Valacta Announces New Governance and Reaffirms Its Commitment to Dairy Producers

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Following the announcement of changes to Lactanet's operating model, Valacta is entering a new chapter in its history and announces the appointment of Mariette Gagnon as Chair of its Board of Directors and Débora Santschi, agr., Ph.D., as General Manager.

These appointments reflect Valacta's commitment to strengthening its presence among dairy producers in Québec and the Atlantic provinces, ensuring continuity of services, and continuing to develop innovative solutions tailored to the realities of dairy operations.

New Leadership Guided by Two Experienced Leaders

Mariette Gagnon – Chair of the Board of Directors

Co-owner of Ferme Boulet, a dairy and maple syrup operation, Mariette Gagnon has been actively involved in the agricultural sector for more

than 20 years. She currently serves as President of Les Producteurs de lait de Chaudière-Appalaches-Nord and as a director of Les Producteurs de lait du Québec. She also served on the Board of Directors of Holstein Québec for 11 years, including two years as President. Her experience includes involvement with the Conseil québécois des races laitières, CIAQ, Semex, and Agricultrices du Québec. She brings to Valacta extensive governance experience and firsthand knowledge of the realities facing dairy producers.

"I am honoured by the confidence my fellow board members have placed in me and proud to chair Valacta's Board of Directors at this important time. Our priority is clear: to be closer to producers in every region and listen to their needs, while continuing to collaborate with all our partners." — Mariette Gagnon

Débora Santschi, agr., Ph.D. – General Manager

Raised on a farm in the Eastern Townships, Débora Santschi holds a bachelor's degree and a master's degree from McGill University, as well as a Ph.D. in animal science from Université Laval. With Valacta since 2010, she has held roles including nutrition and management expert and Director of Innovation at Lactanet. Serving as Valacta's Interim Assistant General Manager since November 2025, she combines scientific expertise, in-depth organizational knowledge, and a strategic vision focused on innovation and producers' needs.

"It is a privilege to lead Valacta and its teams, whose commitment to producers is remarkable. Together, we will continue to provide high-quality services tailored to the realities of our regions and build on the collaboration that has made our industry strong." — Débora Santschi

Recognized Expertise and Continued Collaboration

A founding partner of Lactanet in 2019, alongside Canadian Dairy Network and CanWest DHI, Valacta has a long history of supporting dairy producers in Québec and Atlantic Canada, particularly through milk

recording, advisory services, and knowledge transfer through its Centre of Expertise.

The evolution of the operating model now allows Valacta to strengthen its independence and its connections with producers in the regions it serves, while maintaining collaboration with Lactanet at the national level, particularly for genetic services and other shared needs.

These changes primarily concern the governance and management of the organizations.

Your Services Continue. Our Commitment Remains.

We want to reassure all producers and partners: the services you have come to rely on will continue.

Valacta’s teams remain present and fully committed to supporting you, both on the farm and in the laboratory, with the same dedication to quality, reliability, and service.

Beyond ensuring continuity, Valacta intends to strengthen its regional presence, listen more closely to the needs of each area, and adapt its services to the realities of producers in Québec and Atlantic Canada.

Together, Toward the Future of Dairy Farming

Under this new leadership, Valacta will continue to grow by drawing on its teams’ expertise, innovation, and close relationships with producers.

The organization aims to continue developing effective tools and practical solutions that contribute to the productivity, long-term viability, and sustainability of dairy operations.

Our ambition remains simple: to be a trusted, accessible partner committed to the success of today’s and tomorrow’s dairy producers.

Valacta thanks producers and its partners for their trust and reaffirms its commitment to continuing this collaboration, with the same passion for dairy farming and a renewed commitment to the future.

Debora Santschi (Valacta)

Interim Assistant General Manager