



Les  
Producteurs  
de lait  
du Québec

**PRESS RELEASE**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*Les Producteurs de lait du Québec AGM*

**“We gave on the trade negotiations front. The government needs to let us rebuild in a stable environment in the future”** Bruno Letendre

**Quebec City, April 17, 2019** – At the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Les Producteurs de lait du Québec (PLQ), Chair Bruno Letendre gave a speech to PLQ delegates in which he reviewed the past year, largely marked by the conclusion of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA), and discussed the prospects for the dairy industry in 2019. **“Despite all the public support, the consensus of Quebec and Canadian politicians and the clear demonstration of supply management’s relevance, dairy producers had to bear the brunt of a third trade agreement, which was concluded in October”** declared Mr. Letendre, Chair of Les Producteurs de lait du Québec.

The CUSMA is the latest agreement, after the Comprehensive and Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), to be concluded to the detriment of Canadian milk producers. As a result, 8.4% of the market has been conceded and a limit has been placed on the volume of milk powder that Canadian producers may export. The net amount of \$2.15 billion was announced in the March federal budget to compensate supply-managed producers for the losses resulting from CETA with Europe and the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

**“We hold the Canadian government entirely responsible for all of the negative impacts from these agreements. The amount announced in the budget is a step in the right direction if it wants to reassure us. Now, it must deliver the merchandise. We do not yet have any details on the terms and conditions of payment. The government needs to work with us on determining them. Our demands are clear: The funds must be accessible to all producers, paid quickly and without tonnes of paperwork. The terms and conditions need to be settled before the federal election,”** added Mr. Letendre.

**“Despite the concessions, supply management is still in place, which leaves us with a glint of hope. We gave on the trade negotiations front and the government needs to let us rebuild in a stable environment in the future. We cannot afford to stop being wary of the government or stop reminding it of its promises,”** explained Bruno Letendre, who added that Prime Minister Trudeau may very well have promised that agreements negotiated in the future by Canada would not impact milk producers in any way, but only real actions will regain the confidence of milk producers.

### **New consumer groups emerging**

After stressing the importance of remaining vigilant in the face of changes in the political and economic environment, Bruno Letendre confidently presented the PLQ’s analysis of newly emerging client groups and the producers’ vision of how to meet market expectations:

**“A phenomenon is being observed: The millennial generation has arrived in a massive way. Their expectations are clear: fresh, tasty, natural and local products that are free of artificial additives and produced in an environmentally and animal-friendly manner. Our practices and products have met these expectations for a long time. We not only offer a natural product that tastes good and has recognized nutritional properties, but we have**

**also demonstrated our commitment to animal care and the environment,”** summarized the Chair of Les Producteurs de lait du Québec.

In fact, the updated milk life cycle assessment (LCA) shows that between 2011 and 2016, dairy production in Quebec decreased its environmental impact, lowering its carbon footprint by 8.7%, its water use by 12.5% and its land use by 16.2% In addition, the ProAction program currently being deployed formalizes the industry’s focus on the entire animal care aspect.

**“We have several reasons to feel positively about the future. The outpouring of sympathy that followed the conclusion of the CUSMA is clear proof of consumer confidence. We deserve this confidence, but we will have to make ongoing efforts to keep it. We are proud to have products that meet the expectations of the emerging generation of consumers, and we will need to keep showing it,”** concluded Bruno Letendre, Chair of Les Producteurs de lait du Québec.

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

Les Producteurs de lait du Québec, affiliated with the UPA, represents Quebec’s 5,050 dairy farms, which deliver roughly 3.37 billion litres of milk, for a total of over \$2.6 billion in farm receipts. Milk production and processing create around 83,000 direct, indirect and induced jobs in Quebec and contribute as much as \$6.2 billion to the gross domestic product. Finally, they generate \$1.3 billion in tax receipts.

For more information, visit our Web site at [www.lait.org](http://www.lait.org) or follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

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