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You can feel the enthusiasm on the docks as the fishing season gets into full swing in all of Québec's maritime regions. Snow crab, lobster and Northern shrimp have arrived on the market to the great delight of consumers. I could see this effervescence when I visited the Gaspésie region a few weeks ago to meet with the key players of the commercial fishing and aquaculture industry.

First, I had the honour of announcing the coming into force of the Québec Fisheries Fund, in the company of the Minister of National Revenue and Member of Parliament for Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Diane Lebouthillier. This bilateral fund, which comes with a \$42.8 million envelope, will enable the Government of Québec and the Government of Canada to support the industry in carrying out innovative projects intended to increase its competitive edge and productivity. Fishers, fish farmers, members of Indigenous communities, research centres and postsecondary educational institutions are invited to submit their projects so that, together, we can stimulate innovation, increase investments, generate economic spin-offs and create jobs.

I went on to two days of interesting and enriching meetings that gave me the opportunity to discuss the fishing and processing industry's challenges and issues, as well as the mariculture sector and its development projects. These meetings with the driving forces of this sector that is vital and strategically significant for the coastal regions are important to me. I enjoy being where the action is and seeing activities in real time. I hope to soon return the favour to the people of the Magdalen Islands and the North Shore.

Best wishes for a great fishing season!



Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

ANDRÉ LAMONTAGNE

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MARICULTURE INDUSTRY IN QUÉBEC

By Omar Sarr,

Direction des analyses et des politiques des pêches et de l'aquaculture

In its 2015-2018 strategic plan, the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation (MAPAQ) provided for the production of sector-specific diagnoses. The goal is to support and guide agri-food businesses and sectors to strategically develop their productivity and competitive edge. To tie in with this objective, last March the Department published its sectoral diagnosis and portrait of the mariculture industry in Québec.¹ This document covers various aspects of Québec's sea farming industry—markets, production, companies, potential, issues and challenges, regulatory framework, departmental vision and objectives, public support and framework for joint action and consultation.

One of the things indicated in the portrait is that Québec's mariculture industry, which emerged in the 1970s with trial mussel and oyster farming, tackled major challenges, especially in regard to mastering technologies and techniques for raising the targeted species. This enabled the industry to gradually diversify production, which mainly consists of mussels, oysters, scallops and sea urchins. To date, the industry in Québec has 17 active enterprises based in the three maritime regions, namely, Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Gaspésie-Bas-Saint-Laurent and Côte-Nord.

The portrait also shows that all of Québec's mariculture production is sold almost exclusively on the Québec market, where the demand for bivalve molluscs is high. However, mariculture is not the only source of the bivalve molluscs sold in Québec: some are derived from fishing. For example, in 2017, the retail value of these molluscs in supermarkets was in the vicinity of \$42 million. This does not include direct sales to eating establishments or fish shops. Most bivalve molluscs sold on the Québec market come from Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, but also from the United States, China, Chile and Iceland.

From year to year, the volume of Québec's mariculture production ranges from 350 to 430 tons. However, its sales value increases every year. It went from \$664.5 thousand in 2011 to \$3 million in 2017—an increase of more than 350%.

In its 2018-2025 departmental action plan for the mariculture industry,² MAPAQ set a goal of helping the industry double its production volume by 2025. To achieve this, MAPAQ established a program³ for managing risks related to exceptional natural phenomena in mariculture. It also mandated the Société de développement de l'industrie maricole to manage another program geared to funding mariculture stocks.

By aiming for an increase in mariculture production volume, MAPAQ relies primarily on the industry's potential. This consists in particular of the possibility of re-opening mariculture sites that are not being used at present, optimizing production at all operational sites, and diversifying production by including other species such as algae. The upward trend in the demand for bivalve molluscs is an opportunity for Québec's mariculture industry to up its market share.

However, the industry must deal with certain related challenges such as marketing. Mariculture companies' compliance with the provincial and federal regulations in force, notably those concerning safe navigation, is another challenge that must be faced. Joint action and consultation among provincial and federal agencies and within the sector is another important consideration for the mariculture industry.

¹ www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/portraitmariculture

² www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/planmariculture

³ www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/progmariculture

PUBLISHED BY

Le ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation | Commercial Fisheries and Aquaculture Branch
Communications Directorate | 200, chemin Sainte-Foy, Québec (Québec) G1R 4X6 | www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca

Coordination team: Denis Desrosiers, Mélissa Lapointe, Jean Lavallée, Thierry Marcoux, Nathalie Moisan, Rabia Siga Sow, Karine Villemare.
FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE NEWS is published bimonthly as an insert in Pêche Impact.

