

Quebec Farmers' Association



Strategic Plan 2011 – 2016

**Cultivating a sustainable future serving
the English-speaking agricultural community
of rural Quebec**

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Executive Director**

BACKGROUND

- **1957** Founding of the Quebec Farmers' Association (QFA)
- **1978** QFA launches *The Quebec Farmers' Advocate*
- **2001** QFA decides to affiliate with the Union des Producteurs Agricoles (UPA)
- **2002** UPA accepts QFA's application
- **2005** QFA consults stakeholders to reaffirm its mandate, identify program priorities and examine the organizational structure and financing. QFA adopts five-year plan. Performance reviewed regularly; course adjustments as needed to keep effective and relevant
- **2007** QFA 50th anniversary



MOVING FORWARD

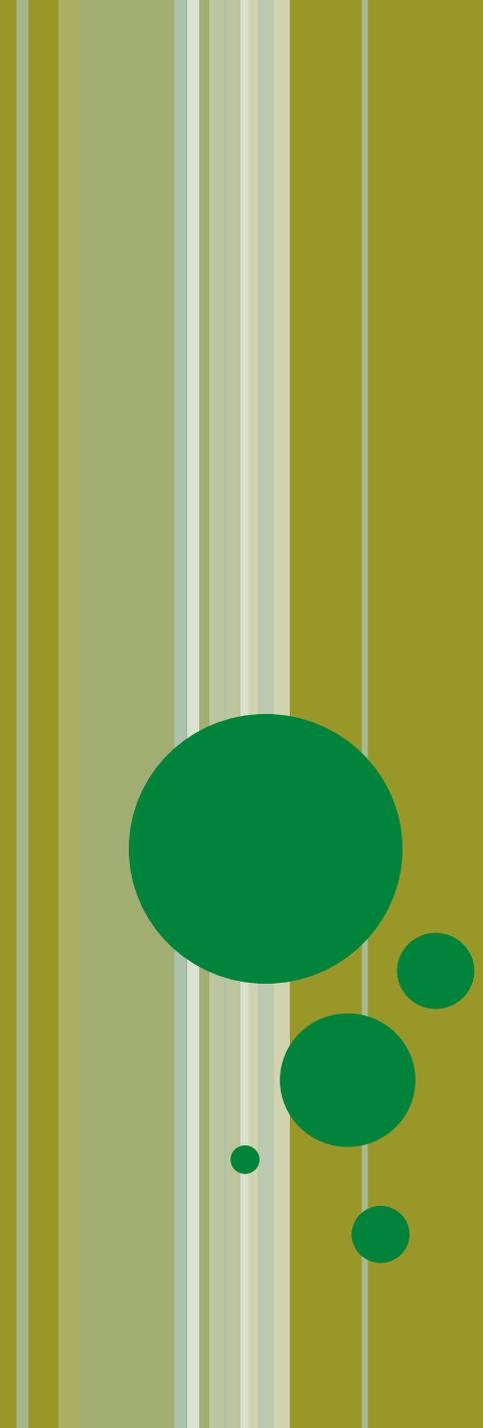
- 2010-2011 agreement with Canadian Heritage describes steps to be taken to up-date the strategic plan
- Stated outcome:
 - QFA adopts strategic plan for 2011 – 2016**
- The desired targeted direct result was identified:
 - *Quebec's minority-language voice in rural and agricultural communities is expressed clearly on the provincial and national stages. Decision makers knowledgeable of the community's needs and aspirations should result in more enlightened and inclusive policy-making and program delivery.*



DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

- Newspaper readership surveys
- *Quebec Farmers' Advocate* notices and articles
- Face to face discussion with farm management technology students at Macdonald Campus of McGill University; distribution of questionnaire
- Face to face meetings with visitors to Ottawa Valley Farm Show
- Questionnaire on membership applications
- Presentation at regional meeting in St-Jean-Valleyfield
- Meeting with representatives of Quebec 4-H
- Meeting with staff and faculty of Macdonald Campus
- Presentation at QFA annual general meeting; distribution of questionnaire on farm accidents and injuries
- 4-H member questionnaire
- Telephone interviews with English-speaking members of the UPA who are not QFA members
- Telephone survey of QFA members





QFA TELEPHONE QUESTIONNAIRES

HOW OPTIMISTIC ARE ENGLISH-SPEAKING FARMERS IN QUEBEC ABOUT THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE QUEBEC?

