two. These findings will provide consolidated input to the federal, provincial and territorial governments prior to negotiations.

The consultation process and final summations are designed to stimulate discussions amongst all stakeholders about how federal, provincial and territorial governments can work together to ensure a competitive and profitable Canadian agriculture and agri-food sector. Being able to provide safe, innovative and high-quality products and services that can benefit all Canadians is also high on the priority list.

We encourage you to add your voice to this discussion! All levels of government are looking forward to hearing from Canadian individuals and organizations. We are working together to develop a solid policy framework that supports a prosperous agriculture and agri-food sector. You will be able to participate via the web site www.agr.gc.ca/nextgen. The deadline for submission is February 28, 2007.

For copies of the consultation documents and for information on how Canadians can participate in building the next generation of agriculture and agri-food policy, contact your provincial/territorial agriculture office, call: **1 800 O-CANADA** (1 800 622-6232), TTY **1 800 926-9105**, or visit the web site www.agr.gc.ca/nextgen.

1 800 O-Canada
www.rural.gc.ca

Rural Canadians' Guide to Programs and Services
Le guide des programmes et des services de Canada rural

Whether you're looking for business advice, a cultural exchange or a boating safety program, the **Rural Canadians' Guide to Programs and Services** was designed for you.

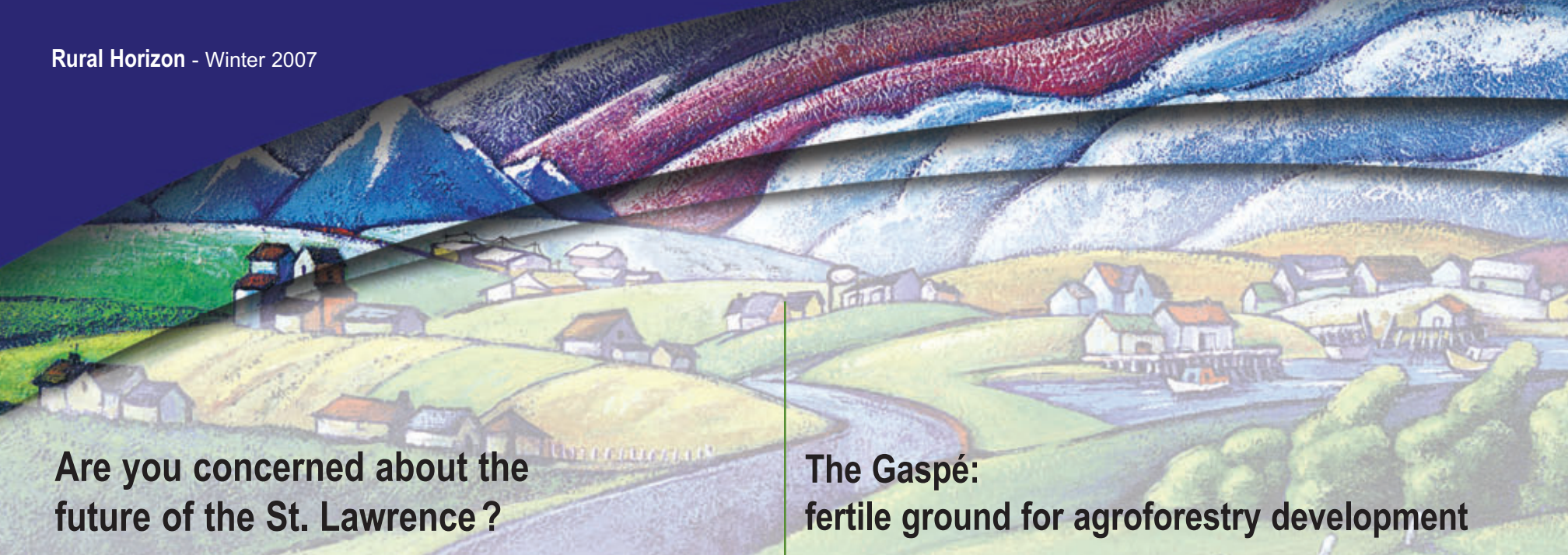
The directory lists about 200 federal programs and services for individuals and businesses.

