



Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada

Rural Horizon



Canada's Rural Partnership | Rural Team Quebec

Spring 2009



New **GROWING FORWARD** Programs in Place on April 1, 2009

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is currently negotiating bilateral *Growing Forward* agreements with each province and territory. These agreements outline action that will be taken from 2008 to 2012 to help the sector become more prosperous, competitive and innovative.

Growing Forward is the tangible response to the common vision developed by the federal, provincial and territorial ministers for a profitable and innovative agriculture, agri-food and agri-based products industry that seizes opportunities by responding to market demands and contributes to the health and well-being of Canadians.

Growing Forward will include an improved suite of business risk management programs, greater investment in innovation, measures to achieve key regulatory priorities, as well as measures to protect the environment and enhance food safety. At the national level, the agreement provides \$1.3 billion for new non-business risk management programs. Funding will be cost-shared on a 60:40 basis by the Government of Canada (\$800 million) and the provincial and territorial governments (\$533 million).

Specifically, *Growing Forward* commits the federal, provincial and territorial governments to undertake targeted initiatives in specific areas:

A Competitive and Innovative Sector:

- Expanding the sector's capacity to innovate by offering support for commercialization and innovation; developing a bioeconomy

strategy; and creating science clusters to deal with priority areas.

- Improving governments' regulatory performance by improving the approval processes for veterinary drugs, novel foods and food additives; and offering science and other support to help the industry generate approvals for health claims and new minor-use pesticide products.
- Facilitating industry success in global and domestic markets through support for industry-led marketing strategies; a Canada branding strategy; market intelligence and services for exporters; and action to maintain and improve market access.
- Enhancing the sector's capacity to adapt and succeed by helping entrepreneurs evaluate their performance and plan the future of their businesses.

A Sector that Contributes to Society's Priorities:

- Enhancing food safety through support for, and recognition of, food-safety systems; and by facilitating producer adoption of systems where the market demands it.
- Enhancing environmental performance through research into agricultural practices that improve environmental performance; support for the adoption of management practices that create benefits for the environment or reduce risk in priority areas; the dissemination of knowledge and information on environmentally sound practices; and measurement of the sector's environmental performance.

A Sector that is Proactive in Managing Risks:

- Preventing and preparing for risk through an animal and plant biosecurity strategy; and by implementing biosecurity and traceability systems.
- An improved BRM program suite, including AgriStability, AgriInvest, AgriRecovery and AgriInsurance.

If you have questions or comments regarding the new *Growing Forward* programs, please contact the Agriculture and Agri-food Portfolio Quebec team by email at: lequipeduquebec@agr.gc.ca

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Renewable Energy – Ready to Make a Decision!

RETScreen clean energy decision support centre

Whether we live in an urban or rural area, we all need energy: hydroelectric, solar, wind, nuclear or oil-generated. Energy enables us to heat and operate our homes, factories, farms, schools and cities.

When planning a residential, industrial or institutional project, it is necessary to determine the most appropriate type of energy to use. Increasingly, planners are looking at cleaner, leaner ways to provide energy, to save money and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Several selection criteria need to be considered, such as technologies and resources available, costs, and impact on the environment. So where does one begin? The solution is just a few clicks away: RETScreen International.

RETScreen is a free software that provides online access to a database and information to assess the implementation and cost-effectiveness of

renewable energy projects. Can my house or cottage run on solar energy? Would a forced-air heating system be appropriate and cost-effective for my factory? Is it worthwhile for our municipality to set up a wind power project? Studies carried out to answer these questions used to be time-consuming and costly—to the point of compromising the implementation of some projects. With RETScreen, doing an energy efficiency study is faster, more accessible and, above all, much less costly than in the past.

Developed by Natural Resources Canada, this software helps professionals and decision makers at every level make better energy decisions. RETScreen evaluates the energy production and savings, costs, emission reductions, financial viability and energy efficiency of various renewable energy technologies. The software includes product and project databases, a user manual and a case study training course.

