Sowing the seeds of resilience

FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE IN AGRICULTURE



POULTRY

Protect your business's future and bottom line to overcome the sector's key sustainability challenges

Desjardins Business

Desjardins understands the challenges facing farmers, and we're committed to supporting our members in this important transition. Our goal is to help our members achieve long-term success and contribute to food security in our communities.

This fact sheet highlights:

- The most material[1] sustainability challenges facing the poultry sector.
- Practical actions farmers and their partners can take.

Animal welfare and social acceptability

Poultry producers implement the Animal Care Program developed by Chicken Farmers of Canada, which sets standards for environmental quality, animal monitoring and transport conditions to ensure rigorous and transparent practices. Egg producers support animal welfare through the Egg Farmers of Canada's national Animal Care Program, which sets over 100 requirements that are verified annually by independent auditors.[2,3]

Challenge	Actions
Major investments needed to meet standards	• Plan financing and structure debt with the Desjardins Agri Offer* • Take advantage of government assistance programs • Develop a plan to upgrade to current and future standards on a timeline aligned with upcoming deadlines
Use of antimicrobials[4]	• Ensure sound management of water quality to limit pathogen contamination risks • Follow veterinarian-recommended vaccination protocols • Select feed that supports immune health and reduces use of antibiotics • Train employees on biosecurity practices • Share information with consumers to explain producers' initiatives under the Responsible Antimicrobial Use Strategy on letstalkchicken.ca

* Terms and conditions apply. Financing is subject to credit approval by Desjardins. The Desjardins Agri Offer may be modified or cancelled without notice. Contact your Desjardins account manager for more details.

Human resources

Challenge	Actions
Producers' mental health	Helpful resources: • Travailleurs de rang (mental health outreach for farmers, in French only) • Sentinelles network (suicide prevention, in French only) • Au cœur des familles agricoles (psychosocial services, in French only)
Shortage of qualified labour	• Provide housing support • Offer on-farm training • Automate selected tasks • Offer competitive employee benefits

Temporary foreign workers
Desjardins has a dedicated team to support agricultural workers that includes Spanish-language assistance. Foreign workers are able to open an account remotely before they arrive.

For more information, email accompagnement-ri@desjardins.com

The Union des producteurs agricoles has a hotline for temporary foreign workers in Quebec to answer their questions about taxes, labour standards and their rights and help them report issues with their employer.

Services aux travailleurs étrangers temporaires – UPA
(in French only)

Business transfer and succession

Transferring your business's *knowledge*, *assets* and *leadership*.

Challenge	Actions
Financial health of the business	• Optimize productive capacity • Identify drivers of productivity
Owner's vision and expectations	• Reflect on life after the farm and communicate expectations clearly • Plan for the owner's financial needs (Wealth Management) • Identify successors with the right qualities
Successor's vision	• Ensure the successor is experienced and has received proper training and support • Provide ongoing training on best practices • Consider business development based on agricultural assets
Human, financial, tax, legal and management aspects	• Plan the transfer 5 to 10 years in advance with agricultural, financial, tax and legal advisors
Preparing farm assets for succession	• Take advantage of government assistance and succession programs: directory of resources and programs for the next generation of farmers (in French only) • Adapt the financing structure

The Desjardins business transfer team

Support every step of the way:

1. Reflection 2. Planning 3. Transaction 4. Transition

Learn how our farm succession solutions can help:
Young farmers – Desjardins

Water management and quality

Water management—a pillar of climate resilience and animal health

Shortages of potable water and declining groundwater levels highlight the importance of securing access to water to reduce risks for farms. Optimizing water management can strengthen resilience against future costs related to potable water and well drilling and support sustainable production in the face of climate uncertainties.[5, 6]

Challenge	Actions
Quality of drinking water for poultry[7]	• Use a water treatment system • Clean water systems frequently
Water use	• Choose drinkers that minimize spillage and water waste • Adjust environmental conditions to reduce poultry water requirements • Improve washing procedures
Compliance with regulations on watercourse contamination	• Add feed additives to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus excretion • Create riparian buffer zones • Optimize field manure application using the 4Rs approach

DID YOU KNOW?

Birds are sensitive to the mineral content and taste of water. Maintaining good water quality helps protect overall flock health.[8]

Adapting to climate change

The impact of climate change on poultry

Pathogens or disease vectors that directly affect poultry could have higher survival rates as a result of climate change. In addition to the impacts of climate on disease, poultry could also be affected by higher temperatures, which can influence weight gain, mortality rates and egg quality.[9]

Challenge	Actions
Rising temperatures	• Prepare a contingency plan and get insurance coverage for loss of income • Provide ongoing biosecurity training • Manage climate conditions in buildings • Diversify energy sources to mitigate the impacts of rising costs and resource constraints
More frequent extreme weather events	• Improve soil health to boost resilience[10] • Stay informed about financial assistance available for extreme weather events • Stay informed about financial aid for adopting soil management practices[11] • Participate in savings programs like Agri-Québec and AgriInvest** • Participate in crop insurance and income stabilization programs**

** Subject to the terms and conditions of these programs. For more details, visit La Financière agricole du Québec (in French only).

DID YOU KNOW?

Climate change contributes to the spread of avian flu by altering the migration patterns of wild birds, forcing producers to strengthen biosecurity measures year-round.[12]

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions

Egg Farmers of Canada has committed to reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

There's mounting pressure to lower greenhouse gas emissions, driven by national climate policies and growing expectations from consumers and big players in the agri-food industry.

Major sources of emissions	Actions
Energy use	• Choose a diverse range of suitable energy sources • Optimize energy efficiency • Maintain infrastructure to ensure quality • Participate in Hydro-Québec energy management programs
Emissions from feed production	• Improve feed conversion to reduce feed requirements • Use precision feeding • Apply fertilizers responsibly to field crops
Emissions from manure management	• Manage manure types[13] • Use effective storage methods • Optimize field application using the 4Rs approach (Right source, Right rate, Right time, Right place) • Select feeds that improve feed efficiency or reduce manure-related greenhouse gas emissions

How can these actions help protect your business's future and boost profitability?

Improving infrastructure and bird comfort reduces disease risk and promotes higher productivity.

Better climate control of buildings helps adapt to temperature fluctuations while reducing the impact on electricity costs. Diversifying energy sources decreases vulnerability to rising costs.

Optimal feeding can improve feed conversion, requiring less feed for the same weight gain and thus directly lowering feed costs.

TEAMS DEDICATED TO SUPPORTING OUR MEMBERS

Sustainable financing

Specialized sustainability support for agricultural businesses
Desjardins members have access to a team of sustainability professionals.
Email financementdurable@desjardins.com for more information.

Financing and loans for agricultural businesses*

No matter your sector of activity or the size of your farm, our account managers are well equipped to provide financing solutions tailored to your needs. The Desjardins Agri Offer* lets you optimize your financing solutions with a structured, long-term approach.

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Sources:

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