

## Ever more tangible actions

(continued from page 1)

### Promoting participation in genetic evaluation

Launched by CIAQ, MAPAQ, CQRL, Breed Associations and Valacta, the **Synergy** project aims to have at least 200 more herd owners discover the benefits of enrolling with genetic evaluation. Incentives offered jointly by all partners will make the available tools even more attractive.

### Consolidating management software

SIGA Farm Software, DS@HR and Valacta are combining the strengths of three major applications, in order to develop a single software for dairy farm management. This application will allow producers to be

more efficient in using all the herd's management data (production, health, reproduction, etc.) and to circulate data or process transactions with all industry partners (veterinarian, breeder, advisors, providers...)

### Organic milk production

Valacta set up an agreement with Mr François Labelle, from Alfred College in Ontario, and requested a financial assistance from MAPAQ, in order to provide strategic advisory sessions to organic dairy producers regarding udder health. This initiative follows a recommendation by Valacta's Strategic Orientation Committee on Organic Production.

### Our best wishes for 2008

Dear clients, we are extremely proud that you acknowledge Valacta as the central forum where your dairy partners can discuss, reach agreements and plan action on the issues that you face every day. On behalf of Valacta's team and Board, I wish that during the coming holidays, you take time to look back on your 2007 achievements and recharge your batteries in order to face the challenges of 2008. Also enjoy the splendour of life with your loved ones: this, as always, should be our number one priority.

Bertrand Farmer, P.Ag.,  
General Manager



## Nomination of Jean Durocher, DMV, MSc

Valacta has the great pleasure of welcoming Mr Jean Durocher, DMV, MSc, as Dairy Herd Health Coordinator on our R&D team.

A graduate from the Faculté de médecine vétérinaire of Université de Montréal, Dr Durocher is widely recognized as an expert, notably in bovine reproduction and embryo transfer, especially since 1991, with his work at Alliance Boviteq. An excellent communicator, he is a member of the *Table de concertation sur la reproduction* and he has contributed to the training of many veterinarians from

Quebec as well as others worldwide. He has given numerous conferences and published several scientific papers.

Working in close collaboration with the veterinarian community, Dr Durocher will deal with the priorities identified by Valacta's Strategic Orientation Committee on Health, which groups representatives of the main organizations working on health issues with dairy producers. Dr Durocher will be mainly located at the Faculté de médecine vétérinaire, in Saint-Hyacinthe.

# Dairy Knowledge at your fingertips

Volume 2 - Issue 4 - December 2007

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## Ever more tangible actions

Bertrand Farmer, P.Ag., General Manager

Valacta, your centre of expertise, will be 20 months old on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Here is a quick survey of recent accomplishments and ongoing projects with industry partners undertaken to respond to your needs.

### A new course on reproduction

Beginning in January 2008, thanks to the leadership of the Table de concertation sur la reproduction (TCR, or Quebec committee on reproduction) and the *Valacta Strategic Orientation Committee on Health*, a training course titled **The Knowledge to Act: Reproduction** will be offered across Quebec (see pages 2-3).

### A guide for your expansion projects

Jean Brisson and René Roy, from our R&D team, together with Mrs Ginette Pearson, CRHA, wrote a guide for advisors who will assist producers with an expansion project. The Guide was produced thanks to the program *Initiatives d'appui aux conseillers agricoles*, under the Canada-Québec agreement in the *Renewal* section of the *Agricultural Policy Framework*. The FPLQ completed the financial package. The Guide will be available on the CRAAQ web site.

### An expanding network

Last September, we were pleased to announce the appointment of

Mr **René Roy**, agroeconomist and Mr **Mario Gauthier**, a new strategic advisor. Today, I am very proud to announce the arrival of Dr **Jean Durocher**, veterinarian, to our R&D team (see page 4). The knowledge and experience of these specialists will translate into even greater expertise being made available to assist dairy producers, especially in the fields of economy and herd health. We wish our industry to focus on a single and coherent message on these key issues.

### Sharing knowledge in the field

Today, Valacta can rely on a team of seven strategic advisors, responsible for sharing their knowledge with Quebec dairy producers. Strategic advisors give the popular Valacta training sessions in each region and provide specialized on-farm assessments, in association with other industry advisors, when required.

Valacta is also in the process of reorganizing our field staff into a network of multifunctional teams, capable of providing the technical services required by the industry (milking supervision, data entry for production, traceability, registration, functional traits, diseases, etc., either for herd management or genetic evaluation purposes). As well, these new teams



will enable tailor-made advisory services, aimed at solving technical and economic issues on each individual dairy farm (This, too, will keep being done in synergy with other industry advisors).

(Continued on page 4)

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## Summary

A course on reproduction... again! **p. 2-3**

Nomination of Dr Jean Durocher, DMV, MSc. **p. 4**

## Group Training Courses 2007-2008

# A course on reproduction... again!

Jean Durocher, DMV, MSc.

