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**Transmettre la ferme familiale  
d'une génération à l'autre**  
**Situation au Québec et regard sur le  
monde**

**Handing Down the Family Farm**  
**The Situation in Quebec and a Look at Other Jurisdictions**



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# Abstract

Because they essentially evoke the idea of continuity, the concepts of inheritance, transfer, and succession seem somewhat at odds with the idea of revolution. However, in Quebec, a "quiet revolution" affecting the transfer of family farms has been underway for some time now, one that is completely transforming how farm ownership is passed on from generation to generation. In fact, the entire farm transfer process is in crisis today. Not only do farmers no longer know how to pass on farm assets, in some cases, the transfer is blocked. Farm transfer can be defined as a transition during which a designated successor moves to take up farming while another person, generally the main owner of a farm, simultaneously plans to leave the business, no matter how long the period required for each of them to achieve their respective goals. This transition period, which varies in length, constitutes the farm transfer period. Given this definition, our analysis in this study must obviously focus on 1) the means and resources employed over time by future farmers to enter the profession, and 2) the means and resources employed by the main owner to prepare for retirement.

## Objective

The goal of this paper is to review the situation in Quebec and compare it with the situation prevailing in other Western countries.

### *An inventory of farm transfer policies in Europe and North America*

For the purposes of this study, farm transfer policies and initiatives were surveyed in numerous countries, including Canada, the United States, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The analysis of these farm transfer policies, initiatives, and data allowed us to develop a method of assessing the farm transfer situation that made it possible to compare Quebec with other jurisdictions. As it will become clear, the situation in Quebec is special. We were also able to identify the various existing approaches to farm transfer.

### *A field survey on the dynamics of farm transfer in Quebec*

This study also sought to provide the most complete picture possible of the internal dynamics of the farm transfer process in Quebec. To do so, we conducted a survey of 114 farm owners and 114 young people already active in farming, i.e., owning at least a 20% share of the farm business. They were asked about their preparation to take up farming, the transfer process, their role in the day-to-day management of the farm, their vision for the farm's future, etc. More generally, they were asked about the constraints and obstacles to

transferring the farm in the first place, the actual conditions in which farm owners operate and, lastly, the means and resources employed by each of the partners to ensure a successful transfer. What sets this study apart from others on the topic is that we posed the same questions to 114 pairs of farm owners and their young successors.

## Findings

Among the study's findings, two deserve special notice.

### *The lack of research on farm transfers*

The first finding, and perhaps the most important, is that the lack of research on farm transfers makes it impossible to conduct a proper overall assessment of the farm transfer situation in Quebec. The lack of data impedes the development of appropriate farm transfer policies and policy measures, thereby limiting decision makers and stakeholders in their ability to take action. Admittedly, Quebec has taken a significant step forward in the field of research with the introduction of its young farmers integration policy (*Politique d'intégration des jeunes en agriculture*), but much remains to be done before the new policy yields tangible results in the form of organized, structured, and targeted measures on farm transfer.

### *Economic analysis obscures the importance of human relations*

The second finding, also very important, is that overemphasis on the economic aspects of farm transfer obscures the important role that human relations play in the successful transfer of family agricultural assets. It is certainly true that no examination of the difficulties of farm transfer today would be complete without taking into account ballooning farm assets and establishment assistance programs: both are crucial to understanding the scope of the obstacles facing young farmers and farm transfers. Were we to stop there, however, we would undoubtedly miss an important aspect of the farm transfer equation—the relations between farm owners and their successors in the farm transfer process itself. The process is fraught with pitfalls as young farmers seek to take their place in running the farm while owners gradually yield responsibility. Our findings show that slightly over one quarter of the sample was clearly unprepared for the establishment and transfer process, that a high level of disagreement exists as to the division of management responsibilities, that communications are sometimes lacking, etc. These are just some of the obstacles to the integration of young farmers and successful farm transfers.

