



Local food systems and public policy : the case of Québec

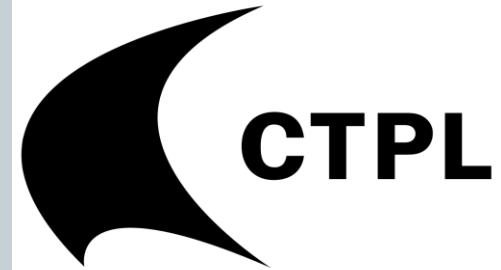


Recherche Évaluation Formation

The two studies

The logo for équiterre, featuring the word "équiterre" in a grey sans-serif font with a small orange arc above the "i".

équiterre



- <http://www.equiterre.org/publication/local-food-systems-and-public-policy-a-review-of-the-literature-2009>
- (Forthcoming) *Scaling up local food systems in Quebec and Ontario : actors, institutions, and change in the governance of two regional food systems*

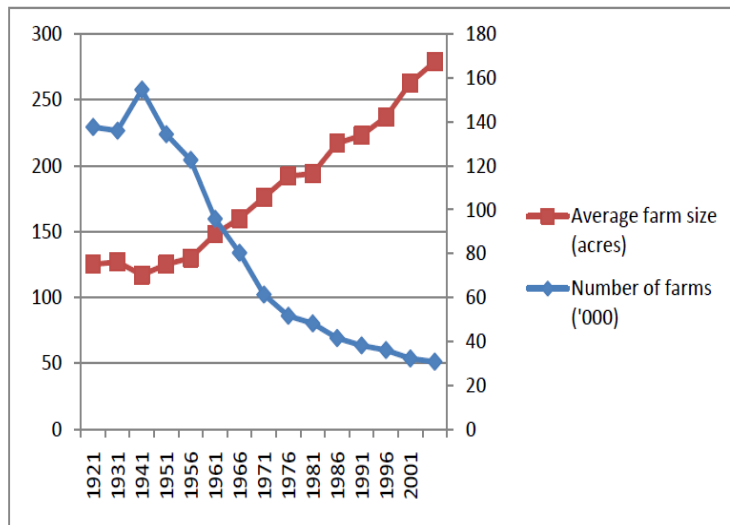
Context of Quebec



This should be of particular interest to local food promoters as most policy areas relevant to short food supply chains fall either entirely under provincial and local jurisdiction, or under joint jurisdiction but where provincial government have more leeway

The context of Quebec

Figure 1 – Number of farms vs. Average farm size, Quebec (1921-2006)



Source: Compiled from Statistics Canada, "2001 Census of Agriculture Data Tables," <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/95f0302x/2001001/4122714-eng.htm#portrait>, with additional data from Statistics Canada, "2006 Census of Agriculture," <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2006/index-eng.htm>.

- Agriculture, food processing, and retail together account for 6.8% of GDP and 12.5% of all jobs
- Quebec produces \$19.2 billion in fresh and processed food while consuming only \$15.4 billion (a 25% surplus)
- Retailers imported \$6.9 billion of fresh and processed foods
- About 44% of Quebec's raw and processed food production finds its way onto Quebecers' plates, the rest being exported to other Canadian provinces (30%) or overseas (24%)

The Pronovost Commission



- In 2006, the government of Quebec gave a clear mandate to the Commission :
 - Assess the state and challenges of agriculture in Quebec
 - Analyse the effectiveness of existing public interventions
 - Make a diagnosis
 - Make recommendations based on needs for agricultural competitiveness, social needs and valorization of Quebec's regions
- The report was published in 2008 (<http://www.caaaq.gouv.qc.ca/>)



Commission sur l'avenir de l'agriculture
et de l'agroalimentaire québécois

LFS initiatives and main barriers



- **Organic and other specialised agriculture** 316 certified organic livestock production units, 341 organic maple syrup producers, and 585 certified farms (CARTV 2009).
- **Farmers' markets.** network of 82 open markets, permanent or seasonal, daily or occasional.
- **Community-supported agriculture (CSA).** Équiterre runs one with over 100 participating farms. Others : Union paysanne (similar system) ; La Mauve (Coop CSA), etc.
- **Solidarity markets.** New phenomenon, solidarity markets are a more flexible box scheme. Consumers place an order through a web portal
- **Lack of financing:**
 - Ex : banks are often not willing to issue micro-loans at competitive rates.
- **Economic power**
 - The food retail sector is marked by high rates of market concentration
 - Supermarkets have been able to achieve economies of scale because they do not have to pay for the social and environmental costs of their business practices.
- **Knowledge**
 - The lack of demand for local foods is attributed to a) a lack of information about where to procure it, b) a lack of information about prices.

