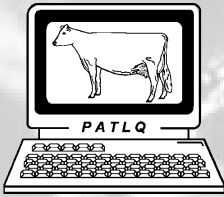
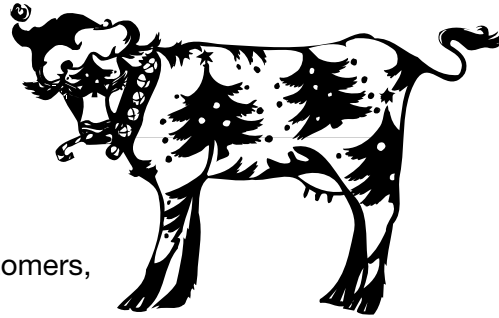


Newsletter

Pavillon John E. Moxley • 555, boul. des Anciens combattants, Ste-Anne de Bellevue Québec H9X 3R4



CHRISTMAS WISHES



Dear customers,

The end of 1998 is approaching quickly. Doesn't it seem as though everything is going faster and faster? But this means that you're accomplishing many things, and so you can really appreciate life.

In these modern times, we must plan and set priorities. Getting information through the newspaper or other communication systems was legitimately not a priority for our grandparents. Today, we choose only the most vital information from among the thousands of communication tools available, and this is no small task.

At PATLQ, among other projects, we're implementing Vision 2000 to provide you with the most effective tools and services to help you take up the challenges of the third millennium. The confidence you've shown in PATLQ through the years is so valued that we always want to offer you more.

Beyond projects and ambitions, important human values like confidence and solidarity have to be strongly represented. In the name of all the PATLQ family, I would like to take a short moment of your precious time to wish you and your loves ones, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

BUSINESS PLAN 1998-1999

Just as you manage the feed ration of your herd based on feed inventory and the price of feed, milk production according to available quota, and all activities according to resources available, so each year, PATLQ also plans and implements a business plan in order to meet its mission.

Our plan takes a critical look at the short (annual) and medium (three years) term objectives, taking into account market opportunities and constraints. It consists of actions meant to fulfill the needs of its 7500 clients and employees.

With a team of some 300 employees, in order to go from site X to site Y, it is imperative that everyone travels in the same direction if we are to reach the objectives. The more the employees are motivated, the more clients are satisfied, and vice versa...The business plan determines the correct path to follow.

You'll find inside the main actions in PATLQ's 1998-99 business plan (June 1st, 1998 to May 31st, 1999).

WIN A HEIFER !

See details inside...

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THE BIG TOUR... AND A CONTEST

During fall and winter, representatives of PATLQ will embark on a tour of about forty high schools, colleges and universities which offer an option in agriculture. Along with information about the structure, history, the many services and the role of its on-farm staff, PATLQ will launch a contest called "**PATLQ... a service made for me**".

This contest was decided on following a survey about our services, and its goal is to encourage the new generation of farmers to express their vision of what PATLQ should become in the future. Four grants of 250\$ each will be awarded to the most interesting and valuable projects.

In an evolving environment, we believe that this gathering of ideas could contribute to the development of tailor-made services, in accordance with our mission to improve the profitability of dairy farms.

TOTAL PERFORMANCE RATING

Since 1969, Louis-Paul Phaneuf and Micheline Vigneault from Upton, have benefited from PATLQ services. Up-to-date producers, they've known since the beginning how to use tools like milk control, identification, artificial in-



semination, classification and embryo transplants to improve the profitability of their business. Right at the beginning of the 1980's, the herd, fed with total mixed ration, soon gave spectacular results such as an increase in production of about 2000 kg.

Nowadays, the dairy cows are fed with 3 kg of dry hay, equal shares of hay and corn silage, as well as wet corn and commercial feed supplement.

A look at the performance will show that the 48 cow herd is in the top 2% in Quebec, with a total performance rating of 98% (TPR). This rating compares herds in three production characteristics: average production per cow per year, for milk, fat and protein. Seven management criteria are also taken into consideration: average interval between calving, the number of breedings per conception, the number of days dry, the age and weight of heifers at first calving, the average weight of the herd and the somatic cell count.

For the son Patrice, who joined the family farm in 1992, the TPR is a very motivating factor that enables a producer to compare his herd performance to the average performance of all producers. It also helps in detecting and improving one's weaknesses. In their case these were the calving interval now getting better at 418 days and the somatic cell count at 236,000.

