

THE GLEANER

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

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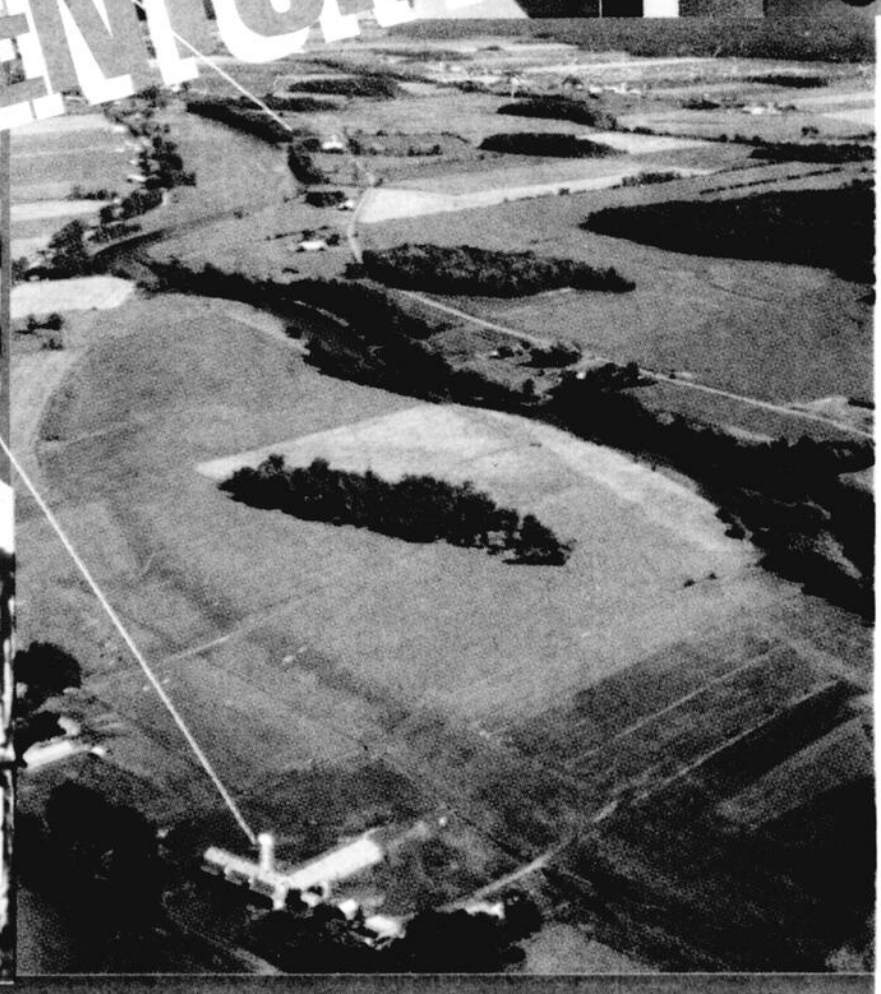
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Big-bale bagged hay new trend in Valley

Valerie Furcall
THE GLEANER

"Baleage," plump round bales of haylage tightly bound in plastic wrap, has become a fashion statement of the local farming community, as many Chateauguy Valley farmers now put some up every season.

Farmers have the choice of processing air-cured hay into big round bales, or, if the weather is unsettled, to bagging wet hay with a moisture content of between 55 and 60 percent. Bagging-style options include sausage-link or individual marshmallow-shaped balls, and units average from 900 to 1,000 pounds.

Round bales became common locally three to four years ago, and two seasons ago when there was an excess crop, many farmers chose to big-bale the late cut and feed it out early rather than see it wasted.

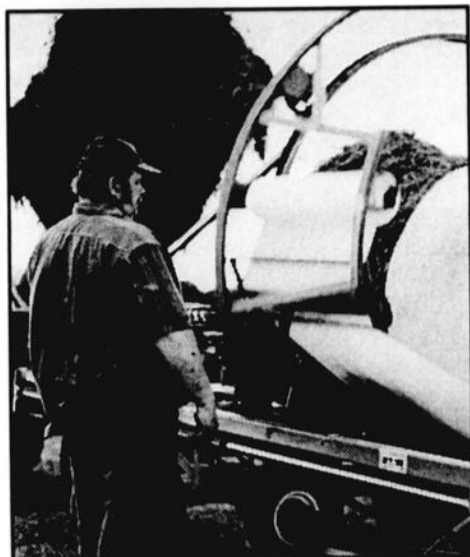
No one would pass over an unfilled silo to store their haylage, but being able to make balage gives farmers another option, explained Hinchinbrooke dairy farmer Lorne McNaughton, one of a half-dozen people offering a custom baling service.

Better quality, less work

Balage is a high-quality feed with more fiber, has longer stems which keeps cows chewing longer for better digestion, is a labor-saver for farmers and can be fed in conventional tie-up dairy barns. (Beef farmers generally have free-stall and group feeding stations, while dairy cows are contained in two long rows of stalls, either head to head or tail to tail.)

St-Malachie dairy farmer Alex McCaig says balage is perfect for outside feeding in the fall, saves on his labor, and the cows like the long stems better than traditional small-bale hay which have sharp stem edges from the knife bar.

