

News Release

Quebec farmers to shape future of agriculture

LONGUEUIL, October 13, 2006 – Today, Quebec Farmers' Association (QFA) President Gib Drury called upon English-speaking Quebec farmers to participate actively in the "Commission on the future of Quebec agriculture and agri-food" announced last June by the Charest government.

Speaking from his farm in the Gatineau Hills, Drury said that "the government of Quebec is at a crossroads in its agricultural policy and it is seeking direction on where to go from here. Quebec's agricultural policy is unique in Canada, if not in the whole world. It is based on a vision of a collective, co-operative model and producer control. It benefits everyone and we don't want that to change."

Unlike the rest of Canada, Quebec farmers themselves decide how their produce will be marketed and how their income security programs will work. A thorough review of the direction of agriculture in the province was last undertaken in the 1960s.

"It is essential that as many producers as possible take the time to participate in these hearings as we are the ones who will be affected by the Commission's recommendations," Drury continued. "The future of our income stabilization is at stake and unless we extol the benefits of the current system we risk having it taken away from us. If the province turns its back on its commitment to maintaining family farms and our collective marketing system we would be forced to adopt the American style of industrial agriculture."

Drury urged individual farmers and farm groups to make their views known to the Commission as it travels across the province over the next six months. He stated that QFA is canvassing English-speaking farmers to prepare its own recommendations and that the QFA will appear before the Commission next spring. The Commission will deliver its report to the Minister of Agriculture in January 2008.

ABOUT QFA: Founded in 1957, the Quebec Farmers' Association represents the province's 2,100 English-speaking agricultural producers.

- 30 -

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