

Planning the expansion of a dairy farm – A Guide for Success

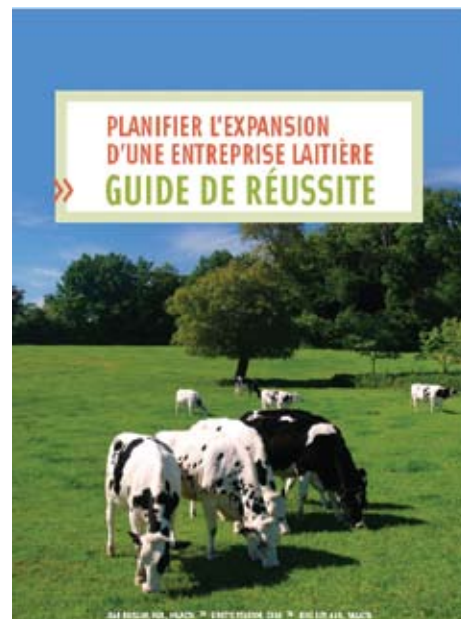
You have an expansion project? You would like to succeed without taking unnecessary risks? You do not want the operation to have a negative impact on your quality of life? All experts agree on one point: the key to success is planning.

Jean Brisson, agr. and René Roy, agr., both from the Valacta R&D team, and Ginette Pearson, CRHA, from the Quebec CRÉA, offer you a Guide and a useful set of work sheets, that will facilitate the planning of your expansion project (document currently available in French).

Who should use this Guide? First, producers who have an expansion project on the way, of course! But

mostly their advisors, because they almost certainly will be contacted by producers looking for help or support with their project. Whether the advisor is involved all along, or specifically within his field of expertise, knowing better the planning process of an expansion project will enable him to give better support to his client.

So, whether your project involves **production, your operations, your human resources, your finances, or everything together**, we strongly recommend that you get help from an advisor who is familiar with the Guide for Success.



The Guide for success is available for free (in French) on the web site www.craaq.qc.ca Give it a try and avoid a lot of trouble !

This project was realized under the *Initiative d'appui aux conseillers agricoles* program, according to the terms of the Canada-Québec agreement on the *Renewal* section of the *Agricultural Policy Framework*. We also wish to thank the Fédération des producteurs de lait du Québec for its financial support.

Survey with Valacta clients

Five producers win a free training session

Valacta periodically does a survey among its clientele. Your answers help us improve the quality of services and to better respond to your various, evolving needs. Thanks to the 1295 participants in the 2008 survey. Here are the five winners who will benefit from a free group training course:

- Patrick Dionne**, Ferme Gena & Fils inc., Mont-Carmel, QC – Advisor: Yvan Lizotte
- Réjean Guillemette**, Saint-François, cté Montmagny, QC – Technician: Alain Côté
- Louis Patoine**, Ferme Louisanne inc., Esthonfleur, Bellechasse, QC – Advisor: Denis Boutin
- Michel Daniel et Lyse Brochu**, Ferme Milibro, Tingwick, QC – Advisor: Robert Leclair
- Julie Malenfant et Steve Chenard**, Ferme Chenard et Fils, Sainte-Hélène de Kamouraska, QC – Advisor: Gratien Tremblay

Dairy knowledge at your fingertips : Volume 3 - Issue 1 - March 2008
Published by Valacta, dairy production centre of expertise.
Edited by: Annik Perron, Communication Manager and Michel Pouliot, writer-editor

Phone: 1 800-BON-LAIT, 514 459-3030 • Fax: 514 459-3020 • www.valacta.com
E-mail: Editor: info@valacta.com • Customer Service: service.clientele@valacta.com

Depot: ISSN 1496-2748 Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec and National Library of Canada, 2008

Dairy Knowledge at your fingertips

Volume 3 - Issue 1 - March 2008

valacta

Appointment of Mr. Clément Blais, agr., as Regional Manager

Bertrand Farmer, agr.,
General Manager

It is my great pleasure to announce the appointment of Mr. Clément Blais as Regional Manager for region Chaudière, effective since February 4, 2008.

A graduate from Laval University in 1982, Clément worked with ROP milk recording from 1982 to 1988, then at Agribrands Purina from 1988 to 2004, notably as Sales Manager and Dairy Specialist for Quebec. Since 2004,

Clément has been Strategic Advisor here at Valacta.

With his large experience and the wide network he established across the dairy industry, in addition to his skills in personnel development, Clément Blais will be a great asset as a Regional Manager. We wish him a resounding success.



Clément Blais, agr., new Regional Manager, Chaudière region

¹ At Valacta, the Chaudière region corresponds to the Chaudière-Appalaches region, minus the MRC of Montmagny and L'Islet. Our clients can contact Mr. Blais at 418-576-8480 or at cblais@valacta.com.