There are no disadvantages to the round bales, he says. "Even if there was extra storage in my barn, I'd still put up the third-cut alfalfa this way."



St-Malachie's Alex McCaig checking the bagging equipment as custom-baler Lorne McNaughton was making bales. (Photo: V.F.)

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Blue-flowered plant new alternative cash crop for Valley farmers

Valerie Furcall
THE GLEANER

Expect to see many more Chateauguy Valley fields planted with those pretty blue flowering plants, as flax production becomes a serious crop choice for the Suroit region.

In 1995 and 1996, flax was grown experimentally in Haut-St-Laurent for Gilflax (part of a Hong-Kong based consortium, Gilbert Holdings) by five farmers: Steven Lalonde and Stanley Lalonde of St-Malachie, Stanley Reid of Godmanchester, Roger Quenneville of St-Anicet and Jacques Machabee of St-Jean-Chrysostome each grew six hectares for the feasibility study supported by the federal and provincial agriculture ministries. Agronome Louis Robert of the Quebec Agriculture ministry's Ste-Martine office compiled the results for the provincial government.

Last year, based upon the success of these trials, the company expanded its production to 400 hectares, which generat-



Flax plants flower in July. (Photo: L. Lalonde)

ed 2,000 tonnes. The results more than convinced the Gilflax that southwest Quebec was an ideal flax-growing region when the average production per hectare was six tonnes. Roger Quenneville topped the harvest with 8.5 tonnes/ha.

Good potential

Steven Lalonde says flax is a viable cash

crop with a strong potential in the Valley. Plants can tolerate changeable weather (as seen in last three years: cold, wet and dry periods); withstand a light frost of minus-4 to -5 degrees Celsius, and pick themselves back up if they're lodged, even at a meter high.

"Prepare the soil, sow the field, maybe

spray, and then watch them grow," Lalonde said.

Flax is relatively inexpensive to grow (little or no herbicide spraying and usually no fertilization) and requires much less labor than corn, for example, he explained, adding that one farmer figured he made more money from growing flax than corn, when he calculated in harvest and drying costs.

Long flax fibers are processed and woven into linen-cloth, short fibers are made into cigarette and currency paper, seeds are used in animal feeds and waste fiber goes into animal bedding.

To prevent disease, flax should be on a five-year rotation, switched to a new field after the second year.

The tricky part is trying to determine when to sow (soil temperature is important), and the depth must be precise: 1/2 to 3/4 inch deep. Soil type should be clay loam; heavy or sandy soils aren't suitable for flax.

— (VF/HT)

Fertilization Clubs springing up to protect environment

Crop and livestock producers are being encouraged by the Quebec government to join fertilization clubs, which hire their own agronomists to serve from 25 to 40 farms.

An agronomist helps each member decide upon the best fertilization rate and time of application.

While the annual deadline to spread manure remains October 1, a professional agronomist can recommend otherwise.

When to spread

This policy forces livestock producers with light soils to spread their manure in the spring, when chances of run-off are minimal.

On heavy clay soils like those found commonly in the Chateauguy Valley, spreading manure in early spring can lead to soil compaction. An agronomist can therefore recommend manure application in the fall as long as the soil is heavy in clay and its nutrient absorption is high, provided the application is light and the soil is not already rich in nutrients.

Research

Research at MacDonald Campus of McGill University in Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue has demonstrated that when liquid manure is applied on clay soils, the nutrient uptake by corn or cereals is just as efficient, whether the manure is applied late in the fall or in the spring.

Nutrient efficiency drops when liquid manure is applied in late summer or early fall because the soils are still warm enough to support nutrient transformation.

Manure

Solid manure contains more organic

nutrients requiring some decomposition before becoming available to plants. With solid manure, the plants perform better

when the manure is spread in late summer or fall, if they're growing on clay soils.

— Suzelle Barrington,

Agricultural Engineer and Associate Professor at McGill University.

(VF)

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Centenarian McIntosh tree thriving in Franklin orchard

Valerie Furcall
THE GLEANER

One of the oldest, if not the most aged still-bearing McIntosh apple tree in Canada has its roots firmly planted in Chateauguay Valley soil, having taken root between 115 and 120 years ago on the slope of Covey Hill in the Franklin area.

One of 3,000 trees representing 20 varieties in the multi-generation Cassidy Orchard on Rte. 202, now owned by Christine Droulers and Jakob Weibel and their family, the McIntosh survived "the Great Ice Storm" of January '98, losing only one big branch.

"The tree is strong and should recover nicely from this injury and produce again this year and in the coming ones," said Christine Droulers.

Last year, a fruit nurseryman from Durham specializing in heritage apple varieties snipped some branches for grafting, along with other old varieties (Wolf River, Duchess and St. Lawrence) not common anymore since the standard commercial varieties took over the marketplace. In three years, the fruits of this old McIntosh type should be borne.

The ice storm was not so kind to other fruit trees in their orchard: some 50 pear trees were severely damaged, while

maybe only a couple of the 15 plum trees will live.

After buying the orchard five years ago, Christine Droulers and Jakob Weibel continue to promote the pick-your-own apples business, which former owner, Charles Cassidy Jr., set up in the 1960s.