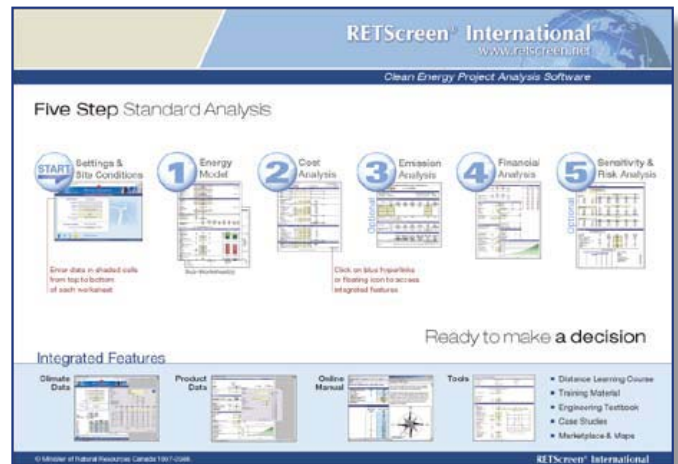
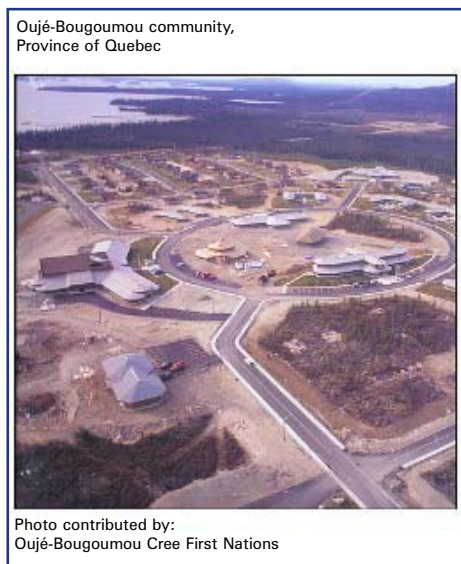
Used by more than 180,000 people in 222 countries around the world, with 1,000 new users signing up each week, RETScreen is quickly becoming the international standard for clean energy project analysis. This software will save users an estimated \$8 billion by 2012 and reduce worldwide greenhouse gas emissions by 20 megatonnes per year.

RETScreen in rural areas

This world-renowned assessment tool also makes it easier to set up renewable energy projects in the rural areas of Quebec.

One example of a case study available on the RETScreen site is a First Nation's band council project, which looked to build a new village in Northern Quebec. During the planning of this

project, the proponents wanted to determine what method would be more cost-effective for the community: an urban heating system with a central boiler plant using locally available biomass or equipping each home individually with electric baseboards or diesel-fuel heating. RETScreen answered this question and demonstrated the advantages of a central system with a diesel furnace used as a back-up to meet heating peak load requirements. The village was built, and in 2000, the biomass-fuelled system covered 89.2 per cent of the community's energy needs. The village has received several awards for this renewable energy project.



Partnerships

RETScreen was developed and is administered by Natural Resources Canada at its CanmetENERGY research centre in Varennes in collaboration with a large network of experts from industry, government and the academic community.

For additional information on RETScreen International, please consult the Web site: www.retscreen.net/ang/home.php

Helping growers get the right tools and providing the public with better information on pesticides: two priorities for Health Canada

The PMRA is Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency. Do you know what it does? Does its role in agriculture affect you?

In addition to enforcing compliance with the Pest Control Products Act (PCPA) and raising public awareness of pesticides, the PMRA ensures that growers have access to sufficient pest control products to remain competitive internationally.

Approved GROU products

- Reglone Dessiccant (Diquat ions)
- 2,4-D Amine 500 Liquid Herbicide (2,4-D)
- Sevin Brand XLR Plus Carbaryl Insecticide (Carbaryl)
- Bravo Zn (Chlorothalonil)
- GF-120 NF Naturalyte Fruit Fly Bait (Spinosad)
- Aatrex Liquid 480 (Atrazine)
- Gavel 75 DF Fungicide (Mancozeb and Zoxamide)
- Touchdown iQ Liquid Herbicide (Glyphosate)**
- Reflex Liquid Herbicide (Fomesafen)
- Roundup Weathermax with Transorb 2 technology
- Liquid Herbicide (Glyphosate)
- Banvel II Herbicide (Dicamba)
- Basagran Liquid Herbicide (Bentazon)

Grower Requested Own Use (GROU) Program

GROU is an initiative put in place by the PMRA to make it easier for growers to access less expensive pest control products. Representatives of key grower associations sit on the GROU Nomination Committee and choose appropriate products for the program. Thanks to this mechanism, growers with an approved import certificate can legally obtain the U.S. version of a Canadian-registered product.