*Overemphasis on the economic aspects of farm transfer obscures the important role that human relations play in the successful transfer of family agricultural assets.*

## Results

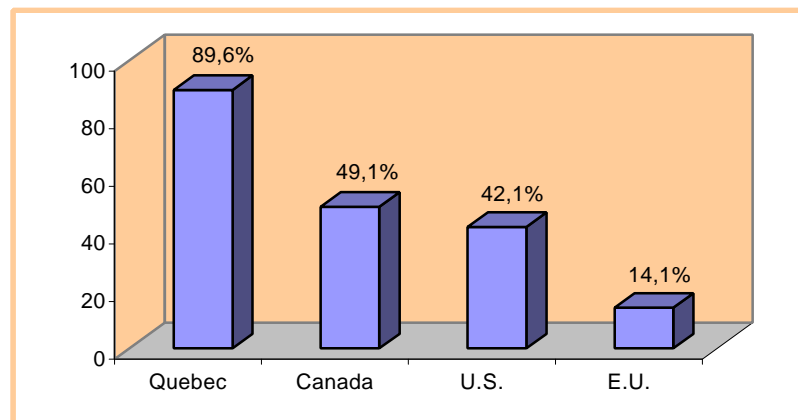
In order to determine where Quebec stands in terms of farm transfers, we had to identify a way to compare it to other jurisdictions on the same basis. Once we had an idea of the overall picture, we were able to perform a more precise analysis of the farm transfer situation in Quebec.

### *The situation in Quebec and other jurisdictions*

*At 89.6%, Quebec has the highest farmer replacement rate. By comparison, the rate for Canada as a whole is 49.1%.*

In order to compare the farm transfer situation in different jurisdictions, we established a farmer replacement rate based on the number of young farmers 34 and under in the active agricultural population compared to the number of farmers 55 and over likely to retire within the next 10 years. According to estimates by the United States Department of Agriculture (specifically the Economic Research Service of the USDA), we can postulate that a 50% replacement rate is sufficient to ensure the renewal of the farming population. Among the jurisdictions studied, Quebec has the highest farmer replacement rate at 89.6%. By comparison, the rate for Canada as a whole is only 49.1%. Among the other Canadian provinces, Manitoba has a replacement rate of 57.1% followed by Prince Edward Island at 53%, Alberta at 50.6%, Newfoundland at 48%, Saskatchewan at 44.3%, Nova Scotia at 40.7%, Ontario at 40.6%, New Brunswick at 36%, and British Columbia at 34.3%. For the United States, the rate is 42.1%, and the EU has a rate of 14.1%.

Farmer Replacement Rates in Quebec, Canada, the United States, and Europe



Source : J. Tondreau, D. Parent et J.-P. Perrier (2001). Transmission de la ferme familiale d'une génération à l'autre : situation au Québec et regard sur le monde.

*Quebec is the only place in North America to offer startup grants (between \$20,000 and \$30,000) to young people interested in getting into farming.*

Like France, Quebec has developed a wide variety of measures to promote farm transfers and startups. In fact, Quebec is the only jurisdiction in North America offering establishment grants (between \$20,000 and \$30,000) to young people interested in getting into farming. In this respect, the province's policies are in line with those in a number of European countries that also offer similar grants (Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, Austria, Finland, and Sweden). Quebec is also the Canadian province with the greatest diversity of organizations and services promoting farm transfers and startups. These include regional farming establishment centers and agricultural management pools.

Among the other benefits Quebec offers in terms of farm transfer and establishment is the fact that it is the jurisdiction with the highest proportion of farms generating revenues over \$100,000. Also, the number of active full-time farmers is on the rise. This is in contrast with all the other jurisdictions examined, where, in some cases, there has been a significant increase in the number of part-time farmers.

Some of the disadvantages in Quebec include a steady decrease in the number of farms in the province, particularly small farms. By comparison, four Canadian provinces saw an increase in the number of farms between 1991 and 1996: British Columbia (+12%), Alberta (+3%), Nova Scotia (+1%), and Newfoundland (+0.8%). Other disadvantages are the fact that between 1997 and 1999, Quebec posted the biggest increase in farm assets in Canada and the second biggest increase in the average debt per farm. Despite this, net farm income rose substantially.

In fact, farm costs have been increasing all across Canada. In 1995, the assets of the average Canadian farm were \$733,983. This figure rose to \$777,249 in 1997 and \$896,013 in 1999, increases of 5.9% and 15.3% respectively. Although average assets increased slowly in certain provinces between 1997 and 1999, notably in Saskatchewan and British Columbia, it was a different story for Quebec and the Maritimes, where average farm assets rose by 35% and 23.4% respectively during the same period.