Our Web sites addresses in this issue

www.agr.gc.ca/nextgen
www.planstlaurent.qc.ca
www.strategiessl.qc.ca
www.reseau-sadc.qc.ca
www.alafut.qc.ca
www.co-op.gc.ca
www.dec-ced.gc.ca
www.servicecanada.gc.ca
www.rural.gc.ca

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Are you concerned about the future of the St. Lawrence ?

What is sustainable development for the St. Lawrence River? In essence, it means balancing three key components: respect for the environment, economic growth, and the uses of the waterway. In other words, development and environment must be aligned with each other and must take into account all the ways in which people use this natural resource.

Let's all do our part

To meet this challenge, we must take more consistent, inclusive, and complementary actions. The 2005-2010 St. Lawrence Plan—which was announced recently by the governments of Canada and Quebec—calls, among other things, for the development of an integrated management concept that will encourage the public to play an even greater role in protecting, preserving, and promoting the St. Lawrence. Everyone who cares about the health of the ecosystem—particularly those who live in communities on or near the river and its tributaries—is invited to take part in discussions on major environmental issues with government and public partners.

Some encouraging results

For more than 13 years, Environment Canada has provided support to APC (Area of Prime Concern) committees brought together by Stratégies Saint-Laurent, a non-profit environmental organization. These APC committees, which are made up of stakeholders, decision makers, citizens, and others, are intended to stimulate local discussion and the development of projects on environmental priorities in their areas.

By rallying municipalities and farming communities to work together, APC committees have built consensus on delicate issues. This, in turn, has given members of the public the opportunity to take part in local initiatives on the protection, restoration, preservation, and promotion of resources and on ecosystem use. Since its inception, this community approach has produced some interesting results: some 400 community projects have been carried out; over 2000 tonnes of waste has been collected; about 150 000 plants, shrubs, and trees have been planted on riverbanks; more than 150 kilometres of coastal area has been developed; volunteers have donated 130 000 hours to riparian communities; and more than 900 consultations and information events have been held.



Picture: Environment Canada
The drudgery of cleaning up along the Richelieu River in McMasterville

Boosting community involvement

The positive impact that community involvement has had on the health of the ecosystem has led partners involved in the St. Lawrence Plan to propose new ways to support citizens in their efforts to contribute to the sustainable development of the St. Lawrence.

Some of these methods are aimed at promoting dialogue among riparian communities on local environmental issues that affect them directly (contact the APC committee in your region), funding community and environmental projects, and providing scientific and technical support.

Others are intended to raise awareness of sustainable development by creating tools and educational programs for youth, adapting scientific information and knowledge for decision makers and citizens, and disseminating information on an array of issues—in particular, the development of the St. Lawrence.

The bottom line? The only way we will achieve the environmental goals set out in the St. Lawrence Plan is if all stakeholders share a common vision of the river, so that our actions focus on the same objectives. Even the smallest contributions will have an effect on the environment and, therefore, on our health. Each and every one of us can make a difference; not only within our communities but also across the ecosystem as a whole.

For more information or to get involved, call Environment Canada toll free at 1-800-463-4311 or visit one of the following Web sites:

The St. Lawrence Plan at www.planstlaurent.qc.ca

Stratégies Saint-Laurent (ZIP committees) at www.strategiessl.qc.ca

The Gaspé: fertile ground for agroforestry development

Renowned for its high-quality seafood products, the Gaspé is set for even greater prominence in the atlas of flavours of Quebec with its mushrooms and serviceberries.

Three years ago, a group of stakeholders led by the Gaspé-Nord Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) looked at ways of enriching the community and settled on agroforestry. A survey of 4,000 acres of farmland in Haute-Gaspésie and Estran revealed that there were 1,000 uncultivated plots and, even more importantly, that trees had started growing again.

The Gaspé-Nord CFDC then set up a working group made up of representatives from the regional county municipality (RCM), the local development centre (CLD), as well as the Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA), the Quebec Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ), the regional council of elected representatives (CRÉ), the Consortium for the Sustainable Development of the Gaspé Forest, and Laval University.

Two working groups were then formed to explore the feasibility of sustainable agroforestry development. The first is looking at the cultivation of the serviceberry, a bush that yields small berries. Two serviceberry demonstration orchards have now been established in conjunction with some 20 producers. The other group is focusing on ways of improving sugar bush profitability without changing syrup production. A test sugar bush has been set up to grow ginseng and certain varieties of mushrooms, including oyster and shiitake mushrooms.

