

The 76th edition of the Quebec Produce Marketing Association (QPMA) convention focused on innovation

Montreal, August 24, 2023 – The 76th Quebec Produce Marketing Association (QPMA) convention was held from August 17 to 19 at the majestic Fairmont Le Château Frontenac in Quebec City. "*Feeding Innovation*," this year's theme, featured prominently in the event's conferences and networking activities, where our members' usual energy, resilience and creativity shone brightly during the exchanges and discussions.

The **536** convention participants were warmly welcomed by the 2023 QPMA Board of Directors Chairman **Chris Sarantis (Canadawide)** and his wife **Pota Bountounis**, and Conference Chairman **Christian Riopel (Sobeys Québec)** and his wife **Nancy Potvin**, and the event more than lived up to their expectations.

Annual General Meeting: Two new directors and many achievements

Two newly elected directors were announced at the Annual General Meeting: **Danny Boileau**, Production Manager (Jean-Yves Boileau et fils), representing the Grower-Packer-Processor-Shipper sector, and **Domenico Procopio**, Purchasing Manager (Courchesne Larose), representing the Wholesaler-Importer-Exporter sector.

During the meeting, Elke Steinwender of **Maïeutyk** presented the Association's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, which sets the direction and priorities for the coming years. The members were enthusiastic about the plan and shared their determination and ideas to help make it a reality, clear evidence of the produce sector's strength and commitment!

One of the four main directions outlined in the QPMA's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan is to "assert the QPMA as the voice of Quebec's produce industry", even more strongly than before, during a year that's been difficult for producers in fields, orchards, and greenhouses and for the entire fruit and vegetable distribution chain as a result of the impacts of climate change. Two topical presentations on the outlook for water management in Quebec and the United States were given, the first by Isabelle Charest of Groupe Agéco and the second by Chris Drew of Ocean Mist Farms.

Conferences: The QPMA makes responding to members' issues and questions a priority

Jean-François Bertholet, Organizations Development Consultant and HEC Montréal Lecturer, gave a conference on "How to work better together" ("*Comment travailler mieux ensemble*"), during which attendees discovered tools to improve their teams' performance through greater employee involvement. "Not necessarily working more intensely but working better" sums up this Friday afternoon conference well.

The QPMA also wanted to inject a bit of fun – and philosophy – into the conference, so it invited Biologist, Oceanographer and Comedian **Boucar Diouf** to speak about water, winter, fruits and vegetables specifically, and food in general. His was an inspired and inspiring talk.

The I Love Fruits and Veggies Movement Brunch: Always a big hit!

Co-hosted by Nutritionist and I Love Fruits and Veggies Movement Spokesperson **Julie DesGroseilliers** and QPMA Director of Strategy and Communications **Mario Lalancette**, the Brunch presented the highlights for 2023 with the Movement's ambassadors.

Producer Josée Petitclerc of **Patates Dolbec**, the Movement's industry ambassador, and Audrey-Anne Desjardins, I Love Fruits and Veggies Movement Brand Manager, presented the initiatives undertaken by members as part of the **I Love Contest**, including a wide range of projects in **three categories** (digital, packaging, and print) to raise the Movement's profile throughout Quebec and beyond. **Special pick** (*coup de cœur*) categories were also new this year.

Digital category: **Ferme André Locas et fils**

Packaging category: **Improve**

Print category: **JPL Maraîcher**

Digital category: **Gen V and Nordany/Ferme J Ouimet**

Packaging category *coup de cœur*: **Sobeys**

Print category *coup de cœur*: **Bellefont Powell**

Coup de cœur Grand Prize: **Canadawide**

The Brunch was an opportunity to take stock of the **I Love Fruits and Veggies Movement's** five years of existence. With its energetic team of ambassadors-influencers and collaboration with a broad range of experts, the Movement has become increasingly well-known! Both on **social media** (Facebook and Instagram) and in the field, the I Love Fruits and Veggies team stays accessible and close to its community. With the publication of its Zéro Gaspi notebooks in collaboration with Florence-Léa Siry, its **monthly comparisons** posted on Facebook, and weekly suggestions for buying fruits and vegetables on a budget of \$20 by Julie DesGroseilliers and others, the Movement also wants to demystify **preconceived ideas** about fruits and vegetables.

