

PRESS RELEASE
For immediate distribution

**Open House on Outaouais-Laurentides Farms
The environment is part of our culture!**

Saint-Eustache, August 16, 2019 - On Sunday, September 8th from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA) will present the 17th edition of the Open House Day on Quebec Farms. About 20 farms will welcome visitors in the Outaouais, Laurentides, Laval and Montreal regions where they will be able to discover the many initiatives moving towards more sustainable agriculture.

The environment is part of our culture, the theme of this year's event, is a reference to an important concern for the public and a hot topic for the agricultural sector. The Open House Day will help people to better understand how responsible agricultural production is part of the daily lives of producers in the region.

"Farms themselves are small laboratories for innovation and experimentation for the agri-environment," says Stéphane Alary, president of the Outaouais-Laurentides UPA. Visitors will be surprised to discover the impressive amount of work that is taking place on our farms to conserve soil, reduce pesticide use, manage crop pests, manage manure, protect waterways, reduce greenhouse gases and promote animal welfare."

This year, five urban farms based in Montreal will open their doors to the public: Lufa Farms (market garden production using rooftop greenhouses); La Centrale agricole (cooperative for agricultural enterprises); La Ligne verte - market garden (rooftop vegetable production); Vignes en ville (study project on urban vineyards); and the Laboratoire d'agriculture urbaine du Palais des congrès de Montréal (rooftop vegetable production). These enterprises are all committed to an approach promoting sustainable food systems within the metropolis and multiplying eco-responsible initiatives.

"It's much more than a slogan, the environment is really a part of our culture and it is with pride that we will be able to demonstrate this on our farms on September 8th," concludes Stéphane Alary.

The Open House Day on Quebec Farms is an event that takes place on more than 100 farms in all regions across Quebec, and on the esplanade at Montreal's Parc Olympique. Over the years, the event has become a 'must see' and popular family activity in the region and elsewhere in the province. Last year, more than 18,000 people visited the participating farms in the Outaouais, Laval and the Laurentides. All of Quebec's farms welcomed more than 150,000 visitors.

All information about participating farms can be found online at the event's website: portesouvertes.upa.qc.ca.

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Science-inspired actions to protect the environment

Bold actions are being put into practice in fields, orchards and for livestock production which have become veritable scientific testing grounds. Two producers share their experiences.

Ferme aux saveurs des monts, Gatineau

"We grow our corn without pesticides and it's GMO-free. We work with small wasps (*Trichogramma*) that we introduce into the fields. After mating, the female lays her eggs into those of the insect pests which are then parasitized and eliminated. It's a biological method that replaces the use of chemicals," explains Samuel Bertrand, co-owner of the farm, which specializes mainly in raising free-range poultry without antibiotics or growth promotants."

Verger La tête dans les pommes, Saint-Joseph-du-Lac

"From my first year of production in Saint-Joseph-du-Lac, in 2014, it was clear that I was going to direct my choices towards alternative methods of production in order to minimize the use of pesticides," says Marylin Courchesne, co-owner and an agronomist. One of these methods is sexual confusion to control the codling moth, the main pest in apple farming. Sexual pheromone distributors are installed in the orchard that give off an odour identical to that emitted by the female moth, causing confusion for the males and making mating more difficult. It works and it is systematically applied in our orchards."

About the Fédération UPA Outaouais-Laurentides

FUPAOL is a union organization that represents the approximately 2,500 agricultural enterprises in the 16 MRCs located within the Outaouais, Laurentides, Laval and Montreal territory, and provides them with services and professional support.

www.outaouais-laurentides.upa.qc.ca

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