Members	4.7
Non-members	5.3

Rated on a scale of 1 – 10 where 1 is very optimistic and 10 is very pessimistic

- Wide range of opinions. Most farmers gave ratings between 3 and 8. Some were extremely optimistic or pessimistic

TOP CHALLENGES FACING FARMERS TODAY

Top Challenges Facing Farmers	QFA Members	Non-Members
Paperwork	10	4
Regulations (environmental)	9	4
High input costs	8	4
Low prices paid for produce	9	5
Farm succession	4	0
Other	12	5

Paperwork overload is the biggest challenge for many farmers

- we're "drowning" in paperwork
- programs, rules and regulations "don't take account of nature, real farming situations or time frames"
- "government employees that we work with don't understand agriculture anymore"
- "financial constraints mean we can't hire staff"
- it's difficult "making a living, there is little financial return"
- "there is constant need to get bigger and an increased debt burden"
- "overload to try and balance starting off a farm and a family"
- "need political and economic changes to interest the younger generation in farming"



QFA should advocate on behalf of English-speaking farmers and community	QFA Members	Non-members
	100%	92%

- QFA should advocate on:
 - “any laws proposed or passed”
 - “property rights and rights to farm”
- “we need a voice, no one else is doing anything for us”
- “sometimes we don’t fight hard enough”
- “QFA should have more of a ‘take charge attitude’”
- “persuade bureaucrats what is good for the farmer”

QFA SHOULD ADVOCATE ON BEHALF OF ENGLISH SPEAKING FARMERS AND COMMUNITY

QFA should continue to provide information in English, and generally make sure farmers know what is going on



Virtually
all
English-
speaking
farmers
read *The
Advocate*

How farmers rate the value of <i>The Quebec Farmers' Advocate</i>	QFA Members	Non-members
	7.8	6.8

- “we need as much information as we can get to keep up with new rules and what’s going on”
- *The Advocate* is a “lifeline”
- “only information on farming in English in Quebec”
- “miss nuances” when read in French
- augments *La Terre de chez nous*
- becoming more timely



English – speaking farmers who read <i>La Terre de chez nous</i>	QFA Members	Non-members
	32%	23%

Comments from readers of *La Terre de chez nous*:

- very positive
- articles are very good and informative
- use the sales, auction and market information
- good political coverage
- gives a different perspective on events in Quebec
- good for practicing French

Most respondents subscribe to at least one other English publication, such as: *Ontario Farmer*, *Eastern Ontario Farmer*, *Country Guide*, *Farmers' Forum*

Most who do not subscribe to *La Terre* cannot read French



Farmers having access to the Internet	QFA members	Non-members
	80%	77%

Farmers who have visited the QFA website	QFA members	Non-members
	20%	0%

Some farmers are not “tech savvy” or don’t use the internet, but their children do

Many visit other relevant websites - UPA, ATQ, and MAPAQ - with generally positive reviews, though for some they are of no use because there is little or no English; some find the ATQ is not always user-friendly.



Farmers who have used, or intend to use QFA services	QFA members	Non-members
Used services	20%	Not applicable
Intend to use services in future	75%	31%

Numerous farmers intend to use the health insurance
Ideas for the future:

- videoconferencing and educational workshops
- services related to farm safety.
- economic/financial program
- help to ensure paperwork is done correctly
- farm transfer services
- programs to help young farmers starting out
- mentorship service for young farmers
- equipment and planning information
- a “bright experienced employee bank”
- information for small farmers
- more information on international issues, production systems and standards

Some are *too* old to use new services.

Other comments:

- “videoconference workshop in January was great”
- “any educational workshops” would be good
- we could use “farm safety services aimed at young farm families”

QFA SERVICES

Many ideas for programs and services to be offered by QFA in the future



WHO RESPONDED TO THE QFA TELEPHONE QUESTIONNAIRE?

