# Sowing the seeds of resilience



FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE IN AGRICULTURE

SWINE

## 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 swine sector.
- Practical actions farmers and their partners can take.

# Market access

The swine sector operates in an environment shaped by international markets, with an export-oriented structure that exposes it to fluctuations in global demand. Its highly integrated production system leaves the entire supply chain vulnerable to external shocks.

| Challenge | Actions |
|---|---|
| **Price volatility** | • Establish futures contracts<br>• Diversify market outlets<br>• Participate in the Farm Income Stabilization Insurance (ASRA) program |
| **Access to international markets** | • Track the latest trade agreements and barriers on the Canada Pork website<br>• Meet Canadian Pork Excellence (CPE) requirements for access to export markets |
| **Animal health risks** | • Prepare contingency plans and get insurance coverage<br>• Monitor the cleanliness of buildings: IRDA summary sheet (in French only)<br>• Provide ongoing biosecurity training |

# Social acceptability

Social acceptability remains a major challenge for hog farmers as compliance with existing regulations does not always guarantee harmonious relations with local communities.

| Challenge | Actions |
|---|---|
| **Odours** | • Manage spreading methods and timing<br>• Maintain transparency and engage with the community |
| **Antibiotic use** | • Strengthen biosecurity<br>• Administer vaccines as recommended<br>• Follow veterinary recommendations to optimize use[2] |

# Animal welfare

| Challenge | Actions |
|---|---|
| **Societal pressure** | • Exceed standards through voluntary practices<br>• Monitor trends and provide training to stay current and meet the latest requirements<br>• Train employees on best practices for animal welfare |
| **Major investments needed to meet standards** | • Plan financing and structure debt with the Desjardins Agri Offer*<br>• Take advantage of government assistance programs<br>• Develop a plan to upgrade to current and future standards on a timeline aligned with upcoming deadlines |

* 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.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Proper management of the swine herd, including enriched pens, increased human interaction and more space, can significantly reduce healthcare costs by improving growth, ease of handling, skin health and immune response.



# Human resources

| Challenge | Actions |
|---|---|
| **Producers' physical and mental health** | Helpful resources:<br>• Travailleurs de rang (mental health outreach for farmers, in French only)<br>• Sentinelles network (suicide prevention, in French only)<br>• Au cœur des familles agricoles (psychosocial services, in French only) |
| **Labour shortage** | • Offer competitive employee benefits<br>• Provide housing support<br>• Recognize employee contributions<br>• Provide relevant training opportunities<br>• Automate selected tasks |

**DID YOU KNOW?**

A third of producers experience high levels of psychological distress, while half deal with persistent lower back pain.[3]



**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<br>• Identify drivers of productivity |
| **Owner's vision and expectations during and after the transition** | • Reflect on life after the farm and communicate expectations clearly<br>• Plan for the owner's financial needs (Wealth Management)<br>• Identify successors with the right qualities |
| **Successor's vision** | • Ensure the successor is experienced and has received proper training and support<br>• Provide ongoing training on best practices<br>• Consider business development based on agricultural assets |
| **Human, financial, tax, legal and management aspects of the transfer** | • 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)<br>• 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

# Adapting to climate change

## The impact of climate change on swine

Rising temperatures and more frequent extreme weather events caused by climate change are directly impacting pig health. In the absence of adequate climate control in buildings, heat stress can affect average daily gain, impair sow fertility and lower meat quality, while also compromising animal welfare.[4]

| Challenge | Actions |
|---|---|
| **Rising temperatures** | • Improve and modernize infrastructure<br>• Optimize climate management to limit temperature fluctuations in buildings |
| **More frequent extreme weather events** | • Improve soil health to boost resilience[5]<br>• Stay informed about financial assistance available for extreme weather events<br>• Stay informed about financial aid for adopting soil management practices[6]<br>• Participate in savings programs like Agri-Québec or Agri-Investissement**<br>• 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).

# Reducing greenhouse gas emissions[7,8]

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 sector emissions | Actions |
|---|---|
| **Liquid manure management** | • Select and manage scraping methods in livestock buildings<br>• Manage storage pits, storage duration and full emptying cycles<br>• Optimize field application methods and timing<br>• Improve nutrient availability through biomethanization of liquid manure<br>• Add amino acids and feed additives to reduce nitrogen excretion in liquid manure[9] |
| **Field production** | • Adopt sustainable agricultural practices to promote soil health and enhance carbon sequestration<br>• Optimize nitrogen fertilizer use<br>• Reduce machinery passes in the field |
| **Energy use** | • Choose suitable energy sources<br>• Improve energy efficiency<br>• Maintain infrastructure to ensure quality |
| **Feeding** | • Improve average daily gain (ADG)<br>• Optimize practices (phase changes, feed selection) and adjust feeders to reduce feed waste and improve conversion |

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Quebec's swine industry excels in environmental performance, emitting on average 25% less greenhouse gases than the top five pork exporting countries.[10]

# Water management and quality

## Water management—a pillar of climate resilience

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.[11,12]

| Challenge | Actions |
|---|---|
| **Compliance with regulations on watercourse contamination** | • Manage effluents: retention ponds, compliant spreading plans<br>• Create riparian buffer zones<br>• Use chemical inputs responsibly<br>• Control erosion: permanent cover crops, controlled drainage |
| **Water use** | • Select the optimal watering system based on production type<br>• Optimize cleaning procedures according to floor type<br>• Improve washing procedures (in French only) |

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

Providing feed tailored to animals' needs improves feed conversion, leading to higher productivity.

Climate change can lead to more frequent freeze-thaw events and extreme precipitation, putting pressure on livestock buildings. Taking these factors into account when designing and upgrading buildings helps ensure resilience.

Improving building infrastructure and climate control can reduce disease risk and encourage healthy feed intake.

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.

### 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.

* 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.

## Sources:


1. Assessing materiality helps identify the most significant ESG challenges and allows businesses to align their strategies with stakeholder expectations.
2. Parent, M-J. (2024). Mieux utiliser les antibiotiques, Le bulletin des agriculteurs.
3. IRSST (2023) Étude Éleveurs de porcs en santé.
4. Ouellet, V. (2022). Les conséquences physiologiques du stress thermique chez le porc. CDPQ.
5. Parent-Bouchard, É. (2025). Des sols plus résilients pour affronter les défis à venir, La Terre de chez nous.
6. FADQ (2025). Guide des normes reconnues par La Financière agricole en matière de pratiques culturales 2026.
7. Turcotte, S. (2025). CDPQ. Démystifier les GES en production porcine et pistes de solutions pour diminuer les émissions.
8. Institut de recherche et de développement en agroenvironnement (IRDA) (2022). Training on adapting to climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions in pork production.
9. Centre de développement du porc du Québec (CDPQ) (2024). Des stratégies alimentaires pour s'adapter aux changements climatiques et réduire les émissions de GES.
10. Le porc du Québec (2025). GHGs: Healthy Results For Pork Production in Quebec.
11. MAPAQ (2023). La disponibilité et l'utilisation de l'eau : Un enjeu pour le présent et l'avenir du secteur agricole au Québec.
12. Radio-Canada (2025). « Il va manquer d'eau dans plein d'endroits si on continue comme ça »



Trademarks including the word Desjardins and their logos are trademarks of the Fédération des caisses Desjardins du Québec, used under license.
200 Rue Des Commandeurs, Lévis (QC) G6V 6R2

(2026-03)