LAUNCH OF THE QUÉBEC FISHERIES FUND

By Rabia Sow,

Direction des analyses et des politiques
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Last April 24, the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, André Lamontagne, and his federal counterpart, the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast, Jonathan Wilkinson, signed the bilateral agreement for the implementation of the Québec Fisheries Fund.

The signature of the agreement marks the beginning of the Fund's coming into force. The Fund consists of a five-year program with a \$42.8 million envelope. The federal government will provide 70% of the funding, and 30% will come from the Government of Québec.

The program has the following objectives:

- Increase productivity, competitiveness, quality and sustainability in the fish and seafood sector;
- Strengthen the industry's ability to adapt to changes in the ecosystem, including those related to climate change, and identify innovative responses to their impact on the fish and seafood sector;
- Enable the sector to stand out through innovation so as to offer quality products and sustainable sources.

ELIGIBLE CLIENTELE

Commercial enterprises, including:

- sole proprietorships;
- partnerships (enterprises that are not legal persons and held by more than one person);
- cooperatives;
- business corporations.

Non-commercial enterprises, including the following persons and organizations:

- industry associations;
- postsecondary educational institutions;
- research and innovation institutions;
- universities;
- groups or Indigenous organizations that are not commercial enterprises.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Various types of projects may qualify for funding under each of the following pillars:

- The following activities are eligible for Innovation funding.
 - Research and development leading to innovations that contribute to the sustainability of Quebec's fish and seafood sector.
 - Undertake pilot projects and test new innovations.
 - Undertake activities to market these innovations.

- Initiatives that support setting up partnerships or networks for innovation activities in the sector, in accordance with Québec Fisheries Fund objectives.
- The following activities are eligible for Infrastructure funding:
 - Adapting or adopting new technologies, or new processes or equipment to improve the efficiency and sustainability of the fish and seafood sector.
 - Provide training associated with adaption or adoption of new technologies, new processes or equipment.
- The following activities are eligible for Scientific Partnerships funding:
 - Research into the impacts of ecosystem changes on fish stocks, distribution and the commercial fishery.
 - Scientific activities to support the implementation of sustainable harvesting technologies.
 - Initiatives that support setting up partnerships or networks for innovation activities in the sector, in accordance with Québec Fisheries Fund objectives.

MAXIMUM FUNDING

For Innovation and Infrastructure, funding is in the amount of \$2,500,000 per project. Annual funding is in the amount of \$1,000,000.

For Scientific Partnerships, funding is in the amount of \$1,000,000. Annual funding is in the amount of \$500,000.

NON-REFUNDABLE OR REFUNDABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

1. Non-refundable contributions

- Contributions to non-profit organizations are non-refundable.
- Contributions to for-profit organizations are non-refundable in the following situations:
 - The contribution does not exceed \$100,000 and the administrative burden of refundable contributions is unjustified;
 - The financial advantages stemming from the contribution benefit several parties and not just the recipient;
 - The contribution is aimed mainly at fostering basic research and development, including payments granted by a granting council or other government body mandated to promote research and development.

2. Refundable contributions

Contributions issued to for-profit enterprises that are not subsumed under the above category are refundable, unconditionally or unconditionally.



For more information about the program, please contact:

- one of the regional directorates of the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation:

Direction régionale de la Gaspésie

96, montée de Sandy Beach, bureau 205
Gaspé (Québec)
G4X 2V6
Phone: 418 368-7676

Direction régionale des Îles-de-la-Madeleine

Édifice Réjean-Richard
101-125, chemin du Parc
Cap-aux-Meules (Québec) G4T 1B3
Phone: 418 986-2098

Direction régionale de la Côte-Nord

466, avenue Arnaud
Sept-Îles (Québec)
G4R 3B4
Phone: 418 964-8521

Direction régionale de l'Estuaire et des eaux intérieures

5195, boul. des Forges Bureau 106
Trois-Rivières (Québec)
G8Y 4Z3
Phone: 819 371-3971

- an office of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), Québec region:

MPO – Régional

104, rue Dalhousie
Québec (Québec)
G1K 7Y7

MPO – Gaspésie-Bas-Saint-Laurent

120, rue de la Reine
Gaspé (Québec)
G4X 2R2

MPO – Îles-de-la-Madeleine

235, chemin Principal
Porte 206
Cap-aux-Meules (Québec) G4T 1R7

MPO – Côte-Nord

701, boulevard Laure Bureau 203
Sept-Îles (Québec) G4R 1X8

Information about the program and how to apply is also found at:

- www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/fondspechesquebec
- www.quebecfisheriesfund.ca

RECAPPING SEAL FEST

By Michel Bélanger,

Direction des analyses et des politiques des pêches et de l'aquaculture

The second Seal Fest was held from March 21 to 31 at more than 20 restaurants in Québec City, Lévis, Montréal and on the Magdalen Islands. Each establishment offered dishes highlighting seal meat, paired with a cocktail, beer or wine. Seal Fest was presented by the Québec company SeaDNA and the Seals & Sealing Network.