Who responded to the questionnaire?	QFA members	Non-members
Farmers who are owner/operators	88%	93%
Number of years farming	33	35
Number of years to retirement	Never 40% 13 years	Never 23% 12 years
Who will take over farm	Family 56% Don't know 44%	Family 46% Don't know 46% Neighbour 8%
Interested in information on farm succession	68%	46%
Farms supported by off-farm income	52%	46%
Main source of household income	Farm 64% Off-farm 28% Half and half 8%	Farm 46% Off-farm 31% Half and half 15% Investments 8%



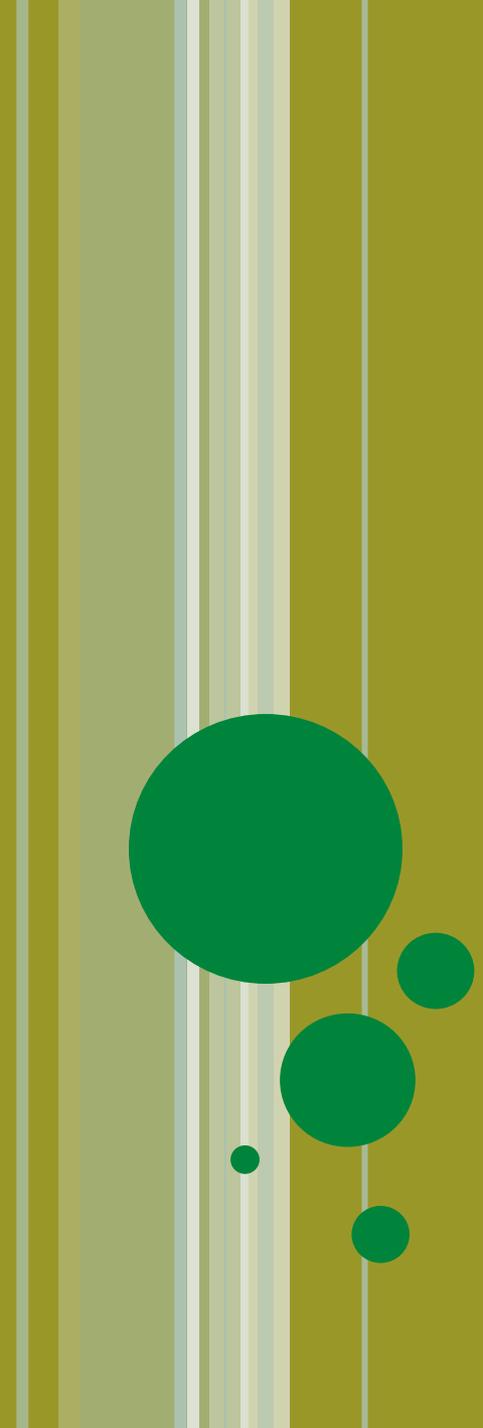
Additional comments:

- the QFA is important, and needs to “keep up the good work”
- Farmers are happy with what they read, and glad the QFA is there to support farmers
- Younger generation is bilingual and this is good but there is still a role for the QFA
- QFA could encourage local food movements
- “we should focus on the common agricultural issues, not the language issue”
- “the QFA needs to keep fighting because farmers have no time”
- “dedicated members can make a difference”

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Farmers
attach
high
value to
the QFA
– even if
they’re
not
members



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4-H WRITTEN QUESTIONNAIRE

4-H QUESTIONNAIRE: WHO RESPONDED?

Number of respondents	26		
Sex	15 girls		11 boys
Age range	12 – 24 years		
Average age	17.8 years		
Years with 4-H	7.6		
Place of residence	City/town: 5		Farm: 21
Studying agriculture?	Yes: 13		No: 9
Working on farms during summer	73%		
Studying agriculture?	Yes 50%	No 35%	Don't know 15%
Access to the Internet?	Yes 84%	No 12%	Don't know 4%
Heard about QFA?	Yes 64%	No 18%	Don't know 18%
Receive <i>Quebec Farmers' Advocate</i> ?	Yes 42%	No 54%	Don't know 4%
Do you read <i>The Advocate</i> ?	Yes 46%		No 54%



Like to work in agriculture or on a farm?

