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Alberta Federation of Agriculture insight

President's Report Lynn Jacobson

Introducing ... the Alberta Federation of Agriculture

A NEW ERA FOR ALBERTA'S GENERAL FARM ORGANIZATION WAS USHERED IN WHEN DELEGATES AT THE 2013 AGM OVERWHELMINGLY VOTED TO CHANGE OUR NAME, MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE, AND GOVERNANCE MODEL.

Immediately after the AGM, we initiated the legislative process to change our name from Wild Rose Agricultural Producers (WRAP) to Alberta Federation of Agriculture (AFA).

Our initial hope was that if everything went without a hitch, we *might* be able to begin operating as AFA on November 1, 2013. In a strange twist

on Murphy's Law, the process moved amazingly quickly and our Private Bill cleared all hurdles and was passed into law on May 27 when it received Royal Assent.

We are grateful to many people for their assistance throughout: Honourable Verlyn Olson, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, and his Chief of Staff Nick Harsulla lined up a sponsor to introduce the Bill in the Assembly; Everett McDonald, MLA, Grande Prairie-Smoky, graciously agreed to be the sponsor; and the Parliamentary Council Office guided us through the requisite parliamentary procedures.

The remaining changes (membership and governance) take effect on November 1. These improvements will better reflect the diversity of participants in our organization. The existing individual producer membership will remain, but new categories will be added to include commodity group members, non-profit members (such as feeder associations, irrigation districts, grazing associations, Ag Service Boards, MDs and Counties and environmental groups), associate members (such as UFA and Farmers of North America) and non-voting patrons (including consumers).



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Each membership category will have a different fee. All members (except patrons) will be allowed representation on the Board and voting privileges. We are also moving from membership renewals throughout the year to a single renewal date that corresponds to our fiscal year. Existing memberships remain in effect until October 31. Membership renewal packages will be going out in October.

And since we were changing everything else and needed to replace our branded print materials, it was timely to implement an office relocation we had been contemplating since hiring our current Executive Director in 2011. By moving to Lacombe, we are now conveniently located along the central Alberta corridor in an area with robust agricultural activity.

AFA continues to be an effective voice across Alberta's agriculture industry. We are currently working on a wide variety of farm issues, including: grain grading workshops for producers, child labor standards for all children paid to work on-farm, ensuring fair treatment for farmers under new open market rules, addressing concerns about the loss of landowner rights under Bill 2, as well as how best to communicate with members and a new membership benefit package.

We are proud of our positive role in the HayEast initiative, which saw us join forces with farm organizations across Canada to coordinate and finance the transportation of hay from Western Canadian farmers and ranchers to livestock producers in Ontario and Quebec. By the time HayEast wrapped up in June 2013, hundreds of Eastern farmers who were in desperate need of hay because of a devastating 2012 drought had received thousands of tons of hay. Yet another fine example of the compassion of the Canadian farm community.

If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me. My door is always open!



A STRONG FUTURE FOR AGRICULTURE

Supporting our next generation through academic scholarships and how *you* can help

Cultivating the next generation of farmers and ranchers in Alberta is important. Clem Samson, Vice President of Western Operations for Farm Credit Canada (FCC), noted at our 2013 AGM that FCC is optimistic about the strength and generational renewal of the family farm.

Samson reported that producers make up 87% of FCC's loan holders, with 98% of those producers indicating they are involved in a family farm. Samson said FCC has also seen a considerable movement of young people back to farm businesses.

AFA is proud to support the next generation through an annual \$500 scholarship that recognizes one individual in post-secondary studies in agriculture or a related program. Preference is given to AFA members or children and grandchildren of members.

Meet our 2013 Scholarship Winner!

Congratulations to Michelle Craddock from Taber. Michelle is the daughter of long-time AFA member Merv Craddock. She is currently in her third year at the University of Lethbridge studying for her Bachelor of Science in Biology, with plans for a career in agricultural research. We are proud to help Michelle in her studies!

Did you know that you can help grow the scholarship fund by making a tax-deductible contribution? Simply call the Alberta Heritage Scholarship Fund at 780-427-8640, and ask to make a donation in the name of Wild Rose Agricultural Producers Scholarship. Your donation will help deserving young Albertans achieve their full potential.

getting to know Canadian Foodgrains Bank

SINCE ITS ESTABLISHMENT IN 1983, THE CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK HAS PROVIDED PEOPLE IN NEED WITH OVER 1.1 MILLION TONNES OF FOOD AND SEED, WORTH OVER \$682 MILLION.

What began in Canada as a five-member organization has now grown to include 15 churches and church-based agencies representing 32 denominations across Canada. Unlike other food banks, which are based mainly on financial contributions, the Foodgrains Bank was created to receive and share gifts of food.

Last year, with assistance from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Foodgrains Bank provided over \$43 million in assistance. This included food, nutrition programs for children and mothers, and projects to help communities produce more food locally. Each year, individuals, churches and other groups donate generously to the Foodgrains Bank. In 2012-13, Canadians gave \$11.8 million, with \$2.8 million of the total coming from Alberta. Some 4,349 tonnes of Alberta grain worth \$1.3 million came from 34 growing projects and individual farmers.

