

PDZA: Succession and property values

Presently, according to the Union des producteurs agricole (UPA), "... Quebec loses more than a farm a day. These losses create a significant void in the social and economic fabric of our rural communities. As well, the agricultural profession is getting older and older. Only ten years ago you could count one farmer under 35 years of age for every farmer over 55 years of age. Today, we can only count one young farmer for every three farmers over 55 years of age."



Succession in Brome-Missisquoi

Nearly 71% of local farmers are over 45 years of age and 40% of those are over 55. The average age of the region's farmers is high: It reached 52 years of age in 2009! However, only **16% of farmers declared having a succession (a plan to pass the farm on)**, while 90% said they don't expect to sell or transfer their farm operation within the next five years. The situation is worrisome, because agriculture is the economic activity **where the**

capital value of the agricultural business is higher than its actual value. This situation is difficult for the young farmer who must purchase the land, the breeding or production infrastructures and win the confidence of financial institutions. The transition of the agricultural legacy has therefore become a delicate choice when it comes to leaving it to a family member. As well, many economic and social factors influence the setting up of a succession, such as the significant increase in property values, agricultural revenues, some laws and bylaws, working conditions and young people's loss of interest in the profession.

Agricultural uses and land values

According to the MRC's 2009 property evaluation role, 70% of land zoned for agriculture is used as such, while 15% is residential. Also, only 31% of the territory zoned for agriculture is fully dedicated to farming according to an analysis of the data. There has therefore been an important change in the rural milieu of the region and it is most noticeable in the *central* and *eastern* sectors of the MRC. Production and breeding in the foothills of the Appalachians has been replaced by residential development for vacation and recreational purposes.



For its part, the average land value of agricultural properties varies in relation to the potential and dynamism of the sector. Even though the regional average increased in 2009 to \$4,740 per hectare, the land value of the dynamic agricultural plain in the *western* part of the region is always higher. The majority are evaluated at more than \$250,000. Despite this, land values increase constantly, particularly in the vacation areas in the *eastern* part of the MRC, which can irreparably harm the viability and profitability of agricultural activities.

In conclusion, the future of agriculture must continue through a dynamic and innovative succession supported by everyone. This key can contribute to the success and the continuity of agricultural activities in Brome-Missisquoi.

In two weeks we will discuss agrotourism and consumers.



This campaign will conclude with a **public consultation** on an action plan on **September 1st at 7 p.m. at the Auberge des Carrefours, in the Davignon room in Cowansville.**

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Comments and suggestions:

<http://agriculturebromemissisquoi.blogspot.com>