Examples of barriers/policy/initiatives



Table 3. Barriers to the development of local food systems and proposed solutions, as well as relevant level of government in Canada and Canadian policy examples

Category of policy	Barriers	Policy proposal	L	P	F	I	Examples		
Distribution and marketing	Lack of organisation and marketing skills for potential facilitators of a local food system	Business and development services for retail, marketing		x			CFAI (BC), Agri-Food Market Development Program (NB), Agri-Food Promotion Program (PEI) CFAI (BC), Direct Marketing Community Development Trust (NS)		
		Fund training for facilitators and organisers			x				
		Mapping of SFS initiatives to promote networking	x	x	x				
	High transaction costs when dealing with small producers and/or processors Lack of infrastructure (warehousing, cold storage, etc.) relevant for LFS Market concentration in retail, transport, and distribution sector Poor access to retail space	Support marketing groups/co-ops/organisations	Support marketing groups/co-ops/organisations		x			Direct Marketing Community Development Trust (NS) Meat processing capacity development (YT)	
			Develop local and stocking facility that could be developed by a regional or local development policy	x	x	x			
		Anti-trust laws	Anti-trust laws			x	x	x	
			Contract regulations				x	x	
		Platform to link local producers with local buyers (lower transaction costs)	Platform to link local producers with local buyers (lower transaction costs)	x	x				
			Supporting the multiplication of farmer's kiosks	x	x				Agri-Food Market Development Program (PEI)
Offering urban land for farmer's markets	Offering urban land for farmer's markets	x					Prince George (BC), Healthy Eating Nova Scotia (NS)		

Zoning and LFS



**ZONING LAWS
FLEXIBILITY VS PROTECTION
NEW IDEAS**



Zoning policy



- 1978 law on zoning : context of economic development, speculation, fragmentation of the land and non agricultural use. A desire to plan and regulate
 - **Loi sur la protection des terres agricoles (LPTAA)**
 - **Commission de protection du territoire agricole du Québec (CPTAQ) : Quebec's agricultural zoning agency**

The dilemma



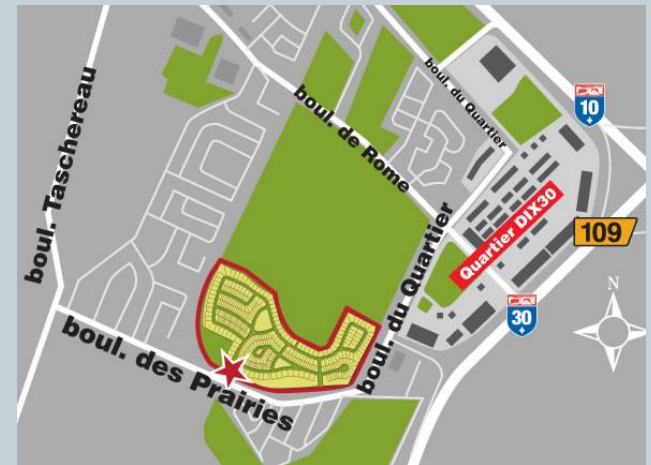
- LFS producers are mostly small and diversified needing small pieces of land (price doesn't help)
- The pressure for city expansion, speculation and non agricultural use is still strong
- How to reform the law without letting the door wide open to what we wanted to prevent from happening in the first place?



New arrangements for land use



- CAPTQ should be made more flexible to meet LFS needs.
 - In one case, the CPTAQ agreed to allow municipal authorities in Ste-Camille to take over management of a large farm that was for sale in order to help new young families establish small farms.
 - In order to do this, the CPTAQ de-zoned the land, technically empowering municipal authorities to develop it whichever way they want, though there was an understanding that the municipality would keep the land in agriculture.
- There should be a formal way to make such arrangements without necessarily de-zoning the land and placing it at risk.



Concluding remarks



- New agricultural policy expected in 2011-12 : based on the Pronovost Commission (hopes)
- Land use to become a great debate (shale gas, bio-energy, LPTAA reform, young farmers/newcomers, etc.)
- New initiatives : cooperative land trust, collective buying, Green belts, etc