Apples bring tourists

Many local apple growers have decided a good way to get the crop harvested and sold in one transaction is through "you-pick" operations.

These orchard-owners take the chore of picking apples and spin it into a family-style outing, promising an enjoyable day in the crisp fall air, when picnicking and meandering through the fruit groves allows all members of the family to pluck their choices from the trees.

Add-on activities at some orchards include wagon rides through the orchards, horse rides, nature walks, a petting zoo of sociable farm animals and fowl, and playgrounds for children.

Roadside stands featuring fresh garden produce, jams, preserves and jellies homemade at the farm, fresh-pressed apple cider, honey and maple products, along with artisan wares, have boosted the Valley's image as a prime agro-tourism region.



This centenarian McIntosh tree (background) photographed last September, is a centrepiece at Franklin's Vergers Cassidy, now owned by (l-r) Christine Droulers, Jakob Weibel, who with their family, son Jean-Maurice, daughter H  l  ne (on "Pauline" the horse) with help from Christine's father Fran  ois Droulers, operate a pick-your-own apples business. Absent from photo is a younger son, Dimitri. (Photo: V.F.)

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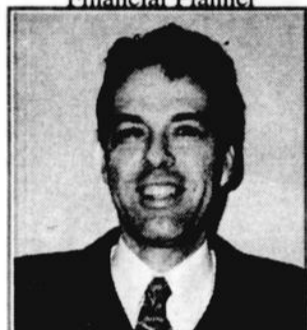
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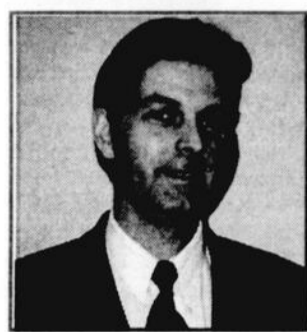
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Manure storage facilities a must by law for most farms, beginning this year

Simply: if it poops, there'll need to be storage for it, the Quebec government says.

On July 3, 1997, Quebec's Environment and Wildlife Ministry revamped its water pollution laws for agricultural operations and made it mandatory for most livestock operations to build manure storage facilities by 2001.

Acquired rights on pre-1981 existing operations were removed and additionally, farmers must now develop fertilization plans to control the use of nutrients (manure), especially phosphorous, being spread on their fields.

Only those farmers who obtained a certificate of authorization between 1981 and 1997 can remain with a 200-day pit, as long as they do not enlarge their operation.

Under the old regulations that came into effect in June 1981, a livestock operation did not have to build a manure storage facility unless the herd size was increased, the barn was enlarged, or a new one was built. The right to operate without a manure storage facility was called an acquired-right.

New legislation

The new legislation changes all this. To be eligible for the Quebec Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries' subsidy, operations with 100 animal units and over must build a facility in 1998.

For operations of 75 to 100 animal units, the structure must be built in 1999; for 50 to 75 animals, by 2000; for less than 50 animals, by 2001.

Cattle are counted as one unit per manure dairy or beef animal; a yearling is .5 animal units and one animal under a year old is .2 units.

Swine are counted as one unit equals four sows, 25 weaned hogs or 5 grower hogs.

Exemptions

Farms exempted from building a manure storage facilities are those on solid-manure management systems, with less than 50 animal units (dairy herd of 35 cows or less, including the young stock), without swine, and located more than 150 metres from any municipal ditch or road ditch.

This distance of 150 m is reduced to 30 m when the ground under the manure pile or the barn slopes away from a ditch. There is no need to build a manure storage facility on farms with fewer than 35 animal units (less than 25 cows), that uses a solid manure management system, does not have swine and is located at more than 75 m from all water course and 30 m from all farm ditches.

All cattle operations with less than 25 animal units are allowed to store their manure behind the barn so long as they respect the aforementioned distances. If

these distances are not possible, the manure can be piled in the field at 100 m from any lake or river and 30 m from any ditch.

Field storage

The manure from all cattle housed on bedding packs can be stored in the field as long as the piles are staked at a distance of 30 m from any ditch and 150 m from any lake or river. When livestock is housed on bedding, the floor of the building does not have to be built of concrete.

See STORAGE page 7

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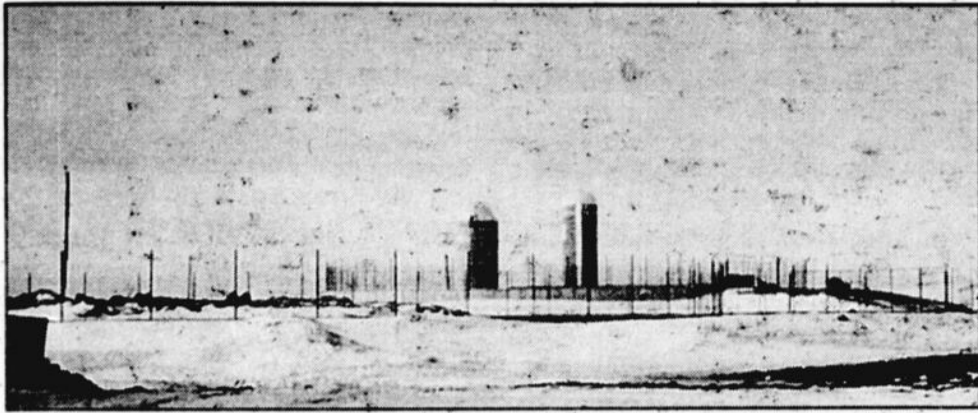
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STORAGE... from page 6



Dairy farmer Pierre Primeau of St-Urbain last fall installed a 90-foot-diameter solid-manure pit, and an adjacent 80-foot-diameter liquid pit to catch and store run-off. (Photo: S.Barrington)

All livestock operations with less than 10 head of cattle or hogs on a liquid manure system, or those with fewer than 30 head of cattle, camel, horse or ostrich on solid manure, and those with fewer than 50 head of goats and sheep on solid manure do not have to build facilities.