Dairy Herd Health Coordinator, R&D, Valacta



The industry partners at the *Table de concertation sur la reproduction* (TCR, or Quebec committee on bovine reproduction) have developed a new one-day training session to help producers better manage reproduction. What, some might say, another course on reproduction? Is this really necessary? Well, just ask dairy producers. Most of them will answer: "Yes it is!"

The dairy industry has seen dramatic changes over the past few years. Milk production per cow has constantly increased and many dairy farms are expanding. Managing reproduction remains a major concern for many farmers. Are we worse off than other provinces or countries? In fact, the problem is worldwide and, all things considered, Quebec is really no worse off than anywhere else.

We do, however, have everything we need to succeed here in Quebec. Some producers already have very good reproductive performances. Their secret: they make reproduction a top priority on their farm, and they take full advantage of the expertise of their advisors in order to *know and act*.

Appropriately, this is the theme of the new group training course that will

be offered as of January 2008: *The knowledge to act: Reproduction*.

The approach is quite different from the two-day training course offered in 2002-2003. At that time, the emphasis was on the "knowledge" aspect, that is, better understanding the biological mechanisms of reproduction. In 2008, we will concentrate on appropriate actions, hence the theme "The Knowledge to Act".

The *Table de concertation sur la reproduction*, which has been in operation for four years, defined 9 conditions for success with reproduction (see box). In respect to these conditions, your experts have targeted interventions that can result in significant improvements in reproduction, when applied with sufficient involvement, rigour, and discipline. The proposed actions are aimed at energy balance, voluntary waiting period, strategies to quickly identify non pregnant cows, and the role of genetics in fertility.

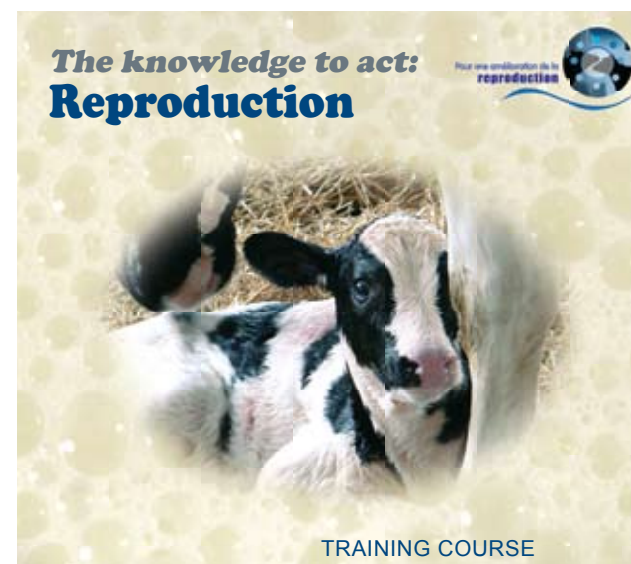
Your trainers will be the Valacta strategic advisor of your region, a representative from CIAQ and a veterinarian (AMVPQ). The collaboration of these organisations meets one of the major objectives of the *Table de con-*

*certation*: promote partnership between the various experts in the field of reproduction, thereby providing producers with the tools they need to succeed.

You will have the opportunity to work with your own reproduction data, allowing you to situate your herd relative to other herds. By using your own data, you will also be able to evaluate how to best apply the tools offered to your herd situation.

The course calendar is posted on the web site [www.valacta.com](http://www.valacta.com). Follow the link Training courses. Contact your Valacta employee to enrol.

Don't forget to enter your chosen date in your agenda. To get a preview of your reproductive performance, we invite you to complete the following grid with your Valacta advisor.



## Reproductive Performance Evaluation Criteria

	Quebec average 2006 <sup>1</sup>	My herd on last test
Calving Interval (days)	427	
Days to 1st breeding	91	
Days in lactation	180	
Total number of cows	299 912	
Number of cows leaving the herd	123 310	
Number of cows leaving the herd with a reason of reproduction <sup>2</sup>	21 939	
% of cows culled for reproductive reason	7,3 % <sup>3</sup>	

## The 9 conditions for success in reproduction

The Table de concertation sur la reproduction (TCR) defined nine conditions for success with reproductive performance:

1. Feed adequately.
2. Prevent diseases that have an impact on reproduction.
3. Adequately treat diseases.
4. Keep a file on reproduction and herd health
5. Define the voluntary waiting period (WP).
6. Breed all cows within 21 days from the end of the WP
7. Identify non fertile breedings early.
8. Analyse performances.
9. Make use of information on sire fertility.

The TCR got a consensus from all members on this list of conditions for success. They consider that evaluating and putting into action appropriate measures will help improve herd fecundity in Quebec.

<sup>1</sup> From report *Évolution de la production laitière québécoise 2006*

<sup>2</sup> See Agri-Lacta report

<sup>3</sup> You need to divide the number of cows culled for reproduction by the total number of cows, then multiply by 100. For example: 21939/299912 \*100 gives 7,3%

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