As CFDC General Manager Richard Marin observed, *“in making every effort to promote the success of these initiatives in the agroforestry sector, we are adopting a novel, creative approach to defining a future vision for Haute-Gaspésie, Estran and the people who live there.”*

Significant benefits

In addition to providing various types of seasonal employment, it is estimated that large-scale cultivation of the serviceberry in the Gaspé will lead to the creation or consolidation of some twenty agricultural businesses over the long term. The main purpose of producing crops in sugar bushes is to increase the revenues of maple syrup producers, who are very interested in the initiative. The approach would also consolidate a number of the businesses already involved in producing maple products and would lead to job creation (e.g., in the processing of crop plants).



One of the serviceberry orchards in Cap-Chat, Gaspé

From a broader perspective, these two projects would certainly foster an interest among the young—and the not-so-young—in the agri-food sector. The projects represent particularly promising sustainable development initiatives for future generations.

CFDCs and Business Development Centres (BDCs) are working in partnership with Canada Economic Development to assist communities in the regions by providing resources that promote their economic and social development.

For additional information on this initiative, contact the Gaspé-Nord CFDC at 418-763-5355.

For information on how to contact the CFDC or BDC in your region, visit the CFDC network's Internet site at www.reseau-sadc.qc.ca.

A new rural microbrewery young entrepreneurs corner the tasting market

A worker's brewing co-operative established in the Mauricie region is the brainchild of four young university graduates from the École de technologie supérieure à Montréal and the University of Quebec at Montreal who started the co-op out of their desire to live and work in a rural environment. Pierre-Paul Carpentier, Philippe Dumais, Francis Foley and David Gauthier have chosen Saint-Tite, in the RCM of Mékinac, to launch their microbrewery project, dubbed *À la fût*. The goal: to develop the tasting market for homemade specialty draft beer.

"We've all wanted to live outside the city for a few years now. Besides giving us professional independence in our area of training, we think living in a rural environment is more appealing and that it offers enormous development potential," explains Pierre-Paul Carpentier, a native of the area.



Picture: Journal l'Hebdo Mékinac
À la Fût members: Philippe Dumais, Francis Foley, Pierre-Paul Carpentier et David Gauthier

Technological advances in a rural setting create professional jobs

Building on the engineering training of three of the four members of the group, the co-operative has developed a device that enables consumers to serve themselves a quality draft beer in the comfort of their own home. The cooling unit developed for homemade draft beer (URBAD) can control the temperature and pressure at which the beer is served—two factors that have a major impact on the final taste of the product.

"There are very few examples of co-operatives that have played a role in technology development. We chose to use the co-operative model in starting up our microbrewery because the model fit well with our values and our image of entrepreneurship. Our project also shows young people in the area the entrepreneurial opportunities that are available there," says Philippe Dumais.

Anticipated results

The members of the co-operative are hoping to start by developing the Quebec tasting market for homemade specialty draft beer, and then move on to conquer the Canadian and international markets.

So far, several partnerships are planned and confirmed and will have a concrete effect on the development of the community. One way in which the co-operative contributes to the development of the RCM community is through local subcontracting, which is given priority, thus creating professional and technical jobs right in Saint-Tite, a city of 4,000.

Another goal of the four founders of the co-operative is to create a sense of connection to the region among young people. According to Francis Foley, *"the co-op will show young people both inside and outside the community that it is possible to become established outside the city and, at the same time, to create professional employment co-operatively."*

This co-operative project is funded in part by the Co-operative Development Initiative (CDI), a Canadian government program designed to help people develop co-ops (through its Advisory Services component, managed by Canadian co-operative networks) and to research and test innovative ways of using the co-operative model (through the Innovation and Research component, managed by the Co-operatives Secretariat).

For additional information on this initiative, visit these Internet sites:

www.alafut.qc.ca

www.co-op.gc.ca

The new Government of Canada announces six new economic measures

By the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec

After completing his tour of the regions of Quebec, in recent weeks the Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of Labour and Minister of Canada Economic Development (CED), last fall announced six new economic measures for the Quebec regions.

The "Venture Capital Fund for Business Start-ups in the Regions" and the "Capital Fund for Business Succession" address the issue of business financing. A \$13 million contribution from CED and support from such partners as Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) and Desjardins Venture Capital will make more than \$50 million available to entrepreneurs.



The Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn

In addition to these two funds is the Community Economic Diversification Initiative, called CEDI-Vitality. This measure supports activities aimed at diversifying the economy and assisting SMEs. With an \$85 million envelope over four years, the CEDI-Vitality is offered to entrepreneurs and non-profit organizations in seven Quebec regions and 21 MRCs experiencing slow economic growth.

Through its "Community Economic Facilities" measure, CED aims to provide targeted communities and regions with sustainable community economic facilities. Examples include industrial parks or ferry wharves.

CED has also launched an "Enterprise commercialization" measure aimed at making Quebec enterprises more competitive on international markets. This initiative helps fund the salary of a resource-person specializing in market development.

Lastly, "advisory committees" will be created in regions served by the Agency. Each advisory committee's mandate will be to advise the Minister as to policy and priorities to be favoured in its region.

"The time has come to re-energize the economies of our regions. I'm confident the measures announced today will make a real difference and give new impetus to our regions, for a favorable wind is blowing over the regions of Quebec," said the Minister.

For further information, consult Canada Economic Development website: www.dec-ced.gc.ca



Service Canada Worth the Trip

Would you like to get help with completing an application for Employment Insurance or Old Age Security—and have that help available close to home? Do you wish you could access Government of Canada services without travelling a long way?

The Government of Canada is addressing these needs by creating outreach service sites. Service Canada's client-service officers visit these sites to meet with residents in remote locations. These outreach service sites are located in the heart of rural communities and are open periodically for a few hours at a time.

For you, where you live

Service Canada's outreach service sites are designed to bring together a number of federal departments in a single service-delivery network that can be easily accessible. People get answers to their questions and advice from attentive officers. Federal departments are working together to make this national initiative a reality, making a full range of high-quality services available everywhere.

Some thirty outreach service sites will be set up by the end of 2007 across most of Quebec. As one client said of the outreach service site in Anse Saint Jean: *"It's easier to solve a problem by coming here. You don't have to travel a long way or wait on the phone. It's really an advantage."*

Citizens generally have questions about Employment Insurance, Income Security Programs, and the Social Insurance Number. The services offered in outreach service sites will develop as time goes by based on client needs.

Tailored services

The success of outreach service sites depends on the officers, who must adapt to their new duties. They now travel to go meet citizens and find out about their needs in order to offer the most appropriate service. The clients appreciate it. In the words of Mario Turcotte, an officer at the Abitibi-Témiscamingue Service Canada Centre: *"The clients are satisfied when we assist them. We have developed a service that is tailored to the needs of our clients and allows them to be self-reliant in their dealings with the Government of Canada."*

Officers in outreach service sites are not equipped with a computer connected to the internal network, as they are in their main offices. This therefore challenges the officers' resourcefulness to provide the best possible service using the resources available on-site. They really put themselves in the place of residents in remote regions. According to Mario Turcotte, this is the best way of understanding their situation and their needs. It's worth the trip!

Service Canada Outreach in Quebec

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Lamarche | L'Anse-Saint-Jean |
| Matagami | Lebel-sur-Quévillon |
| Matapédia | Ferland-Boileau |
| Baie-Saint-Paul | Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré |
| Saint-Siméon | Saint-Michel-des-Saints |
| Grande-Vallée | Saint-Maxime-du-Mont-Louis |
| Potton | New Carlisle |
| Saint-Thomas-Didyme | Témiscaming |
| Taschereau | Notre-Dame-du-Laus |
| Belleterre | Cadillac |
| Weedon | Dégelis |
| Chénéville | Rivière Rouge |
| Notre-Dame-de-Montauban | Grande-Entrée |
| Fortierville | |

Service Canada makes it easier for Canadians to get the government services and information they need with just a click, call or visit. To find the nearest Service Canada Centre or outreach location and the available services, visit servicecanada.gc.ca and click on 'Services Where You Live', or call **1 800 O-Canada**.



FOR INFORMATION ON GOVERNMENT OF CANADA PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:

Phone: 1-800-0-CANADA (1-800-622-6232)
TTY/TDD: 1-800-465-7735

Web: www.canada.gc.ca

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The Rural Team Quebec is made up of representatives from federal departments and agencies, as well as representatives of key organizations working on rural issues in Quebec.

