



Bringing the research to the farm

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Valacta's role with regard to research is clearly defined in its mission to contribute to the sustainable development and prosperity of the dairy sector through knowledge transfer and its analytical and information management services. So, transferring research results to the farm is part of our DNA. The important thing to keep in mind is that, ultimately, the knowledge transfer needs to produce concrete results.

Indeed, research is essentially the development of new knowledge, hence an upstream activity in the innovation chain. Researchers are looking for answers—sometimes to fundamental questions, sometimes to applied problems. Fortunately, they often find answers! And what they find can then be applied on the farm to the benefit of producers and the dairy industry as a whole.

The ultimate goal of the innovation chain is implementation. Beyond the knowledge it generates, research attains its full value only when the findings of the work are implemented by end users, who are motivated to modify their practices based on the results. Valacta is involved in the innovation chain at different levels, but its role intensifies the closer we get to the farm.

A team devoted to knowledge transfer

The main role of Valacta's R&D team is to initiate the chain through which research results will eventually find their way to application on the farm. Depending on the type of knowledge



In Upton, Quebec, producers attend the 2016 Valacta Workshop: A Step Ahead...

services) and external partners. They must take the current issues into consideration when planning these projects while also being proactive and looking to the future trends and social preoccupations.

Training for improvement

Practical training courses and workshops are among Valacta's most visible transfer activities. Every year, throughout Quebec and the Atlantic provinces, we offer approximately 100 training sessions and 75 workshops, which

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generated, this transfer can take multiple forms: training for advisors, technicians, producers, industry partners, tools, software, technical guides, laboratory analyses, reports, conferences, workshops, etc. The R&D team most often acts as a catalyst for these types of projects but carries them through in synergy with both internal (laboratories, information technology, regional

sometimes draw over 2,000 producers yearly. Valacta's strategic advisors, all experienced instructors, use these sessions to deliver the content developed in large part by the research and development team for the producers who attend. They work hand in hand with local partners such as veterinarians. The true value of attending a practical training course for producers is raising

their level of awareness of opportunities for improvement and setting them to thinking about changing their practices to capture those opportunities. Often, these sessions are only the beginning of a thinking process for them, one that continues in discussions with their technicians, advisors or other partners, like their veterinarian, well after they have returned home. Ultimately, they apply some of this newly acquired knowledge to improve their herd performance and profitability.

The ongoing training of our advisors and technicians is another essential activity that enables us to affect change. We invest thousands of training hours into our employees to ensure that they become catalysts of change and innovation directly at the farm. This is facilitated by the close relationships they have with their producers and the fact that they are familiar with the specific needs of their clients. Change and innovation is much easier when a client is well guided and trust has been established with the advisor or technician.

Support for development

With the growing demand for organic food comes the need for producers to be well informed about the certification requirements and best management practices of this segment of the industry. Organic dairy production is

therefore a topic of choice that has been addressed by the Valacta R&D team. While the demand for organic foods is on the rise, the supply is still catching up, and there is a need to grow the rank of certified producers. Producers interested in this type of production need to be well informed and guided before they commit to this transition. Valacta has developed a training session to that effect and has a team of organic dairy advisors that offers a unique expertise in Canada. This expertise, offered in collaboration with organic dairy production clubs, is available in the majority of agricultural regions in Quebec. Our organic advisors will support both certified farms as well as farms in transition in attaining their objectives, whether it be through personalized consultations or workshops targeting the needs of organic farms.

Knowledge transfer is key to sustainable development

Valacta's mission has always been to contribute to the sustainable development and prosperity of the dairy sector through knowledge transfer and its analytical and information management services. When knowledge is shared with producers and implemented successfully at the farm, everyone wins!