The increase in farm assets has had an effect on average farm debt loads, which have also increased significantly in all provinces. The average farm debt for Canada as a whole stood at \$113,465 in 1995, \$130,822 in 1997, and \$163,112 in 1999, increases of 15.3% and 24.7% respectively. Between 1997 and 1999, the Maritimes (39%) and Quebec (36%) experienced the greatest increase in the average debt per agricultural enterprise. They were followed by Manitoba (28%), Saskatchewan (23%), Ontario (21%), Alberta (21%), and British Columbia (11%). Egg farms (77%) and hog farms recorded the highest increase in average debt during this period whereas the rise in average dairy farm debt loads was in the order of 39%.

Increases in average assets and debt per farm constitute a major obstacle not only for young people seeking to get into agriculture, but also for older farmers planning to retire. Young farmers must evaluate farm income-generating capacity to determine their ability to deal with the increase in assets and debt load. In short, assuming that expenditures remain constant, increases in income-generating capacity must be proportional with increases in assets and debt. In 1995, the average net income per farm in Canada was \$33,726. This figure fell to \$31,625 in 1997 and climbed again to \$32,167 in 1999. However, the situation varied significantly from province to province. Between 1997 and 1999, certain provinces posted considerable increases in average farm income while others recorded major drops. The biggest increases were in British Columbia (38%), Quebec (35%), and the Maritimes (34%). Alberta (+5%) and Ontario (+11%) posted more moderate gains, whereas Saskatchewan (-34%) and Manitoba (-20%) saw significant drops.

Although Quebec stands out for the quantity and diversity of resources it makes available to partners in farm transfers, it also stands out for its failure to coordinate these same resources. Although the province has begun to look into developing a more integrated approach (for instance, initiatives to set up a one-stop consulting service), much remains to be done before arriving at more structured actions like the *Associations départementales d'aménagement des structures d'exploitations agricoles* (ADASEA) in France and the *Farm Centers* that exist in certain American states. So far, only Ontario has created a center specialized in farm transfers—the *Centre for Family Farm Succession* in Guelph.

*Between 1991 and 1996, four Canadian provinces recorded an increase in the number of farms. They were British Columbia (+12%), Alberta (+3%), Nova Scotia (+1%), and Newfoundland (+0.8%).*

*Although Quebec stands out for the quantity and diversity of resources it makes available to the partners in farm transfers, it also stands out for its failure to coordinate these resources.*

An analysis of the steps leading to the creation of one-stop service centers to facilitate farm transfers and startups in certain American states reveals six main types of initiative:

- ? Creation of a coalition bringing together stakeholders interested in the development of farm transfer and startup initiatives
- ? Implementation of a research program to examine the farm transfer situation in detail
- ? Drafting of a guide outlining the principal aspects of farm transfer, the various strategies possible, and the main resources and tools required to assess and develop farm succession initiatives
- ? Establishment of a farm databank
- ? Creation of a farm transfer center featuring 1) a financial and management consulting service that works in close cooperation with existing financial organizations, and 2) an information service operating on a forum model where transfer specialists share their knowledge with farmers
- ? Implementation of measures to periodically assess farm transfer programs and policies

#### *The dynamics of the farm transfer process in Quebec*

Our portrait of the farm transfer situation in Quebec has enabled us to take a major step forward by shedding light on certain trends that could have a significant impact on farm startups and transfers. One fundamental trend is the rapid increase in agricultural assets. Although this factor is important in understanding the obstacles facing young farmers—and one that they talk about extensively—it does not explain everything. Even under favorable economic conditions, farm transfers may encounter difficulties or even failure, but for social rather than economic reasons. As farm transfer stakeholders have often noted and the creation of regional farm startup centers confirms, communications and relations between farm transfer partners are two important factors for success.

In this light, it was essential to verify the importance of communication and social relations in the farm transfer process. It was also very important to determine the level of preparation by young farmers seeking to establish themselves as well as by farm owners planning to transfer their farms. Lastly, it was necessary to develop a way of measuring another fundamental aspect of farm transfers—the degree of transferability of the farms studied. Were the farms in favorable state for transfer to a young farmer? The main indicators examined in the study were—

- ? Preparation for establishment by young farmers
- ? Preparation for transfer by farm owners
- ? The level of involvement of young farmers in daily farm management
- ? The division of management responsibility between farm owners and their young successors



? The degree of farm transferability<sup>1</sup>.

