



# DID YOU KNOW THAT AGRI-TRAÇABILITÉ QUÉBEC IS ISO CERTIFIED 9001-2008 SINCE MARCH 2009?

Through this international standard, the organization demonstrates its ability to provide a product that conforms to legal requirements and applicable regulations as well as all the links of the agri-food chain in Québec and throughout the world. This standard confirms that ATQ respects the management norms related to quality resulting from the implementation of business processes and continuous improvement mechanisms for its system. The ultimate objectives are the satisfaction of its diverse clientele as well as to assure conformity within its own systems.

## AGRI-TRAÇABILITÉ QUÉBEC

During the Summit meeting of leaders in Quebec's agriculture and agri-food sector in 1998, the Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA), and the government of Québec, established the objective to set up a permanent identification and traceability system for agricultural products from the farm to the table. On September 25<sup>th</sup> 2001, an independent non-profit organization was created: Agri-Traçabilité Québec inc. (ATQ).

The mission of ATQ is to contribute to the improvement of food safety and the competitive capacity of agricultural producers and of the overall industry. ATQ looks after the development, implementation and operation of a permanent identification and traceability system for food and agricultural products for both livestock and crops sectors.

Québec possesses a high caliber of expertise with regard to food health and safety. The implementation of an identification and traceability system allows the Québec agri-food sector to have in place an effective management tool to maintain its reputation of providing quality agricultural products.



## MANDATE

With the aim of controlling food safety, the organization implemented a traceability system. The processes of identification and traceability are carried out from the farm to the slaughterhouse in the cattle, sheep and cervid sectors. Other livestock and crop products will be added to the system.

In addition, steps that need to be taken are:

- Standardize the applications through the different regulated agricultural productions in order to maximize the investments in the implementation of each production and reduce the entry costs for this system;
- Group together activities in one single database for the traceability of all agricultural productions from the farm to the table. Optimize resources in order to reduce operational costs and allow, in case of a food safety crisis, the ability to react rapidly amongst all agricultural operations and minimize both material and financial impacts;
- Negotiate partnerships to favor the exchange of information between stakeholders in the agri-food sector. Producers should be able to declare their information through one single point and it will then be automatically transmitted to all organizations concerned.

## VERY AMBITIOUS OBJECTIVES

The traceability program in Quebec has taken aim on a number of objectives:

- To be able to rapidly limit and eliminate a food safety crisis by allowing quick response to a livestock epidemic or food safety problem;
- To be able to retrace any animal or agricultural product to its farm of origin, while knowing their history, their previous movements and actual location;
- To improve the capacity for diagnosis and surveillance, and also reduce the risks related to the import and export of livestock or crop products.

## FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL REGULATIONS

Québec's traceability system is regulated by two levels of government. The obligation to identify livestock from birth, to activate an ear tag and to place the animal in a predefined production site represents a fundamental aspect of the Quebec system in the livestock sector. Any relocation of an animal must be declared once it enters a new premises. The following are considered as a premises: a barn, a pasture, an auction, a sorting station, an agricultural fair, a slaughterhouse, a livestock carrier, a veterinary hospital, a meat salvager and rendering plant, a testing station, an artificial insemination centre and a calf collection centre.

*(Regulation respecting the identification and traceability of certain animals, P-42, r.1.1)*



Photo credit : FPAMQ

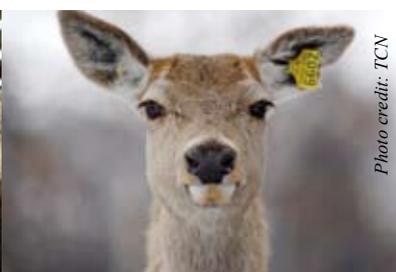


Photo credit: TCN





# WHAT IS TRACEABILITY?

Traceability is the capacity to find and know the history behind a food product through all the steps of the agri-food chain using a registered identification system. The identification of the product must therefore be carried out at the farm and then be maintained right through to the consumer.



## THE QUEBEC SYSTEM

The Quebec traceability system is based upon three underlying principles that can be integrated and adapted to all agricultural productions:

### 1) Livestock or crop product identification

Agri-food products can be identified individually or in lots, according to the characteristics linked to the production sector.