The facility

All manure storage facilities must have a capacity of 250 days. Only manure, bedding, wash water from livestock operations, milkhouse wastewater and rainfall may be stored in the facility.

Municipal sludge, septic tank waste water, milk factory whey and waste water and food-processing waste water may not be stored.

This is clearly outlawed under the new regulations.

Human waste is to be kept out of animal manure storage facilities to control the propagation of human diseases, whereas, food processing wastes generally activate the fermentation process of manure and make the smell worse than its normal bad odor.

All rainfall running off exercise yards for livestock must be collected and stored with the herd's manure. The definition of a yard is a surface when livestock are kept at a density exceeding 5 kg per square meter of surface area. This corresponds to a surface area of more than 1.0 ha (2.5 acres) for 85 dairy cows, weighing 600 kg or for 100 beef heads weighing 500 kg

A livestock operation is one where all buildings are located within 150 m of each other.

For example, if a beef producer has two buildings each holding 100 head and separated by a distance of 100 m (330 feet), both buildings are considered one operation. If these two buildings were separated by 200 m (660 feet), then they would be considered as two separate units.

— Suzelle Barrington,
Agricultural Engineer and Associate professor at McGill University

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A St-Anicet family farm wins Quebec award for advances

The Chateauguay Valley's reputation as an exceptional agricultural region has become known nationally through its farmers who've excelled on the provincial and national levels.

St-Anicet's Chatrac Farm, owned by Sylvain Gascon and France Brunet, was the Quebec winner in the Outstanding Young Farmers of Canada competition. Last November, the couple were invited to the national finals held in Toronto during the Royal Winter Fair.

Local runners-up at the competition's provincial level were France Droulers and Justin Nieuwenhof of Ste-Agnes-de-Dundee and Daniel Montpetit and Jane Nieuwenhof of St-Louis-de-Gonzague.

Big dreams and determination have enabled the St-Anicet couple, who are also raising five children, to develop a modest farm on *chemin des Prairies* into one which would warrant an award.

Today the farm produces 500,000 litres of milk annually from their 50 Holstein cows and cultivate 102 acres, representing a major expansion from what existed the winter of 1983-84 when they bought it from her parents.

Getting started

Their first big obstacle: the *Office du crédit agricole du Québec* refused to finance the purchase, saying the farm was too small, too old and the price was too high. After consulting a local agronomer, they decided to improve herd productivity and buy more quota. This enabled them to rent the farm in August.

They started with 23 grade-cows, 12 heifers, milking equipment and milk quota of 3,523 kilos of butter fat, with production of 530 litres every two days. After

a 13-month trial period, they purchased their farm September 5, 1985.

Sylvain alone owned the farm until 1990 until France qualified for Farm Credit by passing an intensive six-month professional training program in dairy production.

Renovations

Building renovations included trans-

forming a piggery into a cow stable and recovering its roof. They installed a grinder in their grain silo and tile-drained some acreage.

Over 1993-94, they effected phase 2, enlarging their dairy barn by 50 feet to tie

See ST-ANICET page 9



France Brunet and Sylvain Gascon, owners of La Ferme Chatrac, 1997 Quebec winners of the Outstanding Young Farmers Award. (Photo: HT)

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ST-ANICET... from page 8

up 44 cows. They made three group calf pens and installed automatic feeders and a hay-dryer.

They built a 40 x 64 solar free-stall barn, an 18 x 60-foot silo and a manure pit with a 86 foot diameter.

By 1996, their investments had begun to pay off. An increase in milk production meant buying more quota.

The couple don't restrict their interests to farming. France Brunet is a St-Anicet municipal councillor, a member of the Provisory Committee of Women in Agriculture, the AFEAS, and the St-Anicet school committee, and a local theatre group, *P'tit théâtre des cageux*.

Sylvain Gascon is active in the St-Anicet UPA syndicate, a founding member and administrator of the *syndicat de relève agricole de l'UPA St-Jean/Valleyfield*, and the president of the local milk producers' syndicate.

We want to be involved because it's personally enriching, we make new friends and life becomes even more enjoyable, they explained. Spending time with their children, Christine, 14, Sophie, 12, Lucie, 10, Félix, eight, and Charles, five, also occupies much of their time.

Credit for a large part of their personal success must go to professionals such as agronomes, veterinarians, MAPAQ employees and Farm Credit personnel.