The young farmers in our study sample were relatively well educated. No less than 75% of them had agricultural training, 46% of whom held a college diploma (DSC), as shown in the table below. This figure may seem high, but it is important to remember that our sample was composed of young farmers with a minimum 20% ownership share in an agricultural business—in other words, farmers who, for the most part, qualified for establishment grants requiring, in most cases, a high school or college diploma in agriculture.

Highest level of education achieved by young farmers and farm owners, in %

Young Farmers	%	%	Farm Owners
No diploma	4	67	No diploma
High school and other	15	19	High school and other
Vocational diploma (agr.)	29	5	Vocational diploma (agr.)
General DSC and other	4	4	General DSC and other
DSC in agriculture	46	3	DSC in agriculture
University agriculture program and other	2	2	University agriculture program and other
<b>Total</b>	100	100	<b>Total</b>

Source : J. Tondreau, D. Parent et J.-P. Perrier (2001). Transmission de la ferme familiale d'une génération à l'autre : situation au Québec et regard sur le monde.

In matters of farm transfer and establishment, accountants are the professionals most frequently consulted by farm owners, whereas young farmers turn more often to financial advisors. A total of 51% of owners reported that they often consulted accountants as opposed to only 30% of younger farmers, whereas 37% of the latter reported frequently consulting financial advisors. Advisors at regional agricultural establishment centers (CRÉA) and notaries are often consulted by a small proportion of owners (13%) and young farmers (11%).

Professionals most often consulted about farm transfers

By Young Farmers	%	%	By Farm Owners
Financial advisors	37	51	Accountants
Accountants	30	21	Financial advisors
Management pools	19	15	Management pools
MAPAQ agronomists	18	14	MAPAQ agronomists
Notaries	13	13	Notaries
CRÉA advisors	11	11	CRÉA advisors

Source : J. Tondreau, D. Parent et J.-P. Perrier (2001). Transmission de la ferme familiale d'une génération à l'autre : situation au Québec et regard sur le monde.

<sup>1</sup>. See Appendix 2 for details on the creation of these indices. Each index was subjected to statistical testing such as the chi square, the Kappa test, and bivariate and multivariate analyses.

*However, in 44% of cases, young farmers responded that the transfer of ownership would be completed within five years or less, whereas the owners responded that it would take much longer.*

To assess the level of communication between farm transfer partners, we posed a series of questions on the same topics to owners and young farmers. We asked young farmers how long they thought it would be before all ownership and management authority was transferred to them. We then asked all owners how long they felt it would take to transfer full ownership and management authority to their successors. In just over half of the cases (51%), the young farmers were correct in their estimates. However, in 44% of cases, young farmers underestimated the time it would take to complete the farm transfer. A number of them responded that the transfer of ownership would be completed within five years or less, whereas the owners responded that it would take much longer. Another 5% of young respondents overestimated the time the transfer would take, declaring a longer transfer period than anticipated by the owners themselves.

We asked owners whether their successors had drawn up an establishment plan, then asked young farmers themselves whether they had done so. In 32% of cases, the owners responded incorrectly. For example, in a number of cases, young farmers claimed to have drawn up establishment plans whereas the farm owners declared the contrary. We asked a similar question to verify how well informed young farmers were about farm owner transfer planning. In 41% of cases, young farmers responded incorrectly.

Similarly, we asked each farm owner how they envisaged the development of their farm over the next ten years. Would it grow or stay the same? We asked young farmers the same question, then compared answers. In 75% of cases, successors and owners agreed that the farms would grow. In 5% of cases, they agreed the farms would stay the same. In 20% of cases, young farmers and owners held opposing views on how their farms would develop in the years ahead.

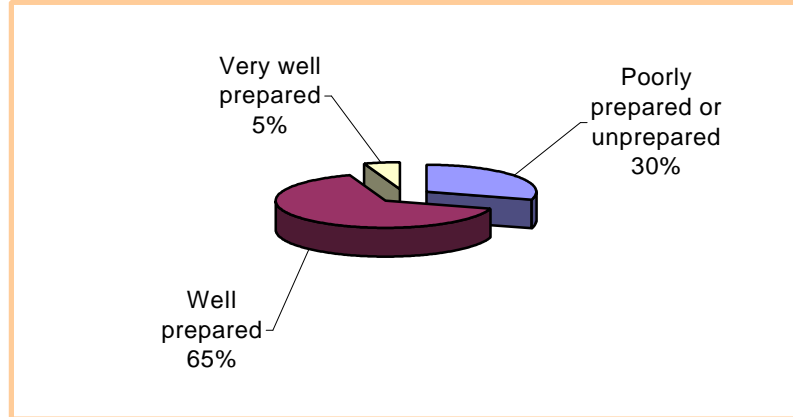
*In 75% of cases, successors and owners agreed that the farms would grow. In 5% of cases, they agreed the farms would stay the same. In 20% of cases, young farmers and owners held opposing views on how their farms would develop in the years ahead.*