Media coverage of this promotional activity was very positive and showed that Québec restaurant owners have a role to play in shining the spotlight on seal products. Québec has developed unique expertise when it comes to making the most of seal meat. Chefs acknowledge the product's distinctive qualities and are always thinking up new ways of preparing it and feature it proudly on their menus.

Supply and access to international markets continue to limit commercialization on a broader scale. However, initiatives like Seal Fest lend this product—that deserves to be known—greater accessibility and inform consumers about its numerous qualities. The festival is a Québec-wide showcase for seal products. It stimulates demand for these products and, as a result, encourages industry players to keep up the good work in terms of development and marketing alike. The Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation accompanies Québec's seal industry and supports its development in order to establish conditions that favour the sustainable use of this resource which abounds in the waters of the Gulf.

RENDEZ-VOUS LOUP-MARIN 2019 ON THE MAGDALEN ISLANDS

By Karine Villemaire,

Direction régionale des Îles-de-la-Madeleine

For the tenth consecutive year, the Fondation Willie Déraspe, in collaboration with the Association des chasseurs de phoques intra-Québec (ACPIQ), organized the Rendez-vous loup-marin on the Magdalen Islands. From March 2 to 10, an array of seal-related activities (discussions, lectures, screenings, a tribute evening and up to ten opportunities to give seal products visibility) were held across the Magdalen Islands.

Highlights included the tribute evening underscoring the outstanding work of a passionate seal hunter and captain much-appreciated by his peers, Denis Éloquin. He talked about the importance of developing Québec's seal industry and insisted on the need for a new generation of seal hunters. Special tribute was also paid to the pioneers and founders of the Centre d'interprétation du phoque and of the ACPIQ, two key organizations which respectively turned 25 and 35 this year.

A first for the Rendez-vous was a lively discussion entitled Regards sur le loup-marin. Six guests took part, and the audience learned more about these marine mammals and the industry as a whole. Participants described their personal connection to sealing, whether the link involved history, family, tourism or business. This segment was streamed live and remains available at the Rendez-vous loup-marin Facebook page.

Several screenings of Chasseurs de phoques were held across the Islands with the producer, Nicolas Lévesque, in attendance. After each presentation, the audience could chat with Mr. Lévesque and discuss the issues surrounding seal hunting's image and how the activity is perceived. Another important event was the Sealers' Supper, which was a resounding success again this year. The head chef from Le Parlementaire restaurant at the National Assembly of Québec, Martin Gagné, and his acolyte, Magdalen Islands chef Jacques Leblanc, concocted a seal-based meal with Indigenous accents, which delighted the taste buds of the 150-or-so guests and seal meat lovers.

Because of its contribution to the industry's visibility, Rendez-vous loup-marin is among the priorities of the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation and of the 2016-2019 action plan to develop Québec's seal industry. The Department is proud to provide financial support for this initiative.

INCREASING COLLABORATION BETWEEN QUÉBEC'S MINISTER AND ATLANTIC FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE MINISTERS

By Michel Bélanger,

Direction des analyses et des politiques des pêches et de l'aquaculture

As usual, the latest Seafood Expo North America (SENA) event generated a lot of buzz. Tens of thousands of visitors attended and numerous business meetings took place to plan for the next season. This annual gathering is North America's biggest aquatic product tradeshow.

This was the first visit for the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, André Lamontagne, who greatly enjoyed the experience. The economic mission was an opportunity for him to learn more about the business environment for Québec's fishing and aquaculture industry in the North American market and to meet the representatives of the companies who participated.

At SENA, business delegations from the Atlantic provinces are always accompanied by their premier or fisheries and aquaculture minister. The presence of government representatives year after year attests to the importance of Boston's Seafood Expo. The ministers from the various provinces also take the opportunity to meet and talk about common issues. The Atlantic ministers and the Québec minister were able to share their vision and ambitions concerning promotion on international markets, aquaculture industry growth, and seal industry development. By participating at SENA, Minister Lamontagne strengthened his relations with his counterparts from the Maritime provinces, with a view to fostering collaboration in current or future projects.

The cooperation at the tradeshow this year was palpable because Québec was part of joint online promotion and a single visual was used for all the booths in the provincial pavilions. The Québec minister was also part of the opening ceremony along with the fisheries ministers from the other provinces.

The fisheries ministers from Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Québec increased their collaboration in order to give more visibility to Canadian aquatic products on the international stage.



