



TESA Candidate — 2026

Name: Victor Drury

Farm Name: Victor Drury

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Farm Description and Environmental Context — 5 points

(History of the business, people involved, their vision)

Our vision is to raise sustainable and profitable beef in an environmentally responsible way, while ensuring the long-term viability of our family farm for future generations. The story begins in 1974, when my father, Gib Drury, purchased a 200-acre farm in the Outaouais region that had been abandoned for nearly a decade. Over the past 50 years, we have expanded by integrating five neighbouring farms. Today, we own 900 acres of pastureland and rent an additional 950 acres for hay production.

Our herd consists of 300 commercial Angus cows and their calves, raised on intensive rotational grazing and compliant wintering sites. We market our semi-finished calves to feedlots and grass-fed finishing producers. Each year, we also sell around 25 cull cows to local producers who supply the regional market. For winter feed, we harvest roughly 4,500 round bales of hay from 28 rented farms nearby.

Our team includes four full-time workers: Gib and Victor Drury as managers, a neighbouring farmer who trades labour for hay, and a permanent employee. Victor plays a central role in daily operations and in implementing agri-environmental practices. His leadership includes coordinating biodiversity projects, participating in provincial and national programs, and organizing tours and workshops to share knowledge. All this work is carried out with the oversight of the next generation, ensuring that their father and grandfather stay on the right track.

Our approach is rooted in environmentally friendly practices: we do not use hormones, antibiotics, pesticides, or chemical fertilizers. These choices have allowed us to restore soil fertility and build a sustainable, profitable operation that we can proudly pass on to our children.

Through collaboration with our neighbours and with support from organizations such as ALUS, UPA, CREDDO, MAPAQ, Club Conseil, and FADQ, we have maintained one of the lowest production costs in Quebec (based on the 2023–2024 Multi-Council Agricultural Center herd analysis), while ensuring animal welfare and environmental stewardship



Actions Implemented to Improve Environmental Management — 20 points

Our farm is made up entirely of perennial pasture, which enhances biodiversity and prevents soil erosion caused by wind and water. We do not till our pastures or rented hay fields, helping preserve soil health and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

All manure produced on the farm is composted, turned three times in the summer, and spread in the fall. This eliminates the need for chemical fertilizers and enriches soil organic matter. It is a highly efficient reuse of our resources.

We do not use any pesticides or herbicides, creating a healthy environment for soil microbes, pollinators, and birds. In the fall, before freeze-up, we implement bale grazing, a method that naturally distributes manure, reduces tractor use, and reseeds the soil with the seeds contained in the bales.

During winter, animals are kept in compliant wintering sites equipped with watering systems and portable windbreaks, ensuring their welfare. These facilities also prevent manure runoff into waterways during spring thaw.

To protect waterways, all animals are kept away from streams using electric fencing, preserving shorelines and maintaining a healthy aquatic habitat on more than 5% of the property.

As a founding member of ALUS Outaouais, we actively participate in biodiversity projects, including replacing barbed-wire fences with electric fences to reduce injury risks for wildlife and livestock. We also delay mowing to protect nesting bird species and reduce their mortality.

Tree planting is not a major focus for us, as our land is already surrounded by mature forests, which provide ecological corridors for wildlife movement. By purchasing neighbouring farmland, we have protected these forests from real-estate development, a significant threat due to our proximity to Gatineau and Ottawa.

Together, these practices demonstrate our commitment to sustainable beef production, environmental protection, animal welfare, and the health and well-being of our family.

Do the Actions Address All Environmental Aspects? — 20 points

Water:

Electric fencing keeps animals away from streams, preventing trampling and shoreline erosion. Pasture soils never remain bare, in any season, eliminating runoff into waterways. Trees surrounding our fields also help maintain water quality through natural filtration. Compliant wintering sites prevent spring manure runoff. A comprehensive underground watering system provides livestock with clean drinking water across all pastures.

Biodiversity:

Our multi-species perennial pastures support a diverse habitat for insects and wildlife. The absence of chemicals creates ideal conditions for soil microbes, pollinators, birds, and employees alike. Wildlife such as deer regularly

share our pastures with cattle. Our ALUS projects include delaying grazing in fields where at-risk bird species nest (such as the Bobolink) and using flush bars during hay harvest to reduce bird mortality. We also collaborate with Développement ornithologique Argenteuil to install nesting boxes.

Soil and Plant Health:

Perennial multi-species pastures are highly resilient to climate change. No tilling preserves soil structure, carbon storage, and prevents compaction. Compost application at the end of the season feeds soil microbes and increases humus levels. Rotational grazing keeps forage plants in their vegetative phase, maximizing carbon sequestration.

Fertilizer Management:

No chemical fertilizer has been used on the farm in 45 years. All compost from wintering sites is spread according to PAEF recommendations. Our grazing system naturally distributes manure without machinery all summer long. Bale grazing ensures manure distribution in fall with minimal equipment and fuel.

