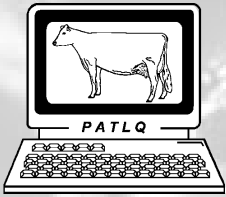


Newsletter

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



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IMPLEMENTATION OF VISION 2000 IN CANADA

During the last decade, the needs of dairy enterprises have rapidly evolved, especially with regard to the size of business and the evolution of information technology. Obviously, the information systems at PATLQ have had to evolve at the same rhythm. That's why, for more than two years now, PATLQ has been working on completely remodelling its information systems and all applications and softwares. This inevitable evolution is not exclusive to Quebec: national discussions have led to the consolidation of various information structures of Canada into only one Canadian database and one Canadian milk recording program, now called Vision 2000.

The objective of this project is to provide greater accessibility to milk recording data for all registered dairy enterprises, at a very affordable cost. Naturally, the underlying intention is to make sure that this new structure is in harmony with the arrival of the new millennium.

Within the project, unsuspected new possibilities for sharing certain aspects at the national level have become a matter of unanimous consensus: for example the management of services options, or common reports printed centrally etc. These additions, though positive, have broadened the project and caused quite a few delays. Further-

more, there is a lot at stake with the consolidation of data from all the herds in Canada into one database. There are many concerns about memory space, speed, and the quality of the conversion of data. Right at this moment, the Canadian Dairy Herd Management Services (CDHMS) located in Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue is sparing no effort to provide accessibility to the new software to all the herds in Canada.

Recent testing indicates that the conversion of data for all Quebec herds in the Canadian database will require a two week shutdown of all PATLQ services. This is why as soon as the testing is well along, we will advise you of the date for the shutdown and implementation of Vision 2000 in each province. In order to minimize the impact on the customers, we are considering making this huge change during the summer.

Your support is imperative for us to reach the goals we've set, to better serve you in the years to come. We intend to keep you well informed on the progress of this dossier over the next months.

We greatly appreciate your understanding

*Bertrand Farmer
general manager*

"PROM-S, AS USEFUL A TOOL AS MILK RECORDING"

The Pelletier et fils inc. farm from Saint-Roch-des-Aulnaies has a herd of 100 cows. Réal and Placide, the owners, pay close attention to the management, in order to exploit the potential of each animal. Their cows have an annual average production of 9938 kg of milk, 396 kg of fat and 321 kg of protein.

The Pelletiers easily relate high productivity with quality breeding. They enrolled on PROM-S as soon as the service was offered in February 1997. The first time, they weighed all the heifers and measured the height at the withers of only one third of them. When they analysed the average growth curves of their heifers with Denis Morneau, their PATLQ adviser, Placide soon noticed that heifers were 25 points lower (percentile ranking) in height compared to weight. In other words, heifers had met the weight standards (based on age) but their height (relating to frame development) was 25% lower than standard. The growth curves also shed some light on the time period where there was a lack of management. Weight alone does not necessarily reflect development or growth. These producers quickly realized that measuring regularly helps to identify problems, either with individual animals or with a group of animals, which would not be seen otherwise.

Placide explains: «In the past, we did not follow up on the development of our heifers. We simply fed them and taped them when verifying if they had the right weight to be bred. At breeding time, it obviously was too late to correct any deficit in the growth of these animals. Since we started using PROM-S, we record the growth parameters on heifers four times a year. Data on heifers is now more complete and so it is possible to correct our overall management or the feeding over the whole development period. Since then, we have observed an overall improvement in our heifers; they are less fat (better body condition) and taller. At calving, these young cows consume more forages, more dry matter and production is superior. The report on heifers to be bred is indispensable for proper planning of breeding depending on their development and the desired age at calving. Furthermore, heifers that exhibit poor growth parameters are culled. PROM-S offers that type of information allowing management decisions which generate significant savings in heifer breeding costs.



Placide follows: «We take a little bit more than two hours to measure our 80 heifers housed in a free stall barn. When taking into account the time required by the adviser to enter data on new heifers born, the breeding dates, growth parameters four times a year, to analyse the reports, to target problems and give us recommendations, its only costs us approximately \$2 to \$3 per heifer per year to use PROM-S. This investment of 4 to 5 hours per year with our PATLQ adviser represents so little compared to the results achieved or obtained. This makes the return on investment very high.

After close to two years of heifer management with PROM-S, our average percentile rankings for the weight and the height of our heifers are now in parallel at 74. The projections for 21 raised heifers that calved over the last six months, show BCA of 223-243-223. Placide spontaneously confirms: «PROM-S has become as useful a tool as milk recording. In recording growth parameters regularly, we have a better knowledge of the situation and can work to meet our objectives. The objectives of the Pelletier brothers remain realistic: increase the average percentile rankings and move from 26 to 24 months average at first calving. With the seriousness, the regular attention and the passion of these producers, the anticipated results won't take long to become a reality.

