



## **Do you hire Spanish-speaking workers on your farm? Call Omar!**

December 18, 2019

It was at the end of March, 2011 and that year, winter stretched a little beyond spring. « *Esta muy frio* » said [Omar Sandoval](#) as he set foot on Canadian soil for the first time! Now living in Quebec with his family, this Colombian-born man had to adapt to the reality here: « The language barrier was my main challenge. I wanted to have my diplomas recognized and to be able to interact with dairy farmers. »

If you cross paths with [Omar](#) on a cold winter's day at the farm, he will now tell you that it's "freakin' cold", in French or in English, just like the true Canadian guy he has become.



With a bachelor's degree in animal science from the Industrial University of Santander, and some 20 years of experience in several Colombian government and private agricultural organizations, including the Federation of Dairy Producers, he nevertheless had to adapt to the reality of dairy production here. [Omar](#) has worked as a dairy production technician for seven years at Valacta/Lactanet. In 2019, he successfully completed the required examination and became a member of the Ordre des agronomes du Québec (*felicitaciones todavía compañero chef!*). He is also recognized as an official service provider for Réseau Agri-conseil in Québec.

Training at the farm for your Spanish-speaking team of workers

More and more dairy farmers rely on temporary foreign workers of Central American countries. When they arrive on the farm, they face the same challenges that [Omar](#) did. That is why he initiated the development of the [Training for the integration and support of foreign workers \(FIATE\)](#). This service is aimed at all dairy farmers who hire Spanish-speaking foreign workers, with the objective of ensuring the quality and competency of their foreign workforce and guaranteeing compliance with their milk quality standards and profitability.

To date, [Omar](#) has provided 169 hours of training to 48 foreign workers on 30 dairy farms in various regions.

“We benefited from the [FIATE](#) service when Margarito arrived at the farm. [Omar](#) explained to him the importance of doing the job right, especially to ensure milk quality and comply with somatic cell standards. We liked the experience and even want more support from [Omar](#) when our employee is more accustomed to the daily tasks. It was reassuring for all the employees and the family to see that he would be starting out with a good knowledge base.”

*-Marc Étienne Roy and Mélissa Roy from Ferme Laitroy, Thetford-Mines*

By Julie Baillargeon, agr., M. Sc.

Over the years, Julie has developed an expertise in knowledge transfer that she shares with her peers as well as with partners in the field and dairy producers.



By Omar Sandoval agr.

[FIATE](#) is a service available to Quebec dairy producers who hire foreign workers.