Air:

Avoiding tillage on both owned and rented land reduces tractor use and fuel consumption, improving air quality and lowering greenhouse gas emissions. Perennial pastures maximize photosynthesis and carbon sequestration. All agricultural plastic waste is recycled using a baler, reducing landfill volume.

Measurable Results — 15 points



Over the years, our changes have led to several tangible improvements.

Intensive rotational grazing extends our grazing season significantly: cattle leave the wintering sites around May 20 and remain on pasture until late November. This allows grazing to continue almost two months beyond the end of grass growth, thanks to strategic use of 30 paddocks providing forage reserves. The extended grazing season greatly reduces operating costs.

Forage growth has improved, allowing us to expand the herd without increasing land area. For example, the original farm, once able to support only 10 cows in summer, now sustains 100 cow-calf pairs.

After the grazing season, bale grazing throughout December prevents soil compaction and machinery tracks before freeze-up. This practice also supports low-cost

natural reseeding, as seeds contained in bales germinate in the spring.

All streams and lakes are protected by electric fencing, and no soils are left bare, eliminating soil and shoreline erosion. Our partnerships with ALUS and Développement ornithologique Argenteuil have encouraged the return of several at-risk bird species now nesting on our land, which also helps reduce fly pressure on livestock. For the past five years, a flock of about 150 wild turkeys has lived on the farm year-round. We frequently observe diverse wildlife such as deer, foxes, beavers, coyotes, ducks, bears, Canada geese, and many others across our pastures and waterways.

Collaborations, Involvement, and Programs — 15 points

- Founding member of ALUS Outaouais (2021)
- Partner of Développement ornithologique Argenteuil (DOA) — “Bovins pour le Climat 2025”
- Member of the Outaouais Agri-Environmental Advisory Club
- Member of a producers’ group that meets monthly to share intensive and sustainable grazing practices
- Meyer Natural Angus certified
- VBP+ certified
- Participation in Canadian Wildlife Federation’s Grassland Bird Workshop (2024)
- Canadian Forage and Grassland Association — Electric fence and waterline installation program (2024)
- FADQ — Environmental practices compensation (Biodiversity-Friendly Area) 2022–2024 and 2025
- Participation in COP15 initiative “Implementing the Global Biodiversity Framework in the Outaouais 2022” with CREDDO and MP Sophie Chatel
- Member of the Agricultural Advisory Councils of the MRC des Collines and the Municipality of La Pêche
- Vice-President of the UPA Outaouais-Laurentides beef producers
- Vice-President of the Feeder Calf Marketing Committee (CMMVE)
- CMMVE representative on the board of the Quebec Cattle Producers (PBQ)
- Quebec representative for the Canadian Cattle Association’s Young Leaders Council (2021–2022)

Future Environmental Objectives — 10 points

Our farm contains 20% forest, and we plan to develop an agroforestry plan to ensure sustainable management of this area. This forest includes roughly 300 maple trees, and we intend to create an action plan for responsible long-term use.

Organic certification remains a long-term goal, as we already follow most required practices. We began the certification process in 1986 and completed three of the four required years, but the process was interrupted due to the bankruptcy of the certifying body (Ontario Crop Improvement Association). The main challenge today is the lack of a certified organic feedlot, meaning organic certification would currently result in financial loss.

In 2026, we will organize a group bird inventory on the farm in partnership with ALUS and birding groups from Gatineau. This event was planned for 2025 but was cancelled due to weather conditions.

With the MRC des Collines, we plan to implement a drainage system to regulate water levels retained by beaver dams, protecting their habitat while preventing flooding of three neighbouring farms.

Since our beekeeping partner retired in 2020, we are searching for a new beekeeper to reintroduce hives to the farm.

We will continue working with MP Sophie Chatel and federal committees on agriculture- and environment-related issues.

We also plan to keep developing our local niche market for grass-fed cull cows.

All of this aims to leave the healthiest, most sustainable, and safest possible environment for our children.



Environmental Leadership — 5 points

- ALUS National Dave Reid Award — Silver Medal (2024)
- Quebec Order of Agricultural Merit — Silver Medal, 4th place (2018)
- Host farm for “Bovins pour le Climat 2025” research
- Host farm for UPA Open Farm Day (2025)
- Panelist at Eco Farm Day (2024), speaking on wintering sites
- Selected for the Canadian Cattle Young Leaders mentorship program (2021)
- Fund donor for a scholarship at St. Michael’s High School for students entering agriculture
- Featured in the documentary *Homes on the Range* (2025)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ru0aYrw4K34>
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- Featured in the documentary *An Outaouais Cattle Producer Taking Action for At-Risk Birds* (2024)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4x-zrQuVFzE>

