
FAIRE autrement MAINTENANT

AGRICULTURE

As in many other sectors of our economy and society, agriculture is undergoing major changes. The 21st-century Quebec agricultural community faces many challenges: the necessary transition to sustainable development; speculators appropriating farm-land; keeping the new generation of farmers on the land; and just being creative and innovative in a competitive economy.

Agriculture is more essential to life than many other economic activities. Our farmers feed us. We have to recognize this reality and support farmers' activities more than we have in recent years.

The NDPQ is addressing the major issues facing agriculture today:

- ✓ Recognizing the role of agriculture and forestry in protecting the environment
- ✓ Opposition to land-grabbing and for taxes based on the economic situation
- ✓ Defending and modernizing supply management
- ✓ Help to young farmers
- ✓ Greater recognition of agricultural workers and defending their rights
- ✓ Linking agricultural production to food security
- ✓ Investing in agricultural businesses and assuring financial security: Supporting of alternative agriculture models
- ✓ Developing urban agriculture

OUR COMMITMENTS

Recognizing the role of agriculture and forestry in protecting the environment

- We need to create a network of autonomous regional agricultural agencies to:
 - Organize dialogue at the local level between farmers, environmentalist organizations, municipal and provincial authorities and local economic actors
 - Offer producers advice-training-education services on sustainable investments, pest control, land and water conservation, irrigation adapted to climatic changes
 - Manage increased acreage under cultivation in a way that corresponds to local needs and constraints
 - Promote new sustainable agriculture models

- Bring financing of government-funded research up to the OECD level and encourage research on:
 - alternative agricultural models
 - biological pest-control
 - small-scale production units and short production chains
- Re-evaluate and modernize environmental regulations applying to agriculture in the light of scientific advances and improved practices focusing on continuous improvement
- Establish a procedure to share risks and support for farmers who commit themselves to the transition to alternative agriculture (gaining accreditation, permaculture, reducing livestock herd sizes, animal well-being).

Opposition to land-grabbing and for taxes based on the economic situation

- Impose a moratorium to evaluate the current situation of speculative land-grabbing by buyers who are not from the agricultural community; eventually limit for the next five years land purchases to 100 hectares per legal entity
- Review the parameters of the agricultural tax credit program (PCTFA from its French initials), particularly its annual budget ceiling, in the context of rising land values to limit the proportion of taxes to be paid by farmers
- Set up, within the framework of municipal taxation, a method to control taxes as well as taxes on agricultural land and private forests
- End making reimbursement of land taxes subject to income tax.

Defending and modernizing supply management

- Apply pressure on Ottawa to guarantee maintaining the supply management system without any concessions in the framework of NAFTA re-negotiations
- Develop and diversify international trade
- Compensate at 100% any losses resulting from Canada's participation in the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)
- Protect agricultural workers and ensure that these jobs that depend on keeping the supply-system are maintained
- Modernize the allocation of quotas in a more egalitarian way in order to encourage the develop and maintenance of small farming units and new production units
- Create a mechanism to support producers and control prices, in order to ensure a just price paid to producers by food-processors, covering the costs of exploitation and guaranteeing producers a minimum profit.

Help to young farmers

- Make it easier for the young farmers to farm by increasing funding by the *Fonds d'investissement pour la relève agricole* (FIRA) and making the criteria more flexible, particularly for foreign university graduates

- Subsidize new economic activities (or transformation of existing activities) by young farmers at the end of their academic training, activities modeled on alternative agriculture.
- Provide financial support for agricultural activities by young Quebecers by developing a low interest, extended-repayment credit instrument, starting with a repayment holiday
- Re-assess current federal laws and regulations respecting the transfer of agricultural land to non-agricultural activities in order to facilitate and promote the transfer of land to a family-member who wishes to take it on.

Greater recognition of agricultural workers and defending their rights

- At the federal level, look for ways to facilitate the rapid delivery of work permits for agricultural workers, particularly those with previous work experience in Canada
- Guarantee that labour law is truly respected for these workers, as much as for all Quebec citizens
- Create a fund to support training in new technologies – particularly those applicable to horticulture – and available to agricultural workers (including foreign workers).
- Develop a programme of income security spread over a number of years to deal with the impact of rapid increase in the minimum wage on agricultural enterprises.

Linking agricultural production to food security

- Encourage shortening commodity chains for local farmers by supporting on-site product processing
- Include food banks in the chain to make direct collection easier of products that food-processors and vendors would otherwise reject as outside the norms
- Improve agricultural efficiency by forcing sales outlets to carry a minimum percentage of products that don't conform to current retailing norms
- Take the necessary measures to limit the extent of concentration of actors in the industrialized chains (such as processed-vegetable companies).

Investing in agricultural businesses and assuring financial security: Supporting of alternative agriculture models

- Increase funding to the Farm Income Stabilization Insurance (ASRA) programme as well as increase coverage to include what we have learned from recent crises (floods, drought, price fluctuations)
- Give greater priority to creating risk-management programmes appropriate for agricultural businesses earning less than a gross income of \$100,000 per year
- Give greater priority to creating risk-management programmes appropriate for agricultural businesses located in the outlying regions of Quebec
- Give greater priority to investment programmes in activities based on alternative and modern agricultural models:
 - Organic farming
 - Integrated production (permaculture)
 - Peasant farming (on the human scale)
 - Precision agriculture (field crops)
 - Low-stress raising and animal well-being

Developing urban agriculture

- Develop and disseminate expertise in urban farming:
 - Promote and support the creation of technical training programmes, specific to CEGEPs and universities
 - Implement a programme of citizens' education in urban agriculture
- Along with municipal authorities, explore the best ways of including agriculture in urban planning
- Integrate urban agriculture into infrastructure development projects, for projects which come under provincial control.