(HT/VF)

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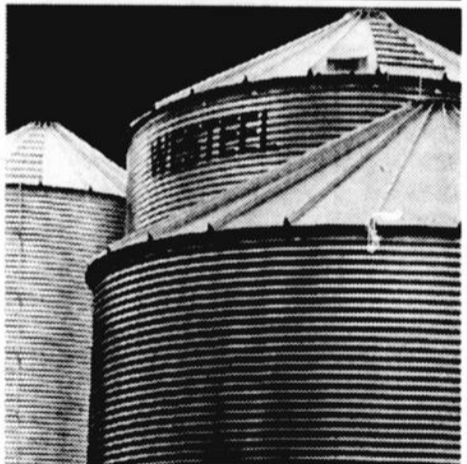
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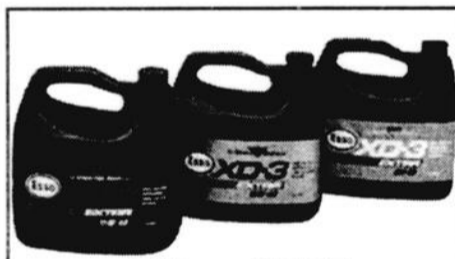
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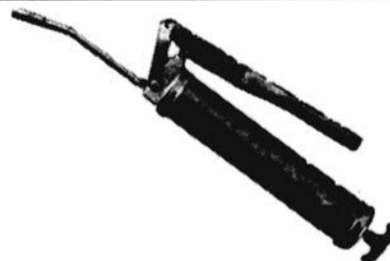
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Nothing beats beef for its ability to taste like . . . deer?

The world's oldest vocation (agriculture, of course) has prevailed through the millenniums, and farmers have endured.

Undaunted, they continue to rally even when faced with marketing boards, trade and tariff agreements, pitiful prices and contrary consumers.

Coping with a fickle marketplace means being able to stand tough and not be "moo-ed" over, agree beef farmers who've seen wholesale prices the last few years sink to levels reminiscent of the 1970s.

Consider this: deer meat (which may only be sold commercially if a butcher shop has a special license) sells at \$7 to \$10 a pound for better cuts, according to St-Stanislas abattoir Boucherie Himbeault.

What might a beef-producer do to make his produce a hotly-sought-after commodity?

What do do?

This whole issue has been addressed, as evidenced in the following reprinted article, "If you like wild game, here's . . ."

"In light of current efforts to evaluate tools to hasten the rate of genetic change for beef quality and tenderness, W.T. Howard, University of Wisconsin, provided the following account of 'How To Make Beef Taste Like Venison.' Those of you who consistently fail in your pursuit of the illusive white tail [deer] may want to pay particular attention.

"Controversy has long raged about the relative quality of venison and beef as gourmet foods. Some people say that venison is tough, with strong 'wild' taste. Others insist that venison is tender and that its flavor is delicate. The UW Foods Research Department recently conducted a taste test to determine the truth of these conflicting assertions.

"First, a high choice Holstein steer was led into a swamp a half mile from the nearest road, then shot several times. After some of the entrails were removed, the carcass was dragged over rocks, logs, through mud and dust, thrown into a pickup box and transported through rain and snow 100 miles before being hung out in the sun for 10 days.

"After that, it was lugged to the garage, where it was skinned and rolled round on the floor for a while. Strict sanitary precautions were observed throughout this test, within the limitations of the butchering environment. For instance, dogs and cats were allowed to sniff at the steer carcass, but were chased out of the garage if they attempted to lick the carcass, bite chunks out of it, or sit on the work bench.

"Next, the steer was dragged into the house and down the basement steps. Half a dozen inexperienced but enthusiastic people worked on it with meat saws, cleavers and dull knives. The result was 375 pounds of soup bones, four bushels of meat scraps and a couple of steaks that were an eighth of an inch thick on one side and an inch and

a half on the other.

"The steaks were fried in a skillet of rancid bacon grease, along with three pounds of onions. After two hours of frying, the contents of the skillet were served on three blindfolded taste panel volunteers.

"Everyone of the members of the panel thought it was venison. One of the volunteers even said it tasted exactly like the venison he had eaten at hunting camps for the past 27 years. The results of this trial showed conclusively that

there is no difference between the taste of beef and venison.

"Many people strongly believe venison tastes best when well-seasoned. It is STRONGLY suggested that this report also be taken with a bit of salt."

The article, contributed by Godmanchester's George Robb, was taken from the Beef Improvement Association newsletter, and reprinted last fall in the "Canadian Hereford Digest."

(V.F.)

