

PDZA: Agrotourism and consumers

Brome-Missisquoi is a region dotted with numerous specialized businesses that make up a diversified agrotouristic offering, allowing consumers to experience enriching and flavourful agricultural experiences. Beyond conventional agrifood products, innovative operations foster emerging niches (ice ciders, organic products). The region is also known as the birthplace of Quebec wine growing. Are you familiar with the marked Wine Route that passes through numerous towns and villages in the region?



What is agrotourism?

It is a tourism activity that allows people to discover the diversity of local operations and products, and also to meet the producers and the craftspeople who make them. A visit, an activity, a stay or even a meal at the farm are among the activities that can contribute to reconnecting with the land and a better understanding of the numerous facets of agriculture. **Also, agrotourism in Brome-Missisquoi is 35 registered projects and 274 agricultural producers who do processing at the**

farm and/or market agricultural products. Therefore there is a significant agrotourism offering in the region and an impressive choice of goods produced by local people.

Buying locally

Agriculture has evolved and some political decisions have served consumers well so far. However, some of these decisions have changed the type of farming done today and has led to increasingly industrialized forms of agriculture. As well, the majority of products we consume pass through numerous intermediaries and cover many hundreds of kilometers, when the importance should be on buying locally! This type of distribution and marketing of locally-produced foods promotes close proximity between producers and consumers and includes at most a single intermediary. Buying locally promotes regional products, contributes to making them known to consumers, minimizes transport and at the same time ensures fresher produce. It also contributes to local economic development, reduces the ill effects on the environment caused by existing distribution networks and creates a strong link between producers and consumers. They are found in the form of at-farm sales, public markets, sales with outlets (such as the family farmer and Community Supported Agriculture) and correspondence (Internet or otherwise). **There are presently four public markets (Knowlton, Bedford, Farnham and more recently West Brome) and a virtual market (le marché de solidarité de Cowansville) that allow you to obtain local products.**



The role of the consumer

According to a study by the ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ), *if each consumer added \$30 of Quebec food to their grocery cart per year, there would be after five years an increase of more than \$1 billion worth of food products from Quebec.* Imagine the impact at the Brome-Missisquoi level! **Encouraging Brome-Missisquoi's farmers is to contribute to the economic development of your region!** As explained by Équiterre *"... eating is one of the fundamental acts that we carry out daily that has an enormous impact on rural communities, the economy, health and the environment. It is up to us to make it a tool for real change..."* Buying is voting! (Laure Waridel, founder of Équiterre)

To conclude this series of columns, the challenges for the agricultural sector are many, and the changeover must be done boldly to ensure the survival of this activity for the common good. In order to ensure the future of this area of activity, the PDZA will look at this question on a regional level because it is important to maintain healthy, viable and prosperous agricultural productions in the area.



Now it's up to you!

Support local agricultural producers and above all...

Come to the PUBLIC CONSULTATION on September 1st, at 7 p.m. at the Auberge des Carrefours, salle Davignon, in Cowansville.

Informations : 450 266-4900

Information: www.brome-missisquoi.ca

Comments and suggestions:

<http://agriculturebromemissisquoi.blogspot.com>