Yes	61%
No	15%
Don't know	23%



4-H QUESTIONNAIRE

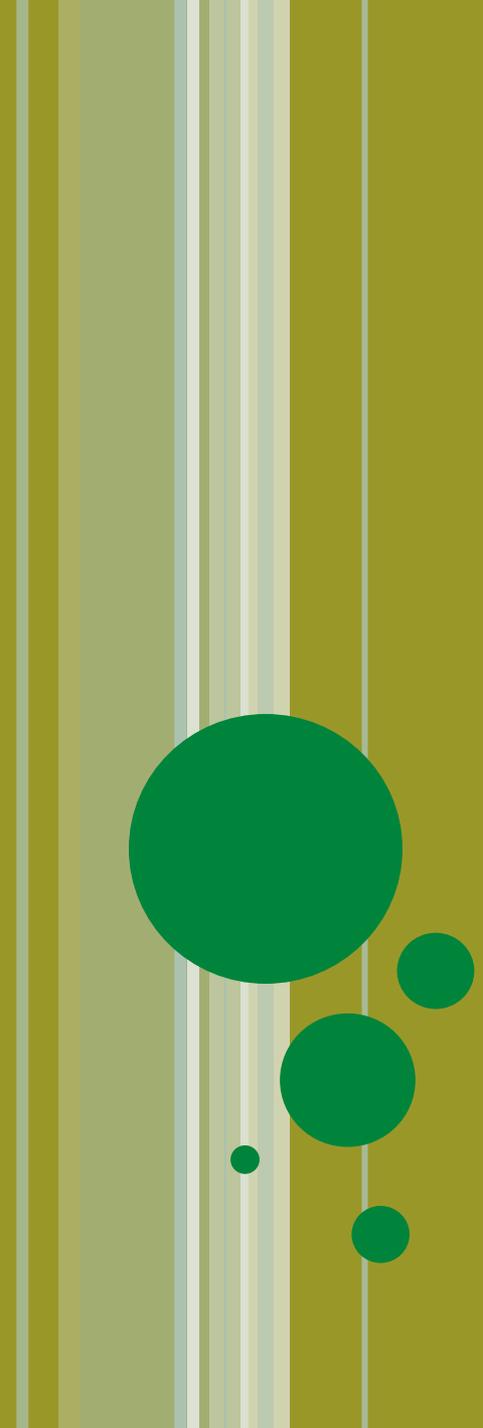
Best thing about agriculture ...

- Own boss (3)
- Milking
- Work accomplishments
- Animals (4)
- Tractors
- Family life / lifestyle (4)
- Feeding the world
- Money / women (2)

Worst thing about agriculture ...

- Hours (7)
- Debt and workload
- Bad prices
- Government (3)
- Money
- Costs vs. Income (2)
- paperwork



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**WHAT WE'VE LEARNED:
PRIORITIES FOR 2011 - 2016**

QFA MISSION

To defend the rights, provide information
and advocate for the English-speaking
agricultural community in Quebec



VISION

The QFA's actions contribute to a sustainable future for both agriculture and the environment while providing a decent quality of life and financial return for the individuals and their families who have made agriculture and food production their chosen professions.



SHARED VALUES

Members of the QFA believe in:

- Maintaining family-owned and operated farms
- Food sovereignty and self-determination by individuals and nations
- Intergenerational involvement
- Lifelong learning
- Protection of the physical environment
- Preserving land for agricultural production
- Minimum government interference
- Working alone and in partnership with others



STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES

2005 – 2011

- Creating a supportive environment for agricultural and rural development
- Seeking respect and recognition for the English-speaking agricultural community's contribution to rural development
- Facilitating communications between the QFA's constituency and the full range of stakeholders from suppliers and government through to the consumer

2011 – 2016 (Proposed)

The QFA:

- Advocates for policies, programs and services that support vibrant and active agricultural communities
- Represents their interests to the Union des producteurs agricole (UPA), government and media, educational institutions and other relevant agencies and organizations.
- Provides pertinent and timely information
- Delivers programs and services
- Supports people both entering and retiring from careers in agriculture



GOALS FOR 2011 - 2016

1. Health, farm safety and injury prevention
2. Supporting entry into agricultural careers and retirement from careers in agriculture
3. Access to information
4. A supportive policy-making environment for income security
5. Harmonizing governance structure with the Union des producteurs agricole (UPA)
6. Financial stability and independence



THEME 1:

HEALTH, FARM SAFETY AND INJURY PREVENTION

Goal Statement

Farm owners, operators, family, members, employees and volunteers assessing the health risks and injury hazards on their farms, taking preventive actions, and better responding when accidents occur

Performance Indicators

- Increased number of publications on subject tailored to constituency
- Increase in number of English-speaking people entering careers in agriculture in Quebec
- Attendance at events focused on topic
- Partnerships with organizations like FarmStart, Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council
- Number trained in first-aid

Activities

- QFA organized seminars, information sessions, school presentations, etc.
- Articles in *The Advocate* or QFA produced publications
- Joint publications with C.S.S.T. and/or UPA
- Presentations at QFA annual general meeting
- Resources distributed at farm shows, etc.
- Active involvement with CSA technical committee on farm machinery
- Active involvement with Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) and Prairie Agricultural Management Institute (PAMI)