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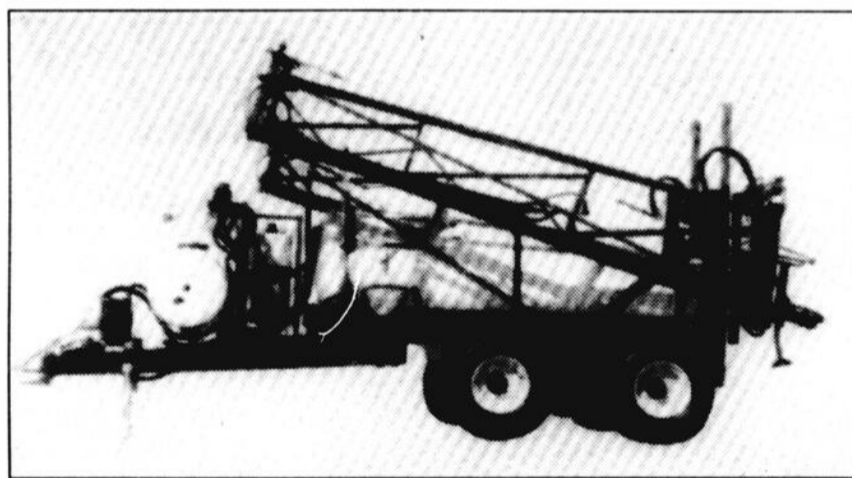
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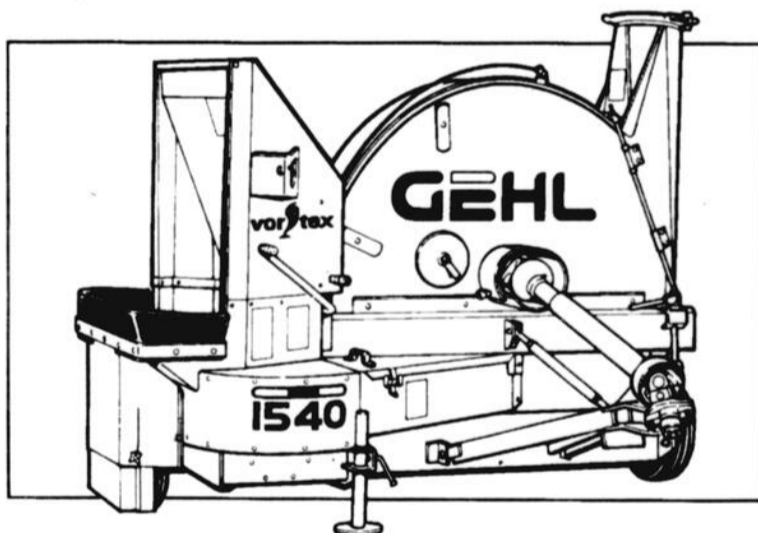


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Field fertilization plan mandatory to control over-use

Chateauguay Valley farmland is rich and fertile, in fact almost too much in one basic element — phosphorous — so now Quebec's Environment and Wildlife Ministry is requiring many farmers to have fertilization plans for their fields.

Over the past 25 years, with the government's help and promotional programs to increase crop yields, phosphorus levels have increased from 30 to 50 kilograms per hectare to 150 to 250 kg/ka.

In the 1970s, it was important to augment phosphorous levels in soil to increase the availability of this nutrient. Then, agronomists thought that phosphorous was so immobile that soil would never reach its saturation point.

In 1995, scientists demonstrated that at levels of 250 kg/ha and higher, phosphorous starts to move into the ground-water as soil reaches saturation.

High levels of phosphorous in soil have been associated with the growth of algae and vegetation in rivers. To stop this proliferation, the ministry wants crop-growers to limit fertilization to only what plants need.

Limited application

In order to limit phosphorous application on cropped land, farms must consult a professional agronomist to develop a fertilization plan.

The ministry has imposed some specific requirements in its new bylaw with respect to spreading manure and fertilizer on cropped land.

First: soil on every field must be tested regularly. All soil samples must be analyzed through Mehlich III tests, to establish the availability of phosphorous. This is the most appropriate for Quebec soils, which tend to be more acidic than in other parts of North America.

Nevertheless, some scientists feel that the Mehlich III test can be improved as it might not be accurate enough for precise P fertilization practices.

Fertilization program

The fertilization plan must be produced by a professional agronomist, a crop technologist or by a producer who has received accredited training.

The plan must indicate the amount of manure which will be spread and the rate of application of nitrogen and phosphorous per hectare, on each field.

All crop and livestock producers have to keep a record of their manure and fertilizer applications. The plan must be based on soil tests and manure analyses.

Exemptions

The new regulation requires crop producers to have fertilization plans if they grow:

- 1) 5 ha and more of potatoes;
- 2) 5 ha and more of market crops;
- 3) 15 ha or more of corn silage or grain;
- 4) 25 ha or more of all crops except pastures and grasslands that are not sown in corn or grains intended for fodder.

Livestock operations with fewer than 40 animals do not need a fertilization plan if they manage their manure as solids and if their manure is spread in such a way as to limit nitrogen application to what the crop requires.

The new bylaw specifies the amount of manure applied and these specifications correspond to the manure of 4.13 dairy cows per hectare of corn, for example.

— Suzelle Barrington

Agricultural Engineer and Associate Professor at McGill University.

(V.F.)

Deal with alfalfa winter-kill by reseeding and fertilizing

While some alfalfa may make it through the winter in decent shape, some will most certainly not, says Miner Agricultural Research Institute.

The Chazy, New York-based research facility suggests that farmers should take steps soon to maximize yield and quality of the forage that is left.

Various strategies

"If the grass is what's left from a winter-killed alfalfa-grass stand, make sure there's enough grass left to work with. If not, plant something that will provide summer forage — barley or oats, or a summer annual such as millet or sudangrass. Forage quality won't be as good as alfalfa-grass, but it beats snowballs.