We also wanted to find out whether young farmers were well prepared to go into farming. To do so, we developed a preparedness index based on the answers to 21 questions from the young farmer questionnaire. The questions selected dealt with initial training (questions 11 to 12)<sup>2</sup>, professional development (questions 25 to 28), involvement in farming community activities (questions 47 to 50), discussions with farm owners and other family members regarding plans for establishment (questions 60 and 61), and consultations with farm transfer specialists (questions 62 to 68). There were also questions on whether the respondent had taken a farm transfer course or drawn up an establishment plan. Each question was weighted to give an average score for each young farmer. The resulting index shows that 70% of the young farmers surveyed were either well prepared or very well prepared to go into farming—i.e., each had completed at least one agricultural training program, taken professional development courses after obtaining their diploma, drawn up an establishment plan, taken farm transfer courses, consulted farm transfer specialists, and been involved in farming community activities—all of which are opportunities to obtain relevant information on running a farm—as well as discussed their plans with the owner(s) of the farm they planned to take over. In contrast, 30% of the young respondents planning to go into farming were little prepared or unprepared for the task.

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<sup>2</sup> For the exact wording of the survey questions for young farmers, see Appendix 3.

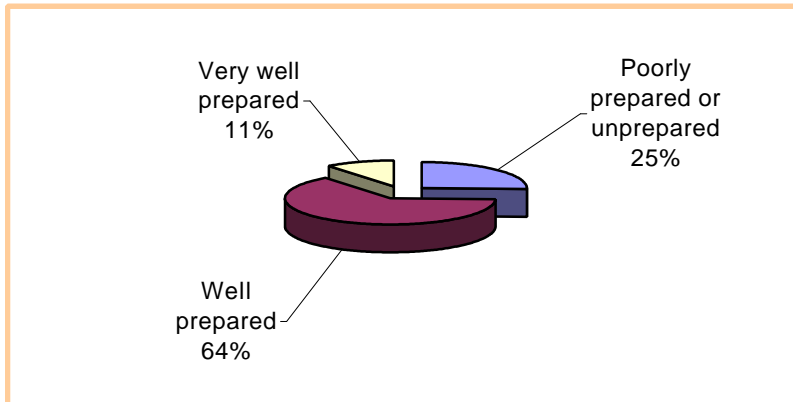
### Preparedness of young farmers



Source : J. Tondreau, D. Parent et J.-P. Perrier (2001). Transmission de la ferme familiale d'une génération à l'autre : situation au Québec et regard sur le monde.

Although the level of preparation of young farmers taking up farming is very important for successful farm transfers, farm owner preparation for transfer is equally important. The farm transfer preparedness index was developed based on answers to 16 questions from the farm owner questionnaire. The questions selected dealt with participation in farming community activities (questions 29 to 32), discussions of transfer plans with the young farmer and other family members (questions 39 and 40), and consultations with farm transfer specialists (questions 41 to 46). There were also questions on whether the owner had taken a farm transfer course (question 47), drawn up a transfer plan (question 48), invested in an RRSP (question 81), or made other retirement investments (question 82). Each question was weighted to give an average score for each owner. The index shows that 25% of farm owners are poorly prepared or unprepared to transfer their farms. Yet proper planning is deemed essential by farm transfer specialists because it has a major impact on the likelihood of farm transfer success.

