For bulletins

**Living together in harmony in the Montérégie’s agricultural zone**

**“OUR COUNTRYSIDE: A LIVING SPACE TO SHARE”**

*An initiative by the Montérégie UPA, 13 RCMs, and Greater Longueuil, with support from the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food (MAPAQ)*

**Soil health**

Soil is the most precious asset for farmers and the main component for their work. This is why farmers are increasingly adopting agri-environmental practices. They protect the soil by maintaining a composition rich in organic matter and nutrients, avoiding wind and water erosion, taking care not to damage the soil with agricultural machinery, and preventing soil compaction. Healthy soil is fertile and therefore productive, but it also plays an essential role in the water cycle, in purification, in the degradation of pollutants, in supporting biodiversity, and in reducing greenhouse gases. (Statistics on soil’s capacity to retain water, host microorganisms, etc.)

To maintain or improve soil health in the fields, farmers use a number of practices in addition to fertilization: crop rotation is preferred (this means not cultivating the same crop in the same field every year), ground-cover plants are used to prevent erosion and feed the soil, direct-seeding eliminates tillage, and crop residues are left behind to fertilize the soil… The goal is to keep the soil healthy so that what is growing is nourished and can grow to nourish us in turn. (Statistics on the progress of these agri-environmental practices in Québec or in the Montérégie.)

*A new theme will be introduced in your next bulletin.*