"If there's a decent stand of grass, apply nitrogen as soon as the grass starts to grow this spring. We'd even risk rutting the field

up a bit with the broadcast spreader, especially since you'll probably plow the field up later in the year. ...," according to a report in the Institute's March newsletter.

Recede

Howick Agricultural engineer Suzelle Barrington says: "Reseed. Don't take chances, and do it before May 1. Alfalfa seed needs to be on the field really early for the seeds to germinate."

Once the snow is off the field, even if the ground is still frozen, seed alfalfa four to six pounds per acre directly on top of the ground, she explained.

The problem with ice-coated fields is that the ice lifts up alfalfa roots through frost heaving, and melting ice, especially in low spots, drowns the plants or they stay wet and mildew becomes a problem. (VF)



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Sweet corn, peas and beans prominent as cash crops

Valerie Furcall

Sweet corn, peas and beans production has been a mainstay business for many Valley farmers who for decades have grown vegetables for processing at a Ste-

Martine-based plant.

The cannery, now owned by Les Aliments Carrières, has a significant number of local acres under contract, with its main crop sweet corn.

Last summer, a coupling of weather

conditions and a particular corn variety enabled the company to reach yields of 10-tons per acre, in what a spokesman called an isolated occurrence.

In Quebec, the average sweet corn yield is 5.5 tons per acre, with a few 8 tons off

some fields.

Ormstown-area's Blake Hooker has been under contract since 1984. Last year he planted a total of 70 acres for Carrière. As well, he grows soybeans and grain-corn cash crops and raises a few beef.

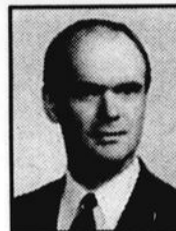


Blake Hooker (left) chatted with Paul Charland (right) who stopped in to watch the sweet corn harvest at Hooker's Rte. 138A farm. (Photo:V.F.)

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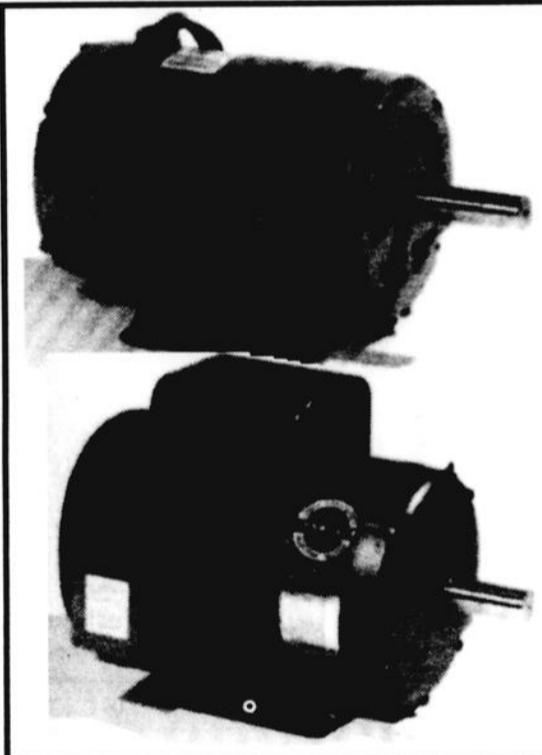
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Financial help available to farmers complying with new regulations

Quebec's Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries has financial help available to all farmers who have to comply with the new regulations.

For manure storage facilities, the subsidy reaches 70 per cent, except for those storing less than 800 square meters of solid manure or 1,000 cubic meters of liquid manure. The subsidy then climbs to 90 per cent. (Volumes this small are produced by herds with less than 35 dairy cows, for example.)

The subsidy for new storage facilities can reach \$30,000 for solid-manure structures and \$20,000 for liquid-manure structures, because it costs more to build solid-manure storage facilities.

For buildings located at more than 150 m from each other, a producer is allowed one subsidy per barn, with \$100,000 the maximum allocated per farm.

For existing facilities with a 200-day capacity, producers may have a grant to build a roof, enlarge their storage facility, or build an additional structure. The subsidy for these farmers may be \$15,000, covering 70 per cent

of the cost.

Systems to treat manure to reduce its volume are subsidized up to 70 per cent, to \$60,000. The system requires Quebec Environment and Wildlife Ministry approval.


Liquid-manure spreading facilities are being subsidized up to 50 per cent, or \$3,000 per farm or group-enterprises.

Fertilization programs are also subsidized when groups of farmers hire their own agronomists. The subsidy covers up to 50 per cent of the salary, or \$500 per producer over a five-year period.

To help agronomists start fertilization clubs, a maximum sum of \$4,000 per club or \$200 per member can be subsidized.


—Suzelle Barrington,
Agricultural Engineer and Associate
Professor at McGill University.

(VF)



Daniel Turp
Beauharnois-Salaberry
member of parliament

Bloc Québécois spokesman on Foreign Affairs



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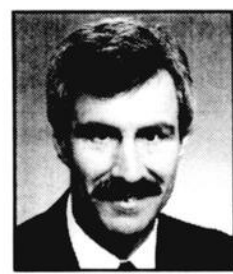
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André Chenail

Lessons from the ice storm.