The strong point of the business is the level of production with an average of 9531 kg of milk, 352 kg of fat and 316 kg of protein. Notice that the heifers are calving at 26 months with a weight of 620 kg.

The future objectives are to improve the fat/protein ratio and to put an accent on conformation. They are also thinking of increasing the quantity of milk produced and of selling animals. As they have always done, the Phaneufs will surely know what tools to use to get what they want.

BUSINESS PLAN 1998-1999

Action #1 - Implementation of a database for the production of Canadian dairy herds

Since September 1998, a group of six employees have been working at implementing a database for the production of herds enrolled in the four Canadian milk recording organizations. This database will be maintained and managed from the head office of PATLQ in Ste-Anne de Bellevue.

Action #2 - Implementation of Vision 2000 across Canada

For the last two years, Canadian milk recording partners have worked at developing a dairy production analysis program common to all of Canada. This software or program is presently being tested and will be made available to all Canadian dairy farms. It will be available to British Columbia milk recording clients in December 1998 (smallest number of herds in a province); it will then be implemented in the prairie provinces in February 1999, in Quebec and the maritimes in March 1999 and in Ontario in April 1999. This is an activity which occupies a great part of the Canadian dairy partner's human resources in 1998-99.

Action #3 - Training clients and employees

In addition to training (both clients and employees) required for the implementation of Vision 2000, several courses on dairy cattle feeding management and on heifer management are presently being organized and will be given over the fall of 1998 and in the early months of 1999.

Action #4 - Marketing of PROM-S and VSMT

There are 2 marketing campaigns planned: the first for PROM-S (heifer management software) and the second for VSMT (verification of milking systems and procedures) services. PROM-S responds to the need to improve the heifer management practices, and VSMT answers the need to improve the quality of milk in Quebec. Improving the overall quality of PATLQ's services remains a continuous process.

Action #5 - New services : feed analysis

Requested by a large percentage of our clients (more than 60%) and knowing that milk samples are already being shipped to PATLQ's central lab, it was decided in June 1998 to offer an innovative feed analysis service (credible, affordable and rapid). The initial target, set at 7500 samples for the first year, will definitely be met.

Action #6 - New services : marketing of milk samples for calibration

PATLQ has been responsible for the analysis of milk components for payment purposes to dairy producer clients and to the dairy processors since 1993. A new five year agreement has recently been confirmed. Also, PATLQ in alliance with Advitech Solutions Inc. presently markets samples, used to calibrate analysers, to a large majority of Quebec milk processing plants. Another true example of partnership.

Conclusion

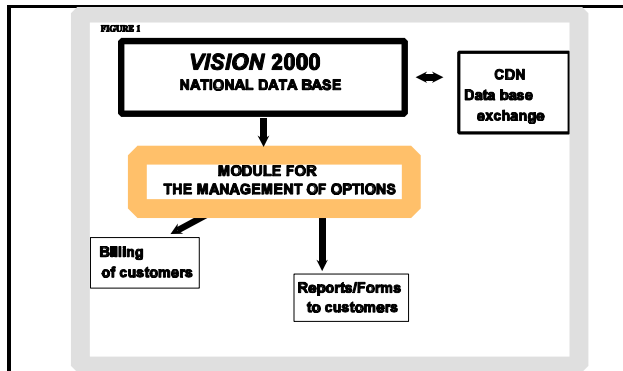
PATLQ must always direct its development to bringing the best to dairy farms in Quebec and in Canada. To accomplish this, we must have your feedback; it may be through our regional customer service network, through written communication, or a call to head office... The Quebec dairy producers are shareholders in PATLQ; your involvement and interest are essential to the development of a strong organization. Thank you.

SEE THE BACK OF THE PAGE FOR NEWS ON *VISION 2000*

Vision2000 - a complete conversion

Have you ever considered what is involved in completely rewriting all the programs in a computer system? At PATLQ the conversion of our current mainframe system to a more modern platform is one of the largest undertakings in the history of PATLQ. This transformation affects every aspect of our system from data entry and reports from the farm, through data processing and lab analysis, to the final printing and mailing of reports.