To coincide with the conference, the Quebec government announced **\$500,000** in funding for the I Love Fruits and Veggies Movement, through combined subsidies from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (**MAPAQ**) and the Ministry of Health and Social Services (**MSSS**). This grant will be used to run a major social marketing campaign aimed at raising awareness of fresh and processed fruits and vegetables and promoting their consumption, particularly among **vulnerable groups**.

Closing banquet: Honours... and emotions

The highlight of the conference was the 2023 banquet hosted by **Katerine-Lune Rollet**. The evening had many highlights, including **Gérard Trudeau (Les Fermes Trudeau)** being honoured as the **pillar of the 2023 Quebec produce industry** for his impressive career, vision, and integrity and for the mentoring he's paid forward to the sector's next generation over the last few decades. Gérard, an undeniably strong pillar, was proud to receive this recognition.

"Passion is about realizing who you are... What's your soul made of? Try to set an intention to live by when you're young, as this will determine the harvest you reap in the autumn of your life. So, set our intentions and opportunities will spring from them. If you do this with love, the passion will always be there because you're contributing to society, not waiting for society to be there to serve you... I must extend my thanks first to my wife and two sons. Without them, I wouldn't have achieved what I have." – Gérard Trudeau

Annie Gagnon (Les Cultures de chez nous), 2023 Next-Generation intern, reflected on her experiences of the past year, including a host of incredible human and professional encounters; it was a year filled with **activities, company visits** and **government** representations. During the banquet, the upcoming year's intern was presented by **Desjardins**, which has renewed its partnership with Cultivating the Next-Generation program. After presenting his candidacy for a second year running, young father **Yannick Guérin (Jardins A. Guérin et fils)** was selected as the 2024 Next-Generation intern. His entrepreneurial vision, which he intends to share with the Association, and his active collaboration are eagerly awaited.

This year's guest of honour was **Dr. Horacio Arruda**, who highlighted the QPMA's contribution as a public health player. His presence at the banquet reaffirmed the Association's mission in this area. Dr. Arruda also noted and acknowledged the role of produce companies in helping to feed the world and keep it healthy.

Members, past Presidents and industry people paid a moving tribute to President and CEO **Sophie Perreault** for her 20-year career at the QPMA. They thanked her for her leadership, determination, dedication, and unique way of putting others first. Everyone was keen to emphasize her invaluable contribution to making the QPMA the well-recognized Association it is today, whether with produce industry players, the government, or the general public.

Finally, the handover of powers took place. **Chris Sarantis** looked back on his year as Chairman of the Board, a year punctuated by major announcements and the implementation of a Strategic Plan for 2023-2026. It was with great pleasure and emotion that he handed over the chairmanship of the Board of Directors to **Enrico Charest (Sobeys)**. Enrico Charest and Pascal Guérin (JAG – **Jardins A. Guérin et fils**), President of the 2024 Convention, said they were looking forward to seeing everyone and enjoying the colourful fall foliage at the **Fairmont Tremblant from September 19 to 21, 2024**, for the QPMA's 77th Convention.

Click here to view all the photos.

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR CONVENTION PARTICIPANTS AND SPONSORS!

**We look forward to seeing you at the 77th QPMA CONVENTION
from September 19 to 21, 2024, at Fairmont Tremblant! (Watch the video)**

About the QPMA

Founded in 1947, the Quebec Produce Marketing Association (QPMA) is a non-profit organization whose members are active throughout the produce sector, working in synergy with them and the industry's many partners. It creates an environment conducive to the development of produce marketing in Quebec, plays a leadership role in promoting fruits and vegetables, and represents and defends the interests of its members in dealings with various government authorities and the industry: qpma.ca.

About the "I Love Fruits and Veggies" Movement

Launched by the QPMA in 2018, the "I Love Fruits and Veggies" Movement aims to raise consumer awareness of the importance of eating fruits and vegetables as they adopt healthy lifestyle habits and, as a result, increase sales of these products for the benefit of its members. For more information, visit lovefruitsandveggies.ca



Facebook: facebook.com/jaimelesfruitsetlegumes

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