THEME 2:

SUPPORTING ENTRY INTO AGRICULTURAL CAREERS AND RETIREMENT FROM CAREERS IN AGRICULTURE

Goal Statement

Anyone wishing to enter an agricultural career, or retire from a career in agriculture has access to information and resources in English

Performance Indicators

- Increased number of publications on subject tailored to constituency
- Increase in number of English-speaking people entering careers in agriculture in Quebec
- Attendance at events focused on topic
- Partnerships with organizations like FarmStart, Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council

Activities

- QFA organized seminars, information sessions, etc.
- Articles in *The Advocate* or QFA-produced publications
- Presentations at QFA annual general meeting
- Resources distributed at farm shows, etc.
- Warren Grapes Agricultural Education Fund



THEME 3:

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Goal Statement

Agricultural producers in Quebec, and anyone else interested in the field, have access to pertinent and comprehensible information in English on a timely basis

Performance Indicators

- Increased number of publications in English available from Quebec-based authorities, i.e. Provincial government, UPA and its related federations, C.S.S.T., etc.
- Number of complaints from English-speaking producers in Quebec; decision makers and key managers aware of community's information needs
- Results of QFA surveys conducted with UPA and QFA members, as well as 4-H members
- Increase in number of clients and volume of work undertaken by QFA's translation service

Activities

- QFA advocacy with provincial government agencies, C.S.S.T., UPA, ATQ, CASA, etc.
- Information columns appear on regular basis in *The Quebec Farmers' Advocate*
- English content on websites of MAPAQ, UPA, ATQ, La Financiere Agricoles du Quebec, QFA, etc.
- QFA translation services
- Resources distributed at farm shows, etc.



THEME 4:

A SUPPORTIVE POLICY-MAKING ENVIRONMENT FOR INCOME SECURITY

Goal Statement

Agricultural producers in Quebec have income security during their working years and in retirement

Performance Indicators

- Numbers of meetings where QFA is represented
- Results of QFA surveys conducted with UPA and QFA members, as well as 4-H members
- Improved financial management skills by Quebec farmers and retirees
- Stable ASRA programs meeting producers' needs

Activities

- QFA representatives actively participate in UPA meetings of conseil general, Table des presidents, Tables des secretaures, Tables des presidents et secretaires, meetings of specialized and regional federations, etc. QFA representatives participate in UPA general congress in Quebec City
- Financial management courses offered at post-secondary agricultural programs
- QFA engages in letter writing campaigns to parliamentarians, etc.
- QFA is an active member of the Quebec Community Groups Network, Quebec Community Newspapers Association, Canadian Newspaper Publishers Association, etc.



THEME 5:

HARMONIZING GOVERNANCE WITH UNION DES PRODUCTEURS AGRICOLE (UPA)

Goal Statement

QFA and UPA work effectively and efficiently together

Performance Indicators

- QFA representatives participating actively at all levels within the UPA structure
- QFA and UPA policy positions are in synchronicity

Activities

- QFA governance reviewed and revised to harmonize with evolving structure of UPA
- UPA supporting QFA in communications
- UPA advocates for QFA member needs
- QFA actively participates in UPA consultation and policy development framework



THEME 6:

FINANCIAL STABILITY AND INDEPENDENCE

Goal Statement

QFA has broad funding base and financial resources to carry out its mandate

Performance Indicators

- Increased revenues from memberships, translation services, *The Quebec Farmers' Advocate*, etc.
- Increase in donations to The Warren Grapes Agricultural Education Fund
- Multi-year program funding approved by Canadian Heritage
- Continued collaboration on *UPA Highlights*
- Expanded staffing and benefits

Activities

- Expand translation services managed by the QFA
- Publish expanded issues of *The Quebec Farmers' Advocate*
- Revise terms of reference of The Warren Grapes Agricultural Education Fund and manage expansion
- Apply for multi-year program funding and project support from Canadian Heritage
- Expand member recruitment activities
- Sales of QFA clothing, accounting books, etc.



Is anything missing?

Yes ___ No ___



Note: Board approval is required to proceed

Thank you!

2011 – 2016 STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

QFA:

*Cultivating a
sustainable
future
serving
the English-
speaking
agricultural
community
of rural
Quebec*



