

Self-evaluation kit for potato growers

The *Fédération des producteurs de pommes de terre du Québec* has produced an agroenvironmental self-evaluation kit for the principal players in this field. The kit is designed to convey the latest information about sustainable agriculture and to encourage operations that specialize in growing potatoes to adopt agricultural practices based on resource conservation.

Funded by the CDAQ's Agroenvironmental program, the kit serves as a reference tool for producers who would like to grow potatoes while limiting impacts on the environment, such as the impoverishment of soils and the appearance of pesticide resistance.

The kit, which has been available since March 31,



2001, has already found many takers, both among producers and Environmental Advisors, not to mention farm input suppliers.

"This tool is certainly going to greatly contribute to rationalizing the use of various pesticides," says Denis Pelletier, Agro-economist and Secretary of the Federation's Agro-environmental Committee. "Given the clear success of the self-evaluation kit, it certainly seems that the acreage planted according to integrated pest management principles will continue to expand."

For more information, call: Denis Pelletier (450) 679-0540, ext. 8448

Tools for producers

Several projects financed by the CDAQ aim to create tools to help producers in various ways, whether that is to improve their competitive ability or to support them in adopting an environmentally friendly approach.

Guides to reducing losses in processing peas and beans

Started in June 1999, the objective of this project was to produce two guides (one for peas, one for beans) that would include work practices and procedures and basic documentation to help producers and processors responsible for harvesting minimize their losses. In order to develop these guides, the *Fédération québécoise des producteurs de fruits et légumes de transformation*, supported by the CDAQ, gave *Gestion-qualité fruits et légumes* a mandate to do a detailed study on pea and bean losses at harvest-time.

The guides were distributed before the 2001 harvest, at regional training clinics and on the occasion of specialized or individual workshops. Positive results

can already be observed after one season's application. In peas, for example, the main objective was reached, with a reduction of almost half the average losses, which fell from 5 % under the bar of 3 %.

"While I already know the information that is in the guide, it made me realize just how important adjustments to the thresher head can be," says Bernard Cousineau, a pea and corn producer who used the guide a lot during the last harvest. "The guide is easy to consult and I believe it is a very good tool for remembering the formulas and methods for measuring losses."

For more information, call: Gilles McDuff (450) 679-0540, ext. 8262

We invite you to contact us for any question or comments on this column or the activities of the CDAQ

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To refer to the list of financially supported projects, please visit the Council's website at: www.cdaq.qc.ca
 Since its inception in 1996, the CDAQ administers the producers' share of provincial funds allocated by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) under the Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development Fund (CARD).