During the course of this transformation PATLQ has maintained the goal of having a more flexible and affordable program to offer to Quebec dairy producers. A good portion of the savings for this undertaking is the result of alliances with other Canadian partners in the animal improvement industry.



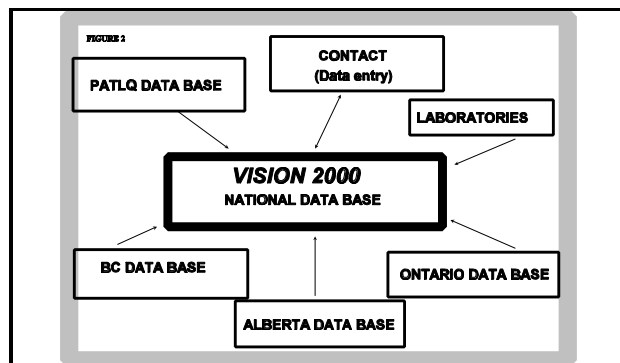
PATLQ: home of the Canadian data processing centre

An alliance has been developed between the four Canadian milk recording organizations. The objective of this alliance is to have database, system and technical support administered from one common group. The fruit of this alliance, Canadian Dairy Herd Management Services (CDHMS) officially began operation in Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue at the offices of PATLQ on August 1st 1998. Sharing development and resources will result in cost savings to dairy producers across Canada. We are confident that the CDHMS solution put in place by the milk recording partners of Canada will serve the needs of our clients as we move into the next millennium.

Over the coming months, the main objective of CDHMS is to prepare for the introduction of **Vision2000** across Canada. Figure 1 gives an overview of the information being fed into CDHMS programs.

Conversion - from old to new

In the current PATLQ system there are several data bases and in each data base there are several tables. We must convert our database to a format recognized by **Vision2000**. This means we must convert all producer, herd, animal and lactation data into a new format. This data then needs to be put into a new output format. Figure 2 demonstrates the different aspects of output that require new programs and designs. To put this into perspective, imagine that each report produced by PATLQ needs to be completely rewritten in order to be produced by **Vision2000!**



Testing - testing- testing!

A critical aspect any conversion is the testing of the computer system. This involves both the national data processing system as well as PATLQ's own systems. The goal of testing is to expose the system to as many simulated situations as possible. In the coming months, each of our staff will be testing at least 2 herds per month on the new system. This means a total of 180 herds for Quebec and 52 for ADLIC. This period of intensive testing will conclude once we are certain that we have a high quality product to offer!

The computer testing period will serve as an introductory training period for field staff. They will be exposed to the new aspects of their computers as well as the new reports. In addition, in class sessions will be offered to intensify knowledge on all new aspects of the project.

PATLQ and all its staff are diligently working to help smooth the way to the future. Soon Quebec dairy producers will have access to state of the art milk recording programs designed specifically to answer to their needs. **Vision2000** will be the key tool for the new millennium.

BETTER BELIEVE IT

Many people asked themselves a lot of questions after reading the article entitled "PROM-S- really gets you going..." published in our September 1998 edition. I mentioned in that article that the projected age at calving for some heifers was 26 months with a weight of 685 kg before calving.

These heifers have now calved and here are the results:

- ▶ age at calving: 25.5 months
- ▶ average weight: 600 kg
- ▶ projection of BCA: 218-226-219
- ▶ deviation of BCA: 24+27+24
- ▶ classification:
GP for the mammary system
VG body strength/capacity
VG dairy features

You want to improve the profitability of your business? Try PROM-S, you won't believe it!

HOW TO MANAGE A LARGE HERD?

Gilles Gauthier and his family, along with 10 employees, run the Aston Farm in Saint-Leonard-d'Aston. The herd has 325 purebred cows and 350 replacement heifers. The average production is 7523 kg of milk with 3.96% fat and 3.34% protein (PATLQ, Sept.98). The farm is spread out over 475 cultivated hectares and produces 200 corn-fed calves annually.



