

'Harmonious cohabitation' encourages understanding

A campaign to inform the population of the efforts made by farmers to protect the precious shared resource of water, essential for all and indispensable for agriculture, has been launched by the Montérégie federation of the Union des Producteurs Agricoles (FUPAM) and partners.

The federation, along with 13 MRCs and greater Longueuil, wants to let the public know that agricultural producers are implementing techniques to limit the waste and impact of their activities. The outreach initiative, designed to raise awareness about "harmonious cohabitation" in agricultural areas, was undertaken with financial support from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ).

A recent press release from the "Un Milieu de vie à partager" campaign says that agricultural businesses that use water are developing practices to protect our most essential resource.

Producers are employing preservation-conscious methods such as the watering of plants at ground level, and the use of efficient irrigation systems.

To prevent water from running off the fields and removing areas of soil, practices are adopted to ensure that water filters slowly into the ground. Protecting aquatic environments is also a priority for farmers, who pay particular attention to areas of erosion like the banks of streams and rivers. Such measures include "des bandes riveraines," strips of land between the fields and the waterways that are left uncultivated. These areas play an important role in fighting erosion, in addition to forming a buffer zone between fields and bodies of water.

The campaign further points out that all livestock production facilities are equipped with state-of-the-art industrial septic systems to enable them to thoroughly manage natural

fertilizers. Additionally, alternative pest-management methods that are integrated and sustainable — such as using natural insect predators — reduce the use of fertilizers and pesticides.

There are many effective mitigation measures being taken by farmers to ensure sustainable agriculture, in collaboration with government policies that are in place for the protection, restoration, and cleaning of waterways and ditches.

The aim of the "harmonious cohabitation" project is to promote collaboration and dialogue between agricultural producers and other residents of the region. The various partners want to increase understanding of agricultural work, demystify the

unknowns, and ease conflict. The initiators of this project consider it important to highlight the region's agricultural areas as multifunctional: places of life, work, and leisure.

Local partners in the project are the MRCs of Beauharnois-Salaberry, Haut-Saint-Laurent, and les Jardins-de-Napierville, as well as the Federation of UPA de la Montérégie (FUPAM) and the Regional Directorate of the Montérégie region of MAPAQ. These organizations are pooling their resources and efforts to develop strategies and tools to ensure regional awareness of the campaign, which has been funded by MAPAQ as part of the Territories: bio-food priorities program. The project will continue until October 2021. (RP)

Farmers working diligently to reduce pesticide use

As part of the 'Our Countryside: A Living Space to Share' initiative to promote harmonious cohabitation in agricultural areas, the Montérégie federation of the Union des Producteurs Agricoles (FUPAM) and partners are raising awareness about the use of pesticides on family farms.

According to the UPA, farmers in general are aware of the issues surrounding pesticides and are working to reduce their usage. Quebec has one of the lowest levels of pesticide use in the world, at 2.9 kg per hectare. Studies have also shown that over a 10-year period (2006-2017), the province recorded a 14 per cent reduction in the amount of pesticides applied.

The campaign highlights that all products are previously authorized by government agencies. Health

Canada has established strict and precise quantitative limits on the trace amounts of pesticides that can be found on food; these limits are set at 100 to 3,000 times lower than the established safety threshold.

The use of pesticides is highly regulated and, in some cases, requires the supervision of an agronomist. Regulations also govern the distances between pesticide application sites and buildings, waterways and water withdrawal sites.

The awareness campaign also points out that family farms are now turning to alternative prevention, monitoring and intervention techniques, such as screening, crop rotation, and integrated management systems, which allow for a significant reduction in pesticide use. (SR)

Photo of the Week, March 24, 2021



PHOTO Katie Martin

This time of year is busy for many farms, as newborns arrive or hatch across the Valley. This beautiful photo by Katie Martin exemplifies perfectly the compassion and dedication our farmers feel towards their animals. This calf, born at the Martin Farm in Ormstown, was unwell at birth; there were concerns he would not survive. He was nursed back to health by Katie's father, Bill Martin; and now "Buddy," as he has been christened, is doing just fine.

If you would like to see your photo featured as our "Photo of the Week," please submit it to info@the-gleaner.com.



**"OUR COUNTRYSIDE:
A LIVING SPACE TO SHARE"**

Water is essential for life and indispensable for agriculture!

Therefore, farmers use techniques to reduce waste, avoid water pollution risks due to runoff, and prevent the erosion of their fields. What is at stake is the protection of aquatic environments, the preservation of water supplies, and the future of agriculture and our food.