### Farm owner preparedness for farm transfer

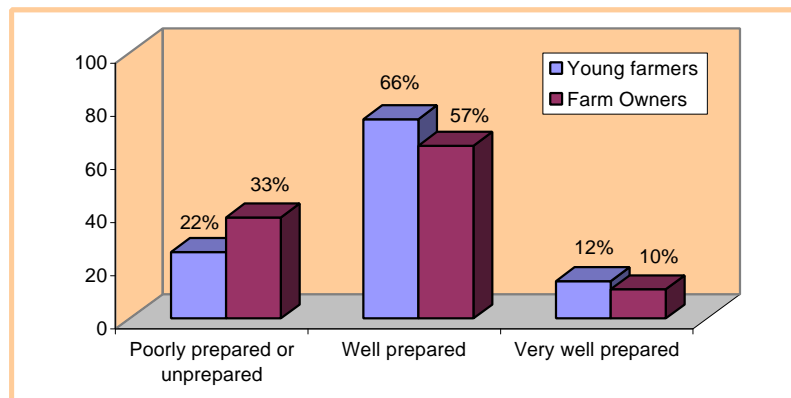


Source : J. Tondreau, D. Parent et J.-P. Perrier (2001). Transmission de la ferme familiale d'une génération à l'autre : situation au Québec et regard sur le monde.

*Statistically, we can conclude that when a young farmer is well prepared to take up farming, there is a high probability that the owner is well prepared to transfer the farm.*

Comparing young farmers and farm owners with regard to their level of establishment or farm transfer preparedness requires a common basis for comparison. As a result, we had to select indicators common to both groups: involvement in farming community activities, discussions with other farm partners, and consultations with advisors, completion of a farm transfer course, preparation of an establishment or transfer plan. Each of the questions was weighted to give an average score for young farmers and farm owners. As the chart below indicates, young farmers are better prepared for their establishment than farm owners for farm transfer. However, and the finding is important, there is a positive and significant statistical relationship between establishment preparedness and transfer preparedness. In other words, when a young farmer is well prepared to take up farming, there is a high probability that the owner is well prepared to transfer the farm. By the same token, when an owner is well prepared to transfer his farm, there is a high probability that the successor is equally well prepared to take over the reins. Inversely, when a young farmer is poorly prepared or unprepared to enter farming, there is a strong likelihood that the farm owner is poorly prepared or unprepared for the transfer.

Comparative index of establishment and transfer Preparedness



Source : J. Tondreau, D. Parent et J.-P. Perrier (2001). Transmission de la ferme familiale d'une génération à l'autre : situation au Québec et regard sur le monde.

We also wanted to verify how involved young farmers were in day-to-day farm management. To do so, we developed an index based on 13 questions dealing with various farm tasks performed throughout the year. We posed the same questions to young farmers and farm owners.

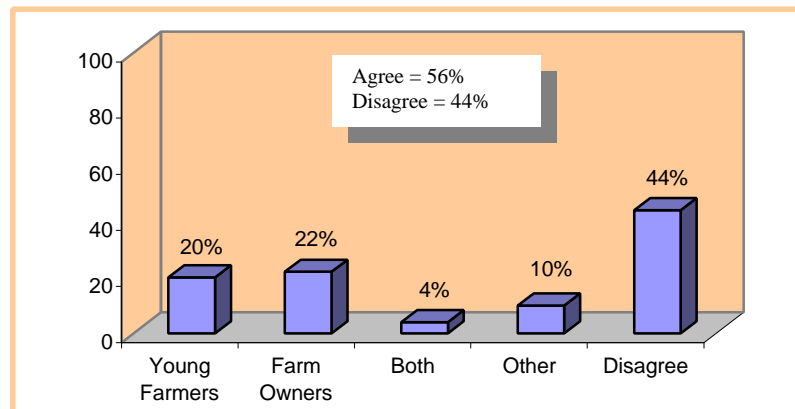
1. Who handles crop management on the farm?
2. Who is in charge of herd management?
3. Who votes on behalf of the farm at farming community activities?
4. Who handles recruitment and selection of farm hands?
5. Who determines the daily work schedule?
6. Who schedules meetings to discuss farm business?
7. Who decides when to pay the bills?

8. Who has authority over farm employees?
9. Who chooses input suppliers?
10. Who negotiates with input suppliers?
11. Who negotiates selling prices for crops and livestock?
12. Who makes investment decisions?
13. Who negotiates credit and financing?

For each question, young farmers and farm owners had to indicate either who was responsible for the task mentioned, whether they shared the responsibility, or whether someone else on the farm was in charge. By compiling the answers to yield a score, we were able to rank farm owners and young farmers according to their level of agreement or disagreement on the division of responsibilities. We were also able to determine the degree (weak or strong) of agreement or disagreement.