January 1998 will be long remembered. We now realize how important electricity is in our daily lives. We were not prepared, individually or collectively, to face such a disaster. The events provoked by this ice storm have taught us many lessons.

The first and most important lesson is the unprecedented growth of solidarity. Never before have we seen such great mutual aid. Families, friends and neighbours all pulled together to help one another. This ice storm made us realize that together we can develop extraordinary strength.

The farming community demonstrated the same spirit of solidarity and mutual aid. It was no easy task to run a farming operation without electricity for weeks on end.

The auxiliary generators were put to the test. Lots of courage and co-operation were needed to pull through.

Another major lesson to remember is the delays and inefficiency of our provincial government in helping the affected farmers. Six weeks after the ice storm we were still waiting for a real relief program. The minister of agriculture did not fulfill his responsibilities; he isolated himself in an ivory tower.

In closing, I want to congratulate one and all for the co-operation, solidarity and courage you demonstrated during this ice storm.


I am proud of you all!

André Chenail, M.N.A.
Beauharnois-Huntingdon

14 — FARM SUPPLEMENT — APRIL 1ST 1998

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Cost of milk quotas big investment dairy farmers

"In March, 1997, it cost a Quebec milk producer \$15,350 per kilo of fat per day merely for the right to produce milk," according to a report published about the Canadian dairy industry.

"A kilo of fat per day equals the production of about 1.4 cows. If it is assumed that the annual production of an average cow is 7,000 litres, and that this milk contains about 3.8 per cent fat, a conversion calculation (kg/litre;day/year), means that a producer must deposit \$11,200 in the

'quota' kitty before being able to milk a cow.

"Obviously, the cost of this quota is amortized over several years since the quota remains the property of the producer until he or she transfers or sells it. However, this quota is subject to market fluctuations. In fact, it is difficult to know what it will be worth in five or ten years.

"Given that the average annual income per cow is around \$3,850 (7,000 litres at \$55/100 litres), the producer must milk a

cow for three years before the gross income equals the amount spent to purchase quota.

"The producer still has to cover other production costs, such as food, milking equipment, veterinary care etc. .

"And the cost of the cow hasn't even been taken into account," the report continued.

Supply management system

The Canadian dairy industry is governed

by a supply management system whereby each Canadian province is given a volume to produce, or a quota. Adjusted annually according to consumption, this volume is established on a historical basis. This provincial quota is then divided among the producers.

A farmer who gets into dairy production or who simply wants to increase production must, through an auction system or direct sale, obtain a quota or a right to produce, the report explained. (VF)

Woodlot owners should not rush to cut down ice-damaged trees

Owners of woodlots damaged in January's ice storm shouldn't rush madly out to cut down or prune back their trees.

This is the word from the UPA *Syndicat des Producteurs de Bois de la Région de Montréal*, which is currently evaluating damages to commercial woodlots before deciding what if any compensation will be paid for damages.

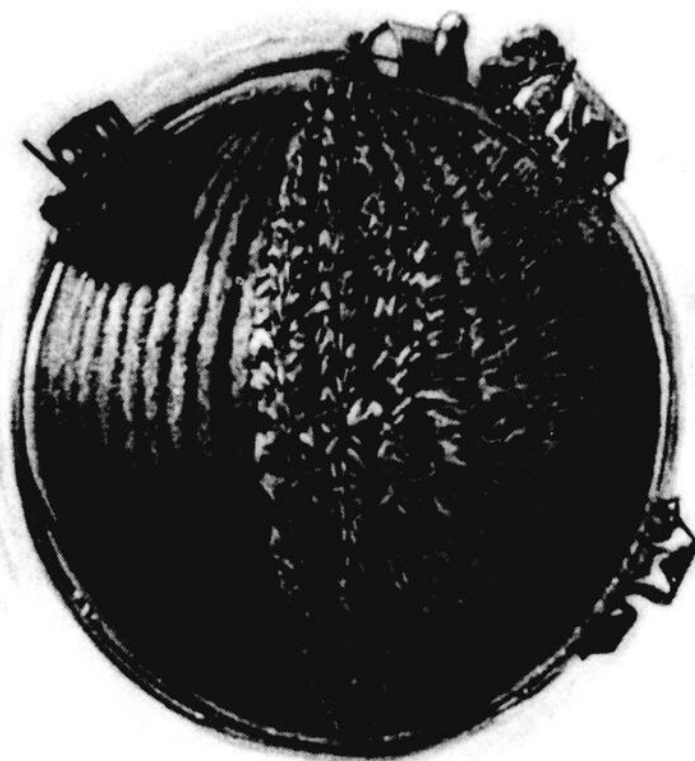
In the meantime, producers are warned to check carefully before signing any contracts or authorizing work in the bush. Those thinking of getting work done may call Michel Martin at (514)679-0530 for advice and sample contracts for cutting rights.

The producer's syndicate is also contacting industries using wood in an attempt to find more extensive markets for the anticipated glut of wood on this year's market.

Producers are warned to be on the lookout for profiteers who may be making promises about compensation or reimbursement of their charges.

"For the moment, no decision has been made about any kind of damage compensation," Michel Martin stressed.

The Natural Resources ministry has set up a telephone information service for woodlot owners needing technical information. Montréal producers can 1-888-768-2647. (J.T.)



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