In 2008, 12 products were approved under GROU (see box), and additional products are under review.

To take advantage of the program, producers must apply for an import certificate.

Reducing the technology gap

A technology gap exists when certain active ingredients and/or uses of pesticides are allowed in other countries, but not in Canada. To reduce the gap, the PMRA has developed programs to make it easier to simultaneously introduce new active ingredients and pesticide uses in Canada and in other countries. Health Canada registered 663 new

uses in 2006-07 and another 758 in 2007-08.

One initiative, Project 914, helps to address the technology gap regarding approved uses of active ingredients by allowing Health Canada to use U.S. Environmental Protection Agency data to inform Canadian registration needs.



Getting the information you need

The PMRA's Pest Management Information Service is a convenient source of information on pest management and pesticides in general. Whether you have a stake in pesticide registration and regulation in Canada or you want to know how to use these products safely, a knowledgeable team of information officers is available to answer your questions.

For more information: 1-800-267-6315
email: pmra_info@hc-sc.gc.ca
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pest/index-eng.php

Learning about rural life: Université rurale québécoise

by Bruno JEAN, professor at the Université du Québec à Rimouski

Every other year since 1997, people involved in Quebec rural development have been meeting for informal week-long training sessions. This fall, the Université rurale québécoise (URQ) will run from September 14 to 18 in Lac Saint-Jean. This will be the next leg on its tour of rural areas, which began in Abitibi-Témiscamingue, moved on to the Bas-Saint-Laurent, Côte-Nord, Mauricie, Outaouais and the Côte-du-Sud.

The URQ has three main objectives: strengthening the skills of rural development practitioners; sharing the diverse knowledge about community and rural development practices; and promoting innovation in social and institutional settings. This is a novel approach to continuous training initiatives for rural experts, one that focuses on "knowledge exchange", a friendly and informal approach to teaching.

The URQ is an institution that goes beyond. It embraces the rural experience, allowing people to step out of their daily lives to better appreciate and understand it. The URQ helps maintain the necessary dialogue between "formal" knowledge and "experience", between theory and practice, between analysis and action. In short, the URQ is an encounter between researchers and rural players, who realize that their knowledge, like their experiences, can only be enhanced through

dialogue, and that theory and practice only make sense when they interact.

The URQ is a virtual university. It has no campus, no permanent staff and no budget. It relies entirely on bringing together professors from the Réseau de l'Université du Québec, rural partners already established in different areas, and Réseau des SADC, Association des CLD and Solidarité rurale du Québec development officers. Together, these partners form the Comité d'orientation, the steering committee that approves different URQ projects and ensures the application of pedagogical principles. In addition, every URQ session uses a local organizing committee comprised of key stakeholders in the host community.

Instead of believing that rural residents are the ones who need to learn, the URQ demonstrates that we can learn something from them. They have learned to manage their environment, to create economically viable businesses, and to set up a social structure that provides a vibrant living environment. They have been and remain creative and forward-looking. The URQ has become the place where rural residents express their ability to innovate at the social, organizational and institutional levels and share their experiences to benefit others.

More info at www.uqar.qc.ca/chrural/urq/



Community Information Database

Canadian community information
at your fingertips!

The Community Information Database (CID) is an easy-to-use, free, on-line tool which provides a detailed statistical overview of Canadian communities. It incorporates facts and figures from Statistics Canada, including the latest 2006 Census, with more than 700 indicators, such as education, income, population, age, employment rate, immigration and citizenship, language, crime, health, resource reliance, and much more!