In the cattle, sheep and cervid sectors, producers opted for livestock identification using two ear tags: one electronic tag and one dangle tag. Each animal is given its own ISO identification number composed of fifteen (15) digits which stays with it for life.

### 2) Premises identification

Livestock production sites and other premises where animals are gathered are also identified in the ATQ database. Each site receives a unique number of seven (7) digits. This data is transmitted to the Institut national de santé animale (National Animal Health Institute) of the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ), which allows for the geo-positioning of each site.

### 3) Declaration of movements

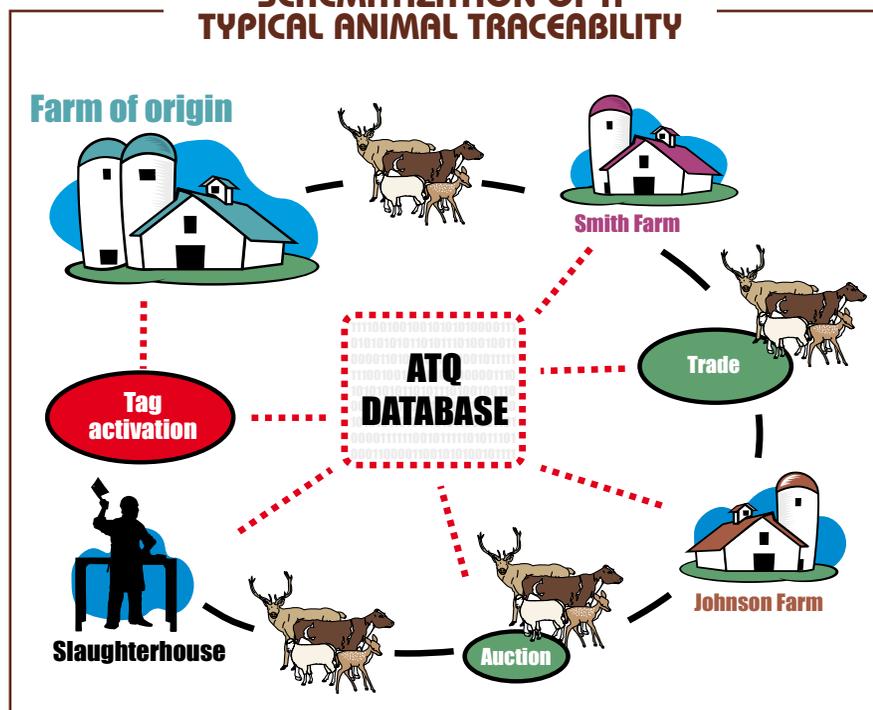
In order to ensure the traceability of livestock, it is important to know all their movements as well as the location of other animals with which they came into contact. This will apply to the crop sector as well.

This requires all stakeholders to actively collaborate and inform ATQ of the presence of all livestock located on their production premises. At the level of individual livestock sectors, numerous stakeholders have installed equipment which allows for the rapid and automatic reading of electronic identifiers on individual animals. They

can also transfer electronically all declarations as computerized files. These transfers contain the premises number, the arrival date of the animal, the identification number as well as the number of the premises of origin. This information ensures traceability throughout the animal's entire life.

The automation of strategic premises represents a major added value to the traceability system. It allows maximum reduction in transmission delays of required information while ensuring conformation of the data. These are essential additions in case of health issues.

## SCHEMATIZATION OF A TYPICAL ANIMAL TRACEABILITY



The Quebec traceability system guarantees a follow through on animals, therefore bringing an undeniable advantage to international marketing. In a context of globalization and free-trade, Quebec producers are the first in North America to be served by such a complete traceability system.

## Agri-Traceabilité Québec

Maison de l'UPA

555, boul. Roland-Therrien, Suite 050

Longueuil, Québec J4H 4E8

Telephone: 450.677.1757 Toll-free line: 1.866.270.4319

Fax: 450.679.6547 Toll-free fax line: 1.866.679.6547

Website: www.agri-tracabilite.qc.ca

## Traceability Partners in Quebec:



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