



Press Release For immediate release

The abattoir issue in Témiscamingue: the MRC is infuriated!

Ville-Marie, October 11, 2017 – For more than 12 years, the farmers of Abitibi-Témiscamingue have not had a provincially or federally registered abattoir in the region, which has incurred significant costs and limited their production options. This abattoir-related problem has many detrimental effects on the region, and for the past five years, the MRC of Témiscamingue has worked tirelessly to change the situation.

The MRC of Témiscamingue—the municipality with the most agricultural businesses in Abitibi-Témiscamingue—introduced a development plan for its agricultural zone in 2015 and is proactive in the slaughterhouse issue, as Témiscamingue producers have requested that it take action. Producers' needs, like those of all other producers of the Abitibi region, are simple: provide slaughter facilities nearby so that they can sell their meat to individuals, grocery stores, and restaurants. This legitimate request, if granted, would admittedly allow farmers to sell their local meat on our territory, but it would also enable producers to process their own products and help local businesses improve their profitability, all the while keeping producers active on the territory. In Témiscamingue, the agricultural industry's annual economic contribution represents \$123 million and creates 1,840 direct jobs.

Two preferred solutions in the territory's image

Located only three kilometres from Témiscamingue's Quebec border, the Belle Vallée provincial abattoir, located in Ontario, is one possibility we are currently studying. This establishment enables Quebec farmers to have their animals slaughtered for personal use, but not for resale. The current provincial regulation restricts provincially inspected abattoirs to the markets within their province. A change in the regulation allowing farmers to market the meat on both sides of the border is the request the MRC of Témiscamingue is making to the different levels of government involved in this option.

Recently, another scenario has been under study: the use of a local abattoir located in Rouyn-Noranda (Évain). La Boucherie Des Praz enables farmers to slaughter animals only for personal consumption given its status of local slaughterhouse. The business owners are open to being a provincially inspected abattoir if there is the need and demand on the territory. This change could allow agricultural producers to market their products in Quebec once the animals have been slaughtered within the region. Specifically, the MRC of Témiscamingue requests that the provincial government accept that a local slaughterhouse conduct its business in its facilities as a provincially registered establishment.

"We ask that the government seriously study the options we have put forth and that it make every effort to ensure that farmers of the region can have access to a nearby abattoir, be it in Quebec or in Ontario. And this time, the entire region is behind us. The efforts we have undertaken in this case are substantial, but we are working for the well-being of our communities and agricultural businesses. This is what gives us the strength to continue. Our goal is clear: we want to find our meat on our grocery shelves, in our stores, and in our restaurants to allow our producers to work in conditions that foster their full economic development. The situation must change immediately. Enough is enough!" retorted Mr. Arnaud Warolin, Warden of the MRC of Témiscamingue.

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