



**Agri-Food Development
Strategic Plan
2021-2023**

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IN CONTEXT

The agri-food committee of the Brome-Missisquoi Local Development Center (CLD) is proud to present the 2021-2023 bio food development strategic plan.

Rachel Mahannah, Chairperson of the agri-food committee

Brome-Missisquoi’s *Centre local de développement* (CLD) agri-food committee is proud to present its 2021–2023 strategic plan for agri-food development. This plan is in line with our continuing efforts deployed since the first strategic plan for 2018–2020 was implemented. Several actions and concrete accomplishments were carried out, allowing us to strengthen our local entrepreneurial fabric and our relationships with all our local and regional partners.

This new plan is put forth within a context of great upheavals. Our businesses are facing many challenges such as climate change, the Covid-19 pandemic and workforce shortages, just to name but a few. These uncertain times have brought to light the necessity to evolve and meet global changes by developing more resilient models, especially for our local food system. With this plan, Brome-Missisquoi region is asserting its deep roots concerning sustainable agriculture and innovation.

Our actions are implemented via four pillars to support and develop our territory’s agri-food sector and food self-sufficiency: business sustainability as well as business development, cohesion among the different stakeholders and the sector’s notoriety. These last two pillars are especially important within the present context. They will allow us to reinforce Brome-Missisquoi’s identity as a food provider and innovator and the feeling of belonging to our territory. This solidarity generating component will be instrumental in our region’s economic recovery and vitality.

The reader will also note that by adopting the term “agri-food,” a more updated and current expression, we offer a more comprehensive description of the region’s overall agri-food ecosystem. It allows us to add to the production and transformation sectors, the realities of proximity commercialization, restaurant operations, residual waste management and valorization, and our territory’s important safety and food self-sufficiency challenges.

The CLD de Brome-Missisquoi’s 2021–2023 strategic plan for agri-food development is designed as a tool to unite around a common vision of our local agri-food sector. Therefore, we invite the region’s municipalities, partners, businesses and citizens to join us in our efforts as we work together for a productive territory and prosperous, sustainable enterprises, to feed the world.

Enjoy your read!





ALEXANDR PODVALNY / UNSPLASH



POSITIONING

A nurturing region with an entrepreneurial flavor

MISSION	VISION
<p>Brome Missisquoi’s CLD supports the emergence and growth of agri-food businesses in the region. It works to promotes the sector and facilitate networking along the value supply chain (production, processing, distribution, consumption, management and valorizing residual waste), and therefore increasing the benefits for our region.</p>	<p>The birthplace of the winemaking industry and L’ARTERRE, a pioneer in bio-intensive market-gardening in Quebec, and a region of excellence for proximity agriculture, Brome-Missisquoi stands out with its strong agri-food identity and as a diversified, plentiful and innovative sector.</p> <p>Our agri-food sector shines through the abundance, resilience and circularity of its value chain. The cohesion of all our food system stakeholders, the excellence of our enterprises and our proximity to our consumers contribute to developing the social and economic vitality of Brome-Missisquoi and its food self-sufficiency.</p>
TARGET CUSTOMERS	GOALS
<p>Businesses; Local organizations and partners; Eaters (residents or visitors).</p>	<p>Increasing the resilience of Brome-Missisquoi’s agri-food ecosystem by aiming at achieving greater food self-sufficiency for the territory. By this, we mean that our enterprises have the possibility to process their products and to commercialize them on our territory and for our citizens to meet their basic needs locally all year round.</p> <p>Accompany the agri-food sector’s development as an economic engine and an important identity marker in Brome-Missisquoi.</p> <p>Foster partnerships between the different community stakeholders to consolidate and increase the sector’s contribution to Brome-Missisquoi’s economy while reducing food waste.</p> <p>Increase the feeling of pride and belonging with regard to Brome-Missisquoi’s agri-food sector by showcasing its distinctive features. e.g.: Innovative and regenerative practices, collaborative and proximity agriculture.</p>



1. THE PANDEMIC'S IMPACTS

The Brome-Missisquoi agri-food sector is one of our most solid economic engines, notably by generating \$239 M in agricultural revenues alone, but also by being a strong identity marker for our region. The sanitary crisis has made us more aware of our food system's frailties and the importance of developing its resilience. During this period of economic recovery, the Brome-Missisquoi CLD would like to develop a vision and a strategic plan for itself, so our territory's agri-food and solidarity character can truly shine.

2. THE RESILIENCE OF OUR FOOD SYSTEMS

Food system resilience —or food resilience— is defined as the capacity of a food system and its constituting elements to ensure food safety over time, despite various, unforeseen disruptions. Certain food system resilience criteria have been identified¹. Some of these include:

- **Diversity at all levels:** whether it involves productions, varieties, agricultural practices, stakeholders and their interactions;
- **Territory self-sufficiency:** the possibility for farms to process and sell their products and for citizens to meet their needs locally on an annual basis;
- **Modularity and connectivity:** operating in units (e.g., gardens, farms, processing businesses, regions) able to support each other in case of any disruptions;
- **Redundancy:** One same function (e.g., distribution) is ensured by several elements, independent of the system;
- **Cohesion among stakeholders:** an essential element that facilitates solidarity, decision-making, developing innovative alternatives, and the system's evolution.

