

Julien Dupasquier – Food Truck Tours and Facebook to Counter Isolation

An inherent aspect of farming is isolation. Farms are primarily located in rural areas, and running a farm is a 24/7 job with high levels of unpredictability and a functionally infinite amount of work. For many farmers, it can be difficult to leave the farm when there is always more to be done.

To add onto this, farming and food production has become unfamiliar to the average Canadian. With only 2% of people in Canada having a direct relationship to a farm, it can be difficult to find people who understand the challenges of the farmers' life, and to find a group of people who can sympathize with the variety of struggles that farmers face.



The Food Truck Tours can bring 100-150 visitors to a farm.

Julien Dupasquier is a Maple Syrup farmer from Frelighsburg, Québec who recognized how isolation was affecting farmers around him and wanted to do something about it. That is one of the reasons why he created his Farm Food Truck Tours, where he would create community events around farms in the surrounding areas to bring everyone together.

Julien's food trucks feature a maple-themed menu as well as a poutine bar. Since its inception in 2021, Julien has visited around 34 farms, and often his food truck will bring together 100-150 people to the farms, most of them who also work in agriculture.

“When we hold these events, the farmers invite all their friends, families and neighbors. That's why it's a great method to counter the isolation we all face,” said Julien.

“In agriculture, loneliness reigns, and it must be broken.”

During these events, Julien donates \$1 from every poutine sold to Au Coeur des Familles Agricoles, an organization that fights against psychological distress in Quebec farmers. In 2021, Julien raised around \$25,000 for the organization through his food truck tours.

Apart from his food truck tours, Julien has also created a Facebook page dedicated to agriculture, which posts a steady stream of humorous content related to farming in Canada. With 6000 subscribers, the page serves as a digital space for farmers to gather and make light of the challenges that they all face.

“I share what I live from my daily life on the page. I hope it makes people laugh, and breaks them out of their routine. Having a page for farmers helps them to feel valued and important, which they are,” said Julien.

With COVID restricting the food truck events, Julien has seen more farmers seeking to be involved with the Facebook page. The page is full of positivity from both Julien and all the commenters, as well as inside jokes that only someone in farming could understand.

Julien's two initiatives are an excellent example of the kind of community-building activities that are desperately needed to counter the inherent isolation that comes with farming. Julien took it upon himself to take a proactive approach to combating isolation, and did it in a way that benefits the community, himself and mental health resources for farmers in Quebec.

