

government programs and by industry groups. Environmental farm planning programs are administered in Ontario by the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. In the Atlantic provinces, programming was initiated and coordinated by the Atlantic Farmers Council, with technical assistance from the Eastern Canada Soil and Water Conservation Centre. It is now administered by provincial farm organizations.

Environmental certification, based on a monitoring system to ensure adherence to environmental standards, appears to be a logical step for environmental programming in the next decade. Industry and governments are working together on certification options, usually using a domestic standards process or applying the International Standards Organization's ISO 14000 to farm enterprises.

The Role of the Community

After a decade of effort, programs such as Canada's Green Plan have shown that tangible improvements in the quality of the environment are usually the result of community effort. The most sophisticated prediction models, competent extension staff, and programs for financial assistance cannot improve environmental quality as it relates to agricultural practice without the commitment of individual farmers, ranchers, and other community residents.

The community approach has been particularly appropriate in dealing with issues of water quality. Before they can deal with the issue, the concerned community must agree on the need for intervention. The form this intervention takes depends on the value the local community places on the environment and the protection of various water uses. Building awareness of the issues among the potential partners is an essential first step in establishing a watershed management group. The effectiveness of this first action is enhanced if leadership is taken by farmers and other land users. The diversity of interests, responsibilities, and expertise needed for this type of project requires the creation of a coalition at the scale of the target area, including municipalities, private and public agricultural and environmental consulting services, local representatives of governmental organizations, interest groups and private organizations, community groups, and farmers and ranchers.

International Cooperation

At the same time that trade is being globalized, there is growing international concern about the sustainability of this development,

Community Action to Restore the Boyer River in Quebec

The Boyer River, located near Quebec City, on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River, drains a watershed of 21 700 hectares, much of it farmland under intensive livestock production. After years of industrial, municipal, and agricultural pollution, the river is so full of nutrients and suspended sediment that the smelt fishery has collapsed and swimmers go elsewhere. Restoring the river's water quality needed the involvement of the entire watershed population. A committee of representatives from farmer groups, municipalities, and the provincial ministries of agriculture and environment organized public information meetings and training sessions. Farmers have received help to build appropriate manure storages, stabilize river banks, manage animal watering places, and restrict animal access to the river. They have also worked with an expert to develop best management practices. This project has created a feeling of identity, membership, and cooperation among people within the watershed.