PROM-S promotion campaign

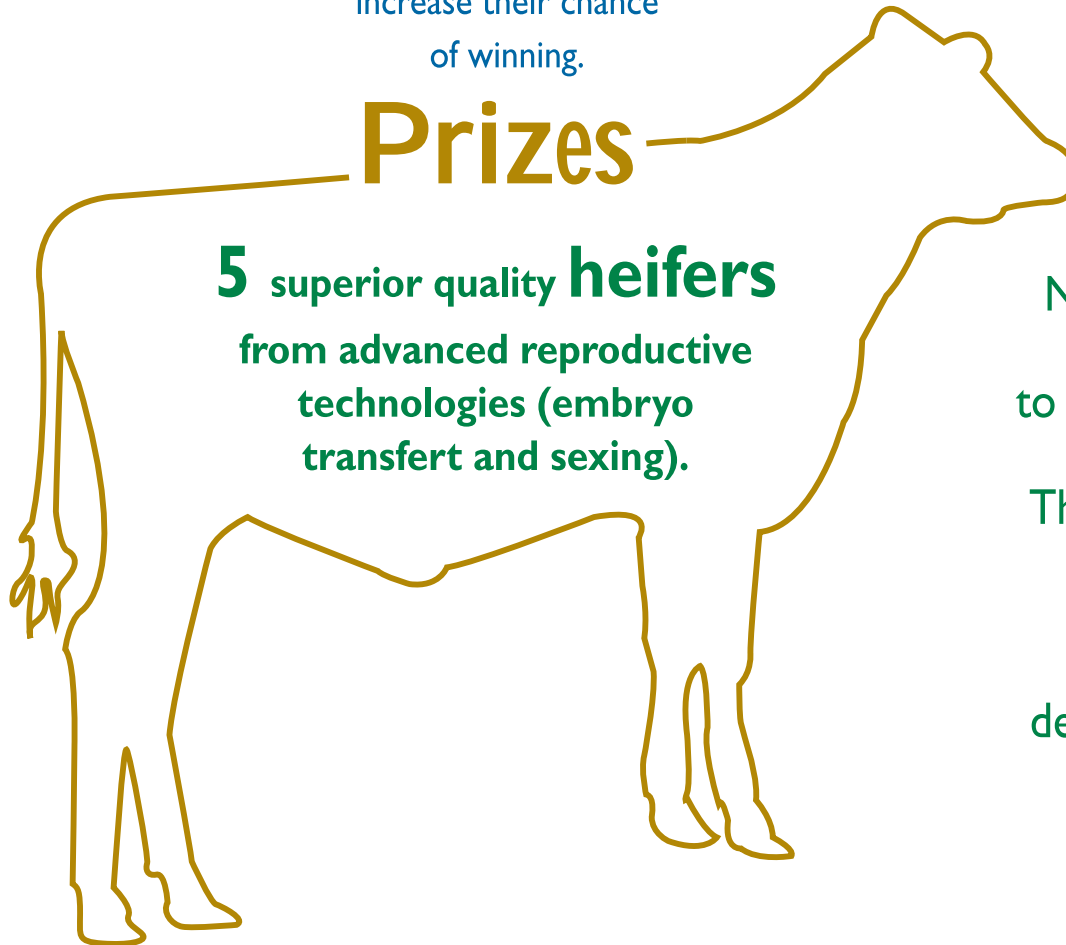
TO PARTICIPATE

Use the
PROM-S service
during the promotion.
The more
you use it,
the more chances
to win.

PROM-S users that enter
Operation Identification
increase their chance
of winning.

Prizes

5 superior quality **heifers**
from advanced reproductive
technologies (embryo
transfert and sexing).



DURATION

The promotion
runs from
November 1st, 1998
to December 15, 1999.
The draw will be held
during the Salon
de l'Agriculteur 2000.

Rules and conditions of contest entry are available from PATLQ agents and inseminators.

A PATLQ / CIAQ collaboration

MILK QUALITY IS TOP PRIORITY AT BEULAC FARM INC.

Serge Fortin, TP, and Sylvain Biron TP, PATLQ

Many producers would content themselves with a somatic cell count of 250 000. But not Henri Boily, his son Sylvain, daughter Suzie and nephew Mario Boivin. All partners in the Beulac Farm Inc., they've set the quality of milk as top priority. Aware that quality milk is as profitable for them as for the industry as a whole, they don't skimp on the necessary measures to continually improve it.

Suzie, Sylvain and Mario together manage a herd composed of 90 cows and 60 heifers. Enrolled with the PATLQ regular control program, the herd shows an average production of 8 158 kg of milk. Their quota reaches 68.5 kg/day of fat. The Beulac Farm Inc. covers 180 hectares and rents an additional 60.

What could be motivating producers, who have already reached a somatic cell count of 250 000, to do better? Suzie hastens to answer: " Serge Fortin, our PATLQ agent, has made us aware of the unexploited potential of our herd resulting from somatic cell count. This caused us to seek help to improve it. Serge told us about the service for verification of milking equipment and methods offered by PATLQ. We have opted for that service because of its neutrality."