Elizabeth Julien, PATLQ agent and Gilles Gauthier from Aston Farm

The management of the herd is a very important factor at the Aston Farm. Mr. Gauthier says "Without the right management tools, there is no way to succeed with a large business". His farm is on the 10 tests supervised option with management services. This option gives the employees the opportunity to know the cows better and to follow the evolution of their milk production. This supervised option is very motivating and represents a challenge as far as cattle breeding is concerned. The results of the farm's management are impressive: calving interval: 390 days, replacement level 25%, cows in lactation on an annual basis: 87%, scc: 200-225 000. Mr. Gauthier uses the CONTACT management reports as much as he can. In order to maintain the cows in good health, a veterinarian comes once a week for preventive medicine. Hoof trimming is done every 8 weeks for dry cows. Because of the size of his herd, Mr. Gauthier likes the computerized sire selection program following the dam's type classification; he finds it's the best way to make a selection. Management is a key element for the success of the business; it sure seems worth the investment.

PATLQ's decision to offer a range of options and an hourly fee has pleased Mr. Gauthier. He feels that the new billing system is cut out to serve the needs of producers on a more individual basis. Mr. Gauthier, who's PATLQ advisor is Elizabeth Julien, makes good use of the quota management software. Along with Elizabeth, he analyses his production and compares it with his quota for the months to come. Using RationL to analyse the feeding program, they compare the nutrient supply vs requirements. Mr. Gauthier follows all the training and information given by PATLQ.

The objective of the Aston Farm is to continue with the improvement of herd management and genetics until each cow reaches an average production of more than 8000 kg. Mr. Gauthier also expects to use PROM-S for a better management of his replacement heifers.

CAMPAIGN FOR PROM-S

PATLQ, in collaboration with CIAQ, is launching a marketing campaign for its program **PROM-S**, on the follow-up of replacement heifers.

By using PROM-S, you have the chance to win one of five (5) heifers of superior genetic quality. One (1) heifer will be offered in each of the five (5) PATLQ regions. Each time you use the PROM-S service between the 1st of November and the 15th of December 1999, you will get coupons for the draw.

Furthermore, each new participant in the Identification Operation during that period will get more tickets for the draw.

Get all the details of this campaign from your PATLQ agent.

GET LOTS OF CHANCES!

VSEM

(Vérification of systems
equipment and methods)
(in French VSMT)

Your milking equipment works for you at least twice a day, 365 days a year. It deserves your attention and the right maintenance to the job well. Don't wait until the quality of milk suffers; prevention is better than cure. A verification of your milking equipment by a PATLQ specialized agent is a profitable investment. Don't hesitate to talk to your regular agent about this; he'll get you in touch with the VSEM agent of your region (list below).

Gilles Laramée

Tel.: 450-774-1554

Fax: 450-774-1554

Jean-Côme Leblanc

Tel.: 819-293-4882

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Gérard Nault

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Marcel Thiboutot

Tel.: 418-492-9496

Fax: 418-492-3954

COURSE ON THE MANAGEMENT AND THE FEEDING OF REPLACEMENT HEIFERS.

In Quebec, year after year, we notice that the development of replacement heifers does not meet the expected results. Yet the genetics is there. The average cost in Quebec to raise a heifer is 2362\$ (GREPA, 1994). The cost of raising cattle constitutes the second most important element on a dairy farm, right after feeding costs. It is 28% of the actual total cost of milk production. Substantial savings may be achieved by paying more attention to heifers.

The last survey made by PATLQ (fall 1996) on what services to offer, showed that 67% of those polled were interested in a course on the management and feeding of replacement heifers. To respond to this specific request, and to help producers to improve the performance of their business, starting in January, PATLQ will offer a course that will increase knowledge about the breeding of replacement heifers. This course will be given by Jean-Robert Doré, an agronome working for both PATLQ and on the family farm. His education and experience means he will be able to facilitate the learning process.

Consult your PATLQ agent. He will tell you when and where the course will be given in your region.

SURVEY ON MILK METERS

A few months ago, through a survey, 1526 PATLQ customers expressed their interest in various ways to have the use of milk meters. The need expressed is so small that PATLQ has concluded that a renting service would not be justified. Here are some relevant results:

- ▶ 90% prefer to be the sole owner of their meters
- ▶ 50% will not be replacing their lactometers in the short term
- ▶ 24% admit that buying one would reduce the milking time when testing
- ▶ 4.5% show interest in renting a milk meter



Newsletter

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Depot: ISBN 2-921692-09-0
Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec
(1984)

Graphic Design
and Printing: Imprimerie des Éditions Vaudreuil
(450) 455-5661

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