

A concertation story

The CIARC, more than a farm... a vision!

The CIARC (*Centre d'initiatives en agriculture de la région de Coaticook*) received its status as a non profit organization in 1990, thanks to the joint action of numerous stakeholders in the region and various governmental bodies.

Financial partners

Loans without interest

City of Coaticook	\$450 000
Municipalities in the MRC of Coaticook	\$143 000
Festival du lait de Coaticook	\$10 000
56 agricultural enterprises	\$50 450
49 commercial contributors	\$166 714
21 individual contributors	\$13 126
	\$833 290

Grants

Government of Canada	\$1 184 500
Regional Development Council	\$305 000
Commission scolaire des Hauts-Cantons	\$222 663
Government of Québec (M.E.Q.)	\$200 000
	\$1 912 163

GRAND TOTAL : \$2 745 453

The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors, composed of 11 volunteer members, has its head office at 125 Morgan, in Coaticook.

The mission

The CIARC's mission is to develop a dynamic and attractive economic environment to facilitate the diversification and consolidation of activities in rural areas. It aims to :

- support the CRIFA's students in practical agricultural training;
- develop education and information programs for the public;
- provide support to agricultural entrepreneurs in the management of their workforce;
- develop agrotourism;
- support environmental initiatives;
- promote cooperation within the farming community.



Visit from a Senegal delegation

A welcoming farm

Proudly overlooking the undulating countryside of the Coaticook Valley, the barn of the Plateau is characterized by its grandiose structure.

Milk production resumed in December 1992 and is the main source of financing for the CIARC. The farm has 70 purebred Holstein cows and some 80 replacement animals.

The farm aims to generate surpluses that could support agricultural initiatives in the region. The farm also offers the opportunity for the students



of the CRIFA to complete their practical training.

Finally, this unique site is an integral component of the agrotouristic mission of the CIARC.

Architecture and history buffs will enjoy visiting the patrimonial barn.



While **animal enthusiasts** will take great pleasure in a tour of the barn, the menagerie and the farm.



As for **fans of horticulture**, they will discover with excitement the bird garden, the English garden, the rose garden, the vegetable garden, and the aromatic and medicinal herb patch.



The **festival-goers** can meet at the Exposition of the Coaticook Valley which takes place on the farm premises.



Promising Initiatives

CAMO Agricole

Founding the CRIFA was the first achievement of the *Comité d'adaptation de la main-d'œuvre en agriculture* (CAMO) created by the CIARC in 1992.

Table de concertation agroalimentaire

The CIARC supports the UPA of Coaticook in its project to create a joint action committee (*Table de concertation*) to develop and enhance the agri-food potential of the region.

Stabilization of the workforce

The project initiated by the CIARC, and supported by various organizations, is developing quality standards and producing a variety of tools to support human resource management in agricultural enterprises.

Restoration of the barn

A project of \$262 000 – 50% of which supported by the *ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine* – has just given back its former glory to the barn of the Plateau, cited as an historical monument. The local community also contributed more than \$80 000 for this project.

Incubator Project

To provide technical and financial support to a trained contractor in horticulture interested in organic vegetable production, the Incubator Project supplies a plot of one acre of land located near the training premises of the CRIFA.

The following stakeholders are partners in this project: the City of Coaticook, the CLD, the Table de concertation agro-alimentaire, the CIARC, the CRIFA, the department of agricultural management of the CEGEP de Sherbrooke and the MA-PAQ-Estrie. A grant of \$10 000 was obtained from the *Pacte rural de la Ville de Coaticook* to support the project start-up activities.

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Centre d'Initiatives
en Agriculture de
la Région de Coaticook

CIARC

More than a farm...
a vision!

- Concertation
- Training
- Innovation
- Agriculture Promotion

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Desjardins
Caisse populaire
des Verts-Sommets de l'Estrie

COOP
cantons

CIAC

The farm's history

The barn of the Plateau was built in 1912 by Eugene Orson Baldwin. Born on July 1st, 1866 in Barford, Quebec, he was viewed as a rich eccentric. Baldwin was of Protestant religion, and the story goes that he would have chosen to settle on the Plateau Morgan because he wanted his barn to be higher than the steeple of Saint-Edmond Church. He allegedly used an important inheritance to build this barn, most unusual both in structure and ornamentation.

Indeed, originally, it measured 240 feet long by 36 feet wide. A few years later, an extension of 100 feet made it the longest barn in North America, and even of the Commonwealth. It is said that Mr. Baldwin worried about losing his place in the Guinness Book of World Records.

The roof, covered with metal shingles embossed with maple leaves, gives the barn the look of an opulent residence with its seven (7) ventilation cupolas and its sixteen (16) nine-paned dormers.

Another surprising feature is that the barn is supported by a steel frame with flying buttresses and steel cables so that the hay loft is large, airy and crossbeam free.

Initially, the herd, one of the largest in Canada, consisted of one hundred thoroughbred Jersey cows. To improve this one, Mr. Baldwin would bring his best cows by train to the United States to get them bred by renowned pedigreed bulls.

Unfortunately, after several years of prosperity, Mr. Baldwin suffered financial setbacks, which

drove him into bankruptcy : he lost his farm.

In November 1940, Mr. Lauréat Lavoie, a forestry engineer, purchased the farm, which would then be passed on from father to son for 49 years. Bernard Lavoie, who inherited the farm in 1962, decided to sell it to the City of Coaticook in 1989, as there were no family members to assume the operation of the farm.



The CIARC, a non-profit organization since October 1990, acquired the farm from the City of Coaticook in September 1992.

In October 1992, the CIARC hired its first farm manager and bought a milk quota of 58 kg/day. The first dairy cows entered the barn in December of that year.

On April 26th 1999, the City of Coaticook adopted Regulation 6-19-4 citing *Ferme du Plateau* (the barn building) as a historical monument, confirming the patrimonial value of the barn and insuring its preservation.



Eugene Orson Baldwin