Photo : © Délégation du Québec à Boston

From left to right: Stephen McNeil, Premier of Nova Scotia; Keith Colwell, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture of Nova Scotia; André Lamontagne, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Sean Casey, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard; Robert Henderson, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries of Prince Edward Island; Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture of British Columbia; Ross Wetmore, Minister of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries of New Brunswick.

STUDY ON STOCKING IN QUÉBEC

By **Nathalie Moisan,**

Direction régionale de l'Estuaire et des eaux intérieures

Hatchery fish stocking makes it possible to enrich certain bodies of water where recreational fishing is carried out and to generate significant economic activity. In 2012, Quebecers spent nearly half a billion dollars on recreational fishing.¹ Stocking proves to be a strategic choice when natural production does not meet the demand of fishers. It may also serve to preserve natural populations or for restocking. In 2016, more than half (58%) of commercial production was used for stocking—the equivalent of 648,107 kilograms or some 2.5 million fish.

In collaboration with partners such as the Table filière de l'aquaculture en eau douce du Québec, the Fédération des pourvoires du Québec, the Association des aquaculteurs du Québec and the Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs, the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation (MAPAQ) conducted a study on hatchery fish stocking. The study made it possible to quantitatively assess the production of fish for stocking and to determine how much it meets the needs of the organizations that offer recreational fishing in Québec. A survey was therefore taken of 589 participants in November 2017; the response rate was 35%.

The results showed that for brook trout, demand exceeds supply. As a result, most producers say that they turn down orders because of a shortage of fish to sell. For some, the facilities or the amount of available water are factors that limit an increase in production. Others face constraints related to location in a watershed or a surplus of phosphorus. Water recirculation and use of low-phosphorus feeds could be one of the solutions for increasing current production levels. Furthermore, the arrival of new players in this market could help to meet demand.

THE SURVEY ALSO SHOWED THAT THERE IS AN INCREASING DEMAND FOR BIGGER FISH. IMPROVED FACILITIES AND FISH GENETICS SHOULD YIELD NOTICEABLE RESULTS IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS.

Among other findings, the availability of other species to diversify the fish supply, better networking among producers and clients to facilitate commercial activities, and ongoing genetic improvement of brook trout were aspects that interested the respondents. These proposals will help MAPAQ as well as the other departments and partners in the study to suggest advantageous solutions for developing the sector.

The full study is found at www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/etudeensemencement.

¹. QUÉBEC. MINISTÈRE DU DÉVELOPPEMENT DURABLE, DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT ET DES PARCS (2013). *Retombées économiques des activités de chasse, de pêche et de piégeage au Québec en 2012*, summary, study by BCDM Conseil inc., Québec, 16 p.

SECTORAL DIAGNOSIS AND PORTRAIT OF FRESHWATER AQUACULTURE IN QUÉBEC

By **Andy Cerqueira,**

Direction des analyses et des politiques des pêches et de l'aquaculture

Last March, the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation (MAPAQ) published a sectoral diagnosis and portrait of freshwater aquaculture in Québec (*Portrait-diagnostic sectoriel sur l'aquaculture en eau douce au Québec*). It presents Québec's freshwater aquaculture industry in terms of legislation, sustainable development and animal health, and describes current production in Québec.

The importance of Québec's aquaculture industry is longstanding. In fact, the first activities began in 1857 with salmonid farming. More than 150 years later, even though Québec aquaculture is still geared to salmonid production, techniques and markets have changed dramatically.

This industry, concerned with protecting wildlife and the environment, produces some 1,000 tons of fish for the recreational fishing sector or for our plates. Consisting of more than 90 businesses, its main output is brook trout, rainbow trout and Arctic char.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, aquaculture is the food sector that has enjoyed the strongest and most accelerated growth in the world, namely 7% per year. In 2013, its contribution was equivalent to that of the catch sector, and this growth should continue until 2030.

Even though this industry is developing less quickly in Québec, it has undeniable potential. It goes without saying that in terms of sustainable development, Québec's production stands out from the competition. Because activities are carried out in artificial ponds or basins, the risk of escapes into the natural environment and interaction with wild fish is kept to a minimum. Among other things, Québec businesses work to reduce phosphorus emissions.

As a result, MAPAQ's departmental action plan for Québec's fishing and aquaculture industry is aimed at doubling Québec's aquaculture yield by 2025.

The Portrait-diagnostic sectoriel sur l'aquaculture en eau douce au Québec is found at: www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/portraitaquaculture



PORTRAIT-DIAGNOSTIC SECTORIEL

**SUR L'AQUACULTURE
EN EAU DOUCE
AU QUÉBEC**

Québec