3. THE NOURISHING TOWN CONCEPT

A nourishing town is a living environment which makes sure that its residents have access to fresh and healthy food. It is built by incorporating these five main ingredients, added to a local food governance²:

1. a productive territory,
2. prosperous and responsible enterprises,
3. improved access to healthy food,
4. a demand for increased proximity,
5. and an optimized life cycle.

1. *Vers la résilience alimentaire : faire face aux menaces globales à l'échelle des territoires. France : Les Greniers d'Abondance*

2. *Villes nourricières : mettre l'alimentation au cœur des collectivités. Montréal : Vivre en Ville.*

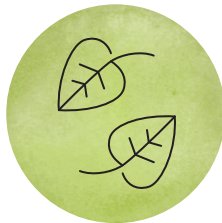


A SUSTAINABLE AGRI-FOOD SYSTEM

Within the structure of this new strategic plan, Brome-Missisquoi as a region has adopted the sustainable agri-food system concept as the reference framework for developing its vision, its strategies, and its priority actions.

“A sustainable food system (SFS) is a collaborative territorial network integrating the production, processing, distribution and consumption of food products as well as waste material management. It aims to improve the collectivity's environmental, economic and social health. It involves the stakeholders, the activities and the infrastructure that support food safety for the population and is based on territorial food governance.”





SUSTAINABILITY: a productive territory and prosperous, sustainable businesses to feed the world

STRATEGIES

Increasing the agricultural population

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Encourage **retaining our youth** in the region
- Attract and retain a **new generation of aspiring farmers and entrepreneurs**
- Attract and retain the **workforce**
- Facilitate **access to farmlands** (in particular through better access to property and housing)

Protect and optimize farmlands

- Encourage **farmland optimization initiatives**
- Innovate in the **areas of receiving and accompanying agricultural projects** (notably through synergy with the MRC's department of territory planning and the municipalities' urban planning services)



LE JARDINIER-MARAÎCHER



FACEBOOK / LA RUMEUR AFFAMÉE SUTTON



DEVELOPMENT: resilient, innovative and regenerative businesses

STRATEGIES

Support development of sustainable agri-food businesses

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Provide **professional support for agri-food businesses** and training to increase their operational efficiency (technical, financial, mentoring, consulting services, production cost support)
- Promote **proximity ties with businesses**

Create local added value

- Offer an added value by **processing Brome-Missisquoi food locally**
- Promote **access to markets and deseasonalize local purchasing**
- Facilitate **establishing processing, storage, distribution and commercialization infrastructure** for promoting local purchasing and short supply chains

Encourage and accompany innovation

- Support **processing and product innovation** for all agro-food sectors
- Support agri-food businesses with their **digital shift**
- Support farm enterprises shifting towards **agri-ecological practices** including sound water management

Continue acquiring knowledge concerning the agri-food economic engine

- Feed and update our **businesses' databases**
- Establish a watch for **monitoring agri-food news**

Optimize resources

- Encourage and promote the **circular economy and functionality projects** notably via a platform and networking projects, products and residual materials
- Encourage, with our partners, **waste reduction and especially food wastage** as an economic lever
- Mutualize **resources and infrastructure for transport, storage and processing**



COHESION: stakeholders mobilized around a promising agri-food vision

STRATEGIES

Unite stakeholders around a common vision for territorial development

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Adopt a **regional food policy** aimed at strengthening food autonomy and the identity character of the Brome-Missisquoi territory, and which would, in particular, invite each municipality to develop its own nourishing city strategy
- Help municipalities bring out their **identity flavours**
- Mobilize municipalities around the **concept of nourishing towns and villages** by equipping them through awareness-raising, training and support activities
- Ensure coherence and continuity between the different **local and regional planning tools**
- Develop an **internal communications strategy** to ensure the mobilization of all the CLD departments around this vision

Continue and increase consultation with the agri-food stakeholders

- Fuel our **communications and collaboration momentum with our partners** in order to encourage resource synergies and mutualizations



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REPUTATION: an attractive territory driven by communicating and valorizing its agri-food sector

STRATEGIES

Communicate and promote Brome-Missisquoi's agri-food niches

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Develop a **communications strategy** aiming towards the development of our territorial attractiveness by valuing our agri-food economic engine's vitality and strength as well as making it an identity marker for the region
- **Value professions and training** within the agri-food sector, and our stakeholders (e.g.: producers, including our conventional, processing, kitchen/restaurant operators)
- Support and promote **wine tourism and agri-tourism**

Develop smart ways for promoting local purchasing

- Promote **proximity marketing and distribution channels** (e.g.: farm stands and self-picking, public markets, boutiques and grocery stores, online, etc.)
- Learn more about businesses' specific promotional needs (timing, points of sale, efficiency and cost-effectiveness)
- Offer consumers tools to **increase and seasonally adjust local consumption**
- Support collaborations and the promotion of **public markets**
- Equip **restaurant, lodging and retail operators to facilitate local purchasing**
- Explore **local institutional purchasing** possibilities and encourage production mutualization



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PATRICE DIDIER