The results indicate that the integration of young farmers into farm management is problematic. There was a high level of disagreement on the 13 tasks, which included everything from crop management to investment decision making. In fact, in 44% of cases, farm owners and their successors disagreed on who held responsibility for the various tasks on the farm.

Summary Table: 13 questions on the involvement of young farmers in farm management

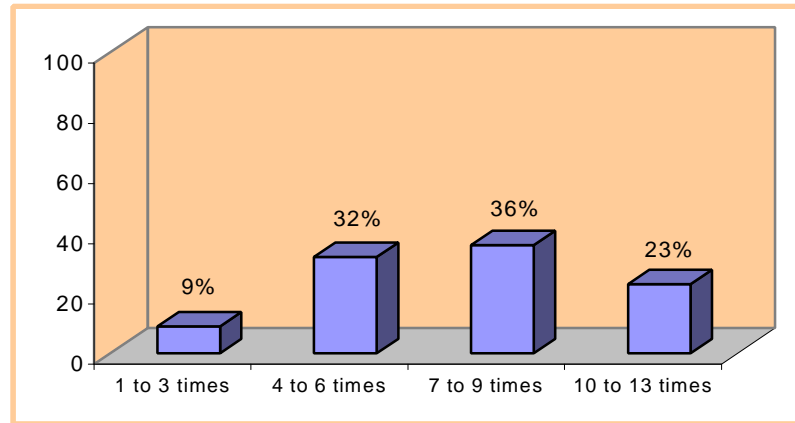


Source : J. Tondreau, D. Parent et J.-P. Perrier (2001). Transmission de la ferme familiale d'une génération à l'autre : situation au Québec et regard sur le monde.

As the chart below indicates, 23% of farm owners and their successors agree on the 13 questions between 10 and 13 times, showing a high level of agreement. However, in 32% of cases, farm owners and their successors only shared the same answers four to six times, and in 9% of cases, only 1 to 3 times. These results clearly show a significant level of disagreement among slightly over 40% of the sample with regards to the attribution of farm tasks. In such cases, farm partners are likely to experience tensions and perhaps even break off transfer plans. As one Quebec study found (Parent, Jean and Simard, 1999), breakoffs are more common in failed farms. In these situations, young farmers generally

feel excluded from farm management, grow discouraged, and eventually abandon their farming plans.

Percentage of agreement between farm transfer partners



Source : J. Tondreau, D. Parent et J.-P. Perrier (2001). Transmission de la ferme familiale d'une génération à l'autre : situation au Québec et regard sur le monde.

Using the answers to the 13 questions, we recategorized the questions according to the degree of young farmer involvement with the tasks mentioned, from lowest to highest. We then grouped the questions into four levels of authority, taking into account the "strategic" aspect of each task. For example, responsibility for choosing suppliers of farm inputs, which we ranked level 1, is much less important than responsibility for investment decisions, which we classified at level 4. The questions were grouped as follows:

#### Level 1

- ? Who is in charge of herd management?
- ? Who chooses input suppliers?
- ? Who handles crop management on the farm?

#### Level 2

- ? Who negotiates with input suppliers?
- ? Who decides when to pay the bills?
- ? Who votes on behalf of the farm at farming community activities?

#### Level 3

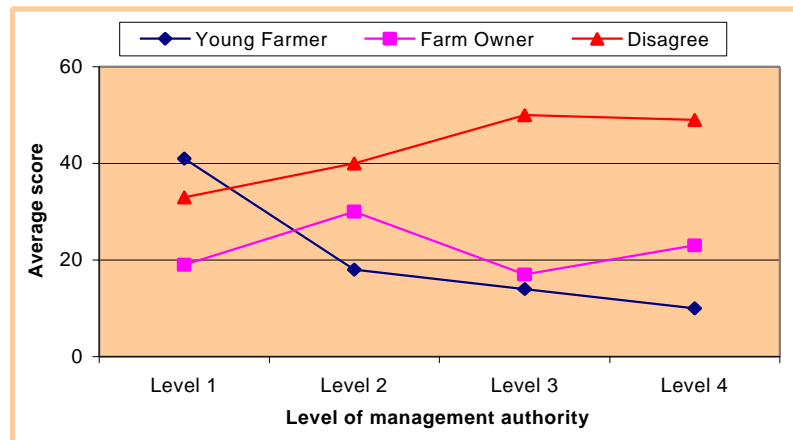
- ? Who negotiates selling prices for crops and livestock?
- ? Who determines the daily work schedule?
- ? Who handles recruitment and selection of farm hands?