The specialized VMEM agent checks two aspects: first, he does a complete verification of the milking system and second, he carefully watches the whole milking method. According to Suzie and Mario, the second part is what really distinguishes the service.

The verification of the milking equipment

Mario says that "...a majority of producers take great care of their machinery. But why not do the same with their milking equipment? It is the machine that works the most for us: twice a day, 365 days a year". He adds: "the agent thoroughly verifies the whole milking equipment including the slope of the pipeline. No one had ever checked that before. With our level of production, it is very important to avoid any clog. We now realize how important it is to check the slope and we even do it between the agent's visits. We are now aware that some cases of mammary infection were probably due to the bad slope of the pipeline.

The milking method

Suzie underlines with a smile that being watched while using the milking system is the most intimidating part of the verification. It is a little bit like passing a test. "But we quickly understood that the agent wasn't there to judge us but to help us correct some bad habits that we've slowly developed by milking day after day over the years." Mario gives a few examples of corrective measures that brought positive results: "Following the first visit, we've made some modifications: we now collect the first streams in a filter-



cup before washing the udder, thus avoiding its contamination. Before, we were washing the udder before collecting the first streams. Now, we also install the milking machine as soon as the cow is ready and that change seems to be working pretty well. In school, we'd learned it was better to wait a minute. We had cows contaminated with Staph Aureus; now, these cows are identified with a bracelet to avoid any kind of mistake and they are milked at the end. "

Results

From their PATLQ reports, Suzie shows the positive results all the changes have brought about. She finds the progress very motivating.

Table 1 : Results of the Beulac Farm Inc.	March 1997	April 1998
Average production(kg)	7 224	8 158
Somatic cell count (,000/ml)	240	119

Suzie Boily and Mario Boivin reveal that the information held in the VMEM reports broaden their knowledge on the subject. Sharing information with the specialized agent really help them set objectives and priorities.

Conclusion

Suzie concludes: " The verification of milking equipment and methods can surely be seen as another management tool. It is as important as a feeding program. It is a complementary way to exploit the potential of the herd. Nowadays, producers must choose a consultant they trust but above all, they must follow his recommendations. At the Beulac Farm, we put the recommendations of experts into practice, and it gives good results.

Y2K BUG AT PATLQ

As any company concerned by its customer service, PATLQ must insure that all its information systems are Y2K compatible. The inventory of all systems, softwares, and machines using dates and the list of suppliers has now been done at PATLQ. The verification and testing of every part or element that will have been identified as critical will be done in the next months.

Most of PATLQ's systems are being changed this year so we are not expecting major problems concerning the Y2K passage. We'll publish more information as soon as all our testing is done. For your own interest, we invite you to read the March issue of *Le Producteur de lait québécois* which will present a very interesting article on the Y2K bug at the farm. You can also get information on these two web sites: <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca> or www.bogue.com or <http://www.cfbmc.com>

WINNERS AT THE SYMPOSIUM DES BOVINS LAITIERS (QUEBEC DAIRY SYMPOSIUM)

In the context of the Quebec Dairy Symposium held October 28th, 1998, CPAQ and PATLQ, have drawn two prizes of



750\$ each (applicable on a PATLQ invoice) among all the registered dairy producers. Mr. Alain Blais (Saint-François de Montmagny) and Martin Gervais (Hérouxville) are the lucky winners. Congratulations to both of them.

PROMOTION AT THE "SALON DE L'AGRICULTEUR"

At the Salon de l'Agriculteur, held at Saint-Hyacinthe, the 12,13 and 14 of January 1999, PATLQ associated with the A.I. Centre of Quebec (CIAQ), the A.I. Cooperative and with Holstein Quebec for a draw of 10 prizes of 200\$ each given as credits applicable on services offered by the partners and used by the winners. PATLQ congratulates all the winners:

Alexandre Rémy, *Saint-Marc sur Richelieu* - Martin Bourgault, *Beaurivage*
Michel Courchènes, *Baie du Fèvre* - Denys Beaudet, *Sainte-Sophie* - Guy Lessard, *Sainte-Ursule* - Luc Desilets, *Saint-Wenceslas* - Raymond L. Lemay, *Parisville* - Ferme Imhot, *Saint-Maurice* - Emilien Binet, *Saint-Pierre de Broughton* - Ferme Lait-Porc MC inc., *Saint-Elzéar de Beauce*

THE TOTAL PERFORMANCE INDEX IS BACK!

The Total Performance Index (TPI) is available with your agent since January 28th last.

This index combines 10 management criteria and constitute an excellent tool to compare your management results with the ones of other Quebecois producers. It also gives you the opportunity to identify the strengths and weaknesses of your enterprise, thus helping you target the right elements to improve.

For more information, consult your PATLQ agent.



Newsletter

Pavillon John C. Morley • 555, boulevard des Anciens combattants, Ste-Jane de Bellefleur, Québec H8B 3H4

Tel.: (514) 398-7880 • Fax: (514) 398-7963
Voice Box: 1-800-BON-LAIT
Internet: www.patlq.mcgill.ca

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