



Les  
Producteurs  
de lait  
du Québec

**Press release**  
*For immediate release*

Annual General Meeting of Les producteurs de lait du Québec (PLQ)

**The PLQ presents the winners of the Lait'xcellent milk quality competition and the Sustainability Award**

**Quebec City, April 17, 2015/CNW** – Bruno Letendre, Chair of Les Producteurs de lait du Québec (PLQ), revealed the 2014 Lait'Xcellent Award winners at its Annual General Meeting. The 2014 Gold Lait'Xcellent Award was presented to Ferme Bilogo 2010 inc of Saint-Léon-de-Standon in the Chaudière-Appalaches-Sud (Beauce) region. The Silver Lait'Xcellent Award was presented to Ferme Denis Desfossés of Sainte-Brigitte-des-Saults and the Bronze Lait'Xcellent Award to Ferme Dominique Hince et Fils SENC also of Saint-Léon-de-Standon.

Chairman Bruno Letendre paid tribute to the producers' work and ongoing efforts to produce the best quality milk possible. **"We present Lait'Xcellent awards to honour producers who have distinguished themselves by producing outstanding quality milk,"** he stated. The recipients produced milk with bacteria and cell counts that were 4 to 7 times lower than the provincial average.

**Milk quality: a key concern for milk producers**

Producers spare no efforts to produce quality milk. Raw milk is subjected to a number of controls, starting at the farm. Producers are required to comply with strict raw milk storage rules (temperature, hygiene, agitation, etc.). Milk is picked up at the farm by a tester who checks its temperature, odour and appearance before loading it. If testers have reservations about the quality of the milk they are meant to pick up, they can reject it. When milk arrives at the plant, its temperature, odour and appearance are checked again while it is still in the tank.

A zero tolerance policy is applied to antibiotics. This means that milk is not accepted whenever antibiotics are detected in it. Milk is analyzed before it is unloaded at the plant. If traces of antibiotics are detected in it, the entire shipment is destroyed at the expense of the producer who sent it. The use of antibiotics on dairy cows is strictly regulated. In addition, the use of growth hormones to stimulate milk production in cows is also prohibited.

Milk samples are also taken at the farm for quality testing purposes. If the results exceed the standards in force, penalties may be enforced and milk may cease to be picked up. In Quebec, the milk quality standards that are set with processors are stricter than the standards and in some cases the minimum requirements stipulated in government regulations. These standards make it possible to control the bacteria and somatic cells, which are naturally found in milk and can affect the dairy processor results.

Les Producteurs de lait du Québec manages various milk quality improvement programs and has also set up a quality fund to help producers deal with problems. Money from this fund can be put toward anything that helps improve milk quality.

Milk producers have also set up the Canadian Quality Milk (CQM) program, a food safety program aimed at helping producers prevent, monitor and reduce food safety risks on farms. The CQM program is based on the so-called HACCP principles (hazard analysis critical control points). Producers have to apply best management practices on their farms and keep records to monitor the critical points affecting food safety.

## **Sustainability Award**

Milk producers also honoured Ferme Clobert of Saint-Bonaventure, Quebec's finalist for the 2014 Dairy Farmers of Canada Sustainability Award, the third time this award has been presented. The Sustainability Award is given to farms in recognition of their innovative management practices that go beyond industry standards and meet several sustainability goals, thereby improving the social, environmental and economic impact of dairy production in Canada.

The sustainability goals for finalists are to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from dairy farms, cultivate effective sustainable natural resource management practices and perform a comparative analysis of the socio-economic performance of Canadian dairy farms.

## **About Les Producteurs de lait du Québec**

Les Producteurs de lait du Québec, affiliated with the UPA, represents Quebec's 5,856 dairy farms, which deliver nearly 3 billion litres of milk every year, for a total of over \$2.4 billion in farm receipts. Milk production generates around 83,000 direct, indirect and induced jobs in Quebec and contributes as much as \$6.2 billion to the gross domestic product (GDP). Finally, it brings in \$1.29 billion in tax receipts, including \$678 million for the federal government and \$454 million for the Quebec government. [www.lait.org](http://www.lait.org)

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