2008 Trade Shows

Several prizes won by dairy producers

Annik Perron,
Communication Manager

Every year, at both Quebec winter agricultural trade shows, hundreds of producers visit the CQRL, CIAQ and Valacta exhibits. This year, Valacta was urging clients to benefit from strategic advisory services through an on-farm specialized consultation. Our visitors also like to use this privileged moment to make a personal request or a suggestion. We always appreciate these few minutes of direct contact with our clients. Also, visitors can win interesting prizes. This year, in addition to several prizes by CIAQ and CQRL, two \$500 credits were drawn by Valacta at each Trade Show. The winners are:

- At Salon de l'Agriculture, Saint-Hyacinthe, on January 17:
Pierre Savaria, Saint-Barnabé-Sud, QC – Advisor: Carole Laliberté
- Mireille Giguère and François Cantin**, Ferme Decan, Tingwick, QC – Advisor: Robert Leclair

- At Salon provincial de la machinerie agricole de Québec, on February 2:
Claude Garon, Ferme Claugla enr., Saint-Denis-de-Kamouraska, QC – Advisor: Yvan Lizotte
- Claude St-Hilaire**, Ferme Clauvy enr., Saint-Gilles, Lotbinière, QC – Advisor: Luc Laflamme

Winner of a Tru-Test milk meter

(A \$450 value, jointly sponsored by Tru-Test and Valacta. The drawing included participants to both trade shows.)
Ghislain Gagné, Saint-Pierre-de-Broughton, QC – Technician: Martine Gagné



Congratulations to our winners and thanks to all participants!

At the Québec City drawing, February 2, 2008: Rosaire Chrétien, Regional Manager, Appalaches, Raymond Castonguay, T.P., Advisor, Centre-du-Québec, Candide Paquin, agr., Advisor, Côte-du-Sud.

Summary

- More comprehensive breeding data **p. 2-3**
- Planning the expansion of a dairy farm – Guide for Success **p. 4**
- Survey with Valacta clients
- Five producers win a free training session **p. 4**

More comprehensive breeding data!

Jean Durocher, DVM, MSc, Dairy Herd Health Coordinator, R&D, Valacta
Sylvia Lafontaine, agr., Standards and Data Coordinator, R&D, Valacta
Robert Moore, Ph.D., Scientific Director, R&D, Valacta
Denis du Tremblay, DVM, eng., Faculty of Veterinary medicine, University of Montreal.

Breeding information, including the breeding date and sire, is now provided to Valacta by the Centre d'insémination artificielle du Québec (CIAQ) and Eastern Breeders Inc. (EBI) in New Brunswick. In mid-November 2007, breeding information dating back to January 2006 was added to the Vision2000 database. Additionally, Vision2000 is now updated regularly. If you have noticed an increase in the number of breedings/cow/year on your Herd Summary, this increase is due to the electronic inclusion of breeding information that was not previously entered.

Historically, all breeding information was entered manually by advisors or technicians at the farm. Despite their good will and the collaboration of producers, some data never entered the system. This resulted in a slight underestimation of the number of breedings by cow. With more complete breeding information, some producers will see an increase and in some cases this increase may be quite significant!

The electronic trail

Quebec breeding data is forwarded by CIAQ to the Canadian Dairy Network (CDN) on a daily basis for genetic evaluation purposes. This information is then forwarded to Valacta by CDN and loaded into Vision2000. In the case

of EBI, breeding data is sent to CDN monthly.

This updated information will soon be made immediately available to technical advisors in the field. This will result in a considerable savings in data entry time. Some time will still be spent validating the completeness of the data, however this step will be substantially less than manually entering the data. As a producer, you should still provide all breeding data to your Valacta Dairy Production Technician.

An improving system

Although this new approach is a great improvement, not all data can be captured. Two conditions must be met. Firstly, the data transfer process requires that the cow be registered with a breed association. Close to 20% of all the breeding data cannot be transferred as the cows are not registered. Secondly, the breeding must be done by an inseminator in the EBI or CIAQ networks. It is estimated that 15% of Quebec producers perform their own breedings or call upon a network other than CIAQ or EBI. In New Brunswick, this number is much higher: only 15% of breedings recorded by ADLIC/Valacta for 2007 were received from CDN as compared to 67% of the breedings recorded in Quebec.

Increase in the number of breedings per cow?

Across Quebec, the number of breedings per cow increased from 1.92 in 2006 to 2.14 in 2007. For New Brunswick, the figure climbed from 1.82 in 2006 to 1.91 in 2007. When comparing data across time, it is important to note that this change does not correspond to a deteriorating situation but rather to improved data entry. For the same reasons, care should also be taken when comparing the averages of these two provinces to other Canadian provinces.

Caution when comparing data from different sources

When you compare the number of breedings per cow on your Valacta Herd Summary with the figure from your CIAQ report, keep in mind that Valacta includes only cows, while CIAQ includes heifers. Since heifers enjoy greater breeding success, including them will reduce the average number of breedings per cow per year. Both methods are valid, but they are nonetheless different. Similarly, if you compare the number of breedings per cow from your Valacta report with the number of breedings by pregnancy for all breedings (source : DS@HR) often used by vets, you get a slightly higher



value. Here too, the calculation method is different as a pregnancy confirmation is required. Such discrepancies might in fact exist for any comparison between reports from different sources.

In order to benefit from a proper evaluation of your reproduction parameters, take the time to discuss these indicators with your veterinarian and your advisors: they can best help you with the interpretation of the various indexes.

As with any calculated index, keep in mind that the number of breedings per cow per year is as accurate as the breeding data provided is complete.

valacta

Canadian Quality Milk Program

TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR ON-FARM IMPLEMENTATION

You have completed your training? Filled the self-evaluation questionnaire? Written your draft for standard operating procedures and corrective action plans?

Now is the time for action!

Contact the Secretary of your Syndicate to enrol with the 3-hour workshop on implementing CQM at the farm.