#### Level 4

- ? Who negotiates credit and financing?
- ? Who has authority over farm employees?
- ? Who makes investment decisions?
- ? Who determines the agenda at meetings to discuss farm business?

As the following chart shows, average scores for young farmers are very high for level 1 tasks (41), indicating a high level of involvement at this level. Conversely, farm owners are not very involved in these tasks, leaving management authority to their successors. Moreover, the level of disagreement between owners and their young successors is lowest at level 1. The situation changes markedly at level 2. The average score for young farmers drops to 18, whereas the score for owners increases to 30, indicating that they have held on to more level 2 management responsibilities. As we move up through authority levels 3 and 4, the average score of young farmers decreases further, but not as dramatically as between levels 1 and 2. Note also that the average score for owners is lower at levels 3 and 4 than at level 2, even though they continue to exercise greater management control than young farmers. This situation is due to the fact that level 3 and 4 tasks are shared with other members of the family, such as the mother, father, or sibling. However, the level of disagreement between farm owners and their successors increases markedly between levels 3 and 4, with an average score of 50.

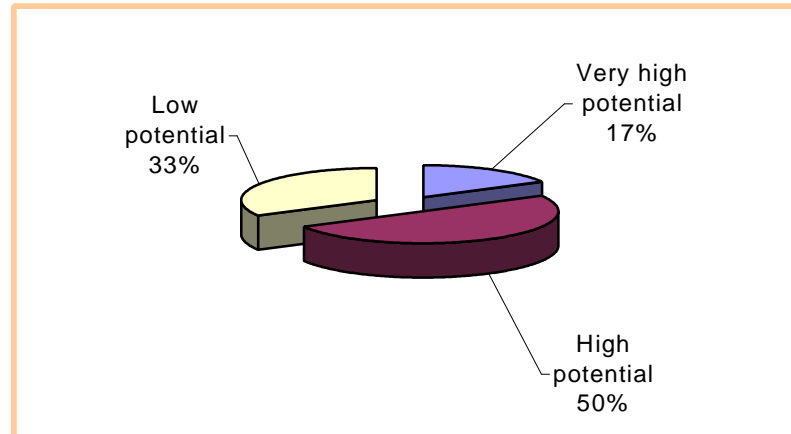
Young farmers and levels of farm management authority



Source : J. Tondreau, D. Parent et J.-P. Perrier (2001). Transmission de la ferme familiale d'une génération à l'autre : situation au Québec et regard sur le monde.

Lastly, we wanted to find out whether the farms in our study had good transfer potential. To do so, we asked farm owners whether they had, during the preceding five years, invested in additional dairy quotas, made new machinery purchases, built new farm buildings, or increased herd sizes. These questions were designed to assess efforts to maintain or develop the farm, important indicators for young farmers taking over a farm. We also asked them to indicate the value of their farm assets as well as their gross income and overall farm debt. Using these questions, we developed an index of farm transferability. For example, a low income farm with a high debt load and no investments over the preceding five years would have low transferability potential. High income farms with a small debt load and numerous investments over the preceding five years would be ranked as having very high transferability potential.

## Farm Transferability Potential



Source : J. Tondreau, D. Parent et J.-P. Perrier (2001). Transmission de la ferme familiale d'une génération à l'autre : situation au Québec et regard sur le monde.

Overall, 33% of the farms in our sample showed low transferability potential. Young farmers taking over such farms will face much more serious difficulties than those taking over farms with high (50%) or very high potential (17%). However, this indicator should be interpreted with caution given that our data, which were primarily technical and economic, are insufficient to allow for an in-depth evaluation of farm transferability potential

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By no means could our research answer all the questions on farm transfers and the establishment of young farmers. The topic is too vast and complex to cover in a single study. Two important aspects need to be developed in future research in order to develop a more accurate portrayal of the overall situation and the internal dynamics of farm transfer and establishment in Quebec: 1) a study of the barriers to becoming a farmer and leaving the farming business; and 2) the development of diagnostic tools designed to identify areas of conflict during the phase when young farmers gradually take over farm management responsibilities.