The CID is a reliable, innovative tool for community groups, private or non-profit organizations, government policy makers, businesses, academics or individuals wanting to make a difference in their community. The CID allows you to compare your community with other similar-sized communities, research and analyze population changes, create and download maps, tables and charts, and create your own community and regional profiles.

Discover how you can use the information to support local and regional development





Agroforestry: an emerging field that holds promise for rural communities

Growing trees and shrubs in combination with crops and livestock can add to a farm operation's bottom line and have environmental and economic benefits for a rural community. Agroforestry is an approach to sustainable development that is attracting international attention because it offers the possibility of extra income, improves water quality and increases biodiversity for the community, aids carbon capture, helps keep the workforce in the region and enhances landscapes for the community and the tourist industry. In short, everyone wins!

Currently in Quebec, windbreak hedges are the most commonly used form of agroforestry. Other practices such as intercropping and riparian agroforestry systems, which involve planting trees and shrubs in riparian zones for various productive and environmental purposes, are also being developed.



A riparian buffer of hybrid poplars can shelter animals and protect waterways less than six years after it is planted. (Photo: Julien Fortier)

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) supports the planting of windbreak hedges to protect crops, soil, animals, buildings and roads against wind. Between 2003 and 2007, the Greencover Canada program invested more than \$840,000 to plant 216 km of windbreak hedges in Quebec. Revegetation of river and stream banks benefits the environment by improving ecosystems, which in turn benefits farmers and communities. Between 2005 and 2007, more than \$500,000 was allocated under this program to plant shrubs and trees along some 184 km of waterways in Quebec. When strategically located, hedges reduce building heating costs and snow removal expenses. Other activities, such as co-production of fruits, mushrooms or medicinal plants, are generating interest because they offer the potential to diversify farm income.

Intensification of farming, combined with the more than 100,000 hectares of abandoned farmland, has led to a loss of landscape quality in many areas. A joint study by Quebec's Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and AAFC reveals that diversified, carefully planned plantings of trees and shrubs create quality landscapes and enhance society's perception of the work farmers do. Imagine how an entire rural region can benefit if a number of producers opt for this agroforestry approach.

AAFC is actively supporting the development of agroforestry by helping to develop various tools. Produced in partnership with the Canadian Forestry

Service and the Centre d'expertise sur les produits agroforestiers, the Portrait of Agroforestry in Quebec gives an overview of agroforestry practices in the province and points the way to the future. Since March 2007, the Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food (ACAAF) program has supported a pilot project on goods and services that can be derived from agroforestry. AAFC has also supported the Institut de technologie agroalimentaire (La Pocatière campus) in creating a tool to evaluate the

Where can I get information about agroforestry?

Agri-Réseau (agroforestry Web site):
www.agrireseau.qc.ca/agroforesterie

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (land management; agroforestry):
www.agr.gc.ca

Centre d'expertise sur les produits agroforestiers:
www.cepaf.ca

Groupe interdisciplinaire de recherche en agroforesterie:
www.plg.ulaval.ca/giraf/

Greencover Canada:
www.cdaq.qc.ca

Greencover (Quebec):
www.agr.gc.ca/env/greencover-verdir/

PFRA Shelterbelt Centre:
www.agr.gc.ca/pfra/shelterbelt_e.htm

economic impact of windbreak hedges and riparian agroforestry systems. Since November 2008, the Agri-Réseau has included a special Web site on agroforestry, making information even easier to find. Combining agriculture, forestry, land use planning and regional development, agroforestry is an emerging field that will benefit rural communities.

FOR INFORMATION ON GOVERNMENT OF CANADA PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:

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

Web: www.canada.gc.ca

Service Canada Access Centres

Rural Horizon is an annual publication of Rural Team Quebec and is produced for residents living in rural and remote communities.

The team consists of representatives from federal departments and key organizations working on rural issues in Quebec. The Rural Team works to create partnerships to mobilize stakeholders in Quebec's various regions around issues affecting their rural communities.

If you have a story idea, comment, or would like to receive a copy of this newsletter, contact Isabelle Lamontagne, Managing Editor of the Rural Horizon at:

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