Although farmers still grow food for the Foodgrains Bank, the food is no longer shipped overseas. The Foodgrains Bank now prefers to use money from the sale of grain in Canada to buy from farmers in impoverished areas, which saves time and shipping costs and supports local communities.

According to Jim Cornelius, Executive Director, the Foodgrains Bank is thrilled to see its actions improve the world hunger situation. "Although media reports might lead people to think the world is losing the fight against hunger, in fact, a lot of progress has been made." He stresses the need is still great in many areas of the world, however, with over 800 million people without sufficient food to live healthy and active lives.



IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING: WEATHER HAS A HUGE IMPACT ON OPERATIONS AND THE BOTTOM LINE. WEATHER IS PERHAPS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT VARIABLE INFLUENCING AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION.

simplifying your weather

Today, however, the majority of weather data and information that is available across Canada to farmers and the agriculture industry is extremely sparse – it's generated from weather stations that can be anywhere from 50 to 80 kilometers from your farm. This type of weather data provides little value to the agriculture community on a daily basis. For example, trying to determine whether to spray or if disease pressure has reached a critical threshold based on data derived from a station 50 kms away from your farm could suggest an incorrect prescription for the problem. Field trials in 2011 and 2012 for a Fusarium head blight model clearly demonstrated that an on-farm weather station is required for accurate disease risk thresholds, which proved the case for localized weather stations. These factors have resulted in farmers and industry representatives seeking more localized and real-time weather information as a guide to field operations and agronomic decisions, including but not limited to pesticide management, harvest decisions and insurance claims.

Are you interested in having a site specific, real-time (2.5 second update) weather station installed at your location? Our professional software tools for agriculture and weather monitoring include integration of your local station data, radar, short and long range forecasts, customized alerts, market information, mobile applications and more. Call the WeatherGuy today!



Creating a positive perception of Canadian agriculture is a big job that can't be done by just a few people. Agriculture More Than Ever is an industry-driven effort that asks everyone in agriculture – from corporations and associations to farms and individuals – to work together and tell the real story of agriculture.

Partners in the initiative come from many different backgrounds to support our great industry. Check out the website, www.agriculturemorethanever.ca, to learn how you can participate, access ready-to-use information tools such as PowerPoint slides and fact sheets and share your passion for our industry!

You can also find the initiative on Facebook and Twitter at the following links:

<https://www.facebook.com/agriculturemorethanever>
<https://twitter.com/agmorethanever>



Top 50

CONGRATULATIONS to AFA President Lynn Jacobson on being named one of Alberta's 50 Most Influential People for 2013. Alberta Venture magazine recognized what we have known for years - that Lynn is one of the most dedicated and strongest advocates for the agricultural industry in the province. Well deserved!



Guy Ash
204-229-6139
weatherguy@shaw.ca

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The Farmers' Advocate Office has issued an updated Farm Advisory Notice pertaining to Failsafe Canada and Carbon Merchants. If you or someone you know engaged Carbon Merchants to handle the sale of your carbon credits and you are owed money, please contact the AFA office.

403.789.9151

or toll free

1.855.789.9151



Shelter belt-tightening Keeping a long tradition alive

The Alberta Federation of Agriculture is one of the key partners working to ensure that the tree nursery in Indian Head, Saskatchewan, continues providing hardy tree and shrub seedlings to farmers.

In 2012, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) communicated its intention to transition out of the 111-year-old program. In response to widespread concerns about the impact of this closure on the well-being of agriculture, rural communities and the environment, AFA stepped forward as one of eight agricultural and municipal groups to form the Western Canada Tree Nursery Coalition (WCTNC).

With funding support through the Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program, the Coalition engaged McNair Business Development of Regina to develop a business plan with the goal to successfully transition the program from government to organizations with an understanding of the needs of farmers and rural communities.

The Coalition is awaiting response to the business plan from AAFC Minister Gerry Ritz, who has previously provided assurances that the tree nursery will remain fully operational to the end of 2013. This is critically important to allow the fall tree harvest to take place, thereby ensuring the program can be transitioned as a going concern so it can supply trees to farmers and rural land holders in Western Canada for years to come.



5033 - 52 Street
Lacombe, AB T4L 2A6
p: 403.789.9151 f: 403.789.9152
Toll Free: 1.855.789.9151
www.AFAonline.ca

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Enhanced Member Benefits for AFA Members

Exclusive insurance coverages and savings

In our continuing effort to provide value to our membership, AFA has worked together with The Co-operators to bring you access to an enhanced Member Benefits Program. As of August 1, members now have access to the following new insurance coverages and savings:

- **Farm and Home Member Loss Experience Discounts**
These discounts are applied on renewing Co-operators farm and insurance policies when member group claims experience has been favourable.
- **Service fee savings on auto and home insurance**
Waiver of service fees on auto and home insurance for members paying by pre-authorized debit from a bank account.
- **Enhanced home insurance coverage**
Claims Forgiveness and availability of Enviroguard and Better Limits for Members home insurance endorsements.

These new insurance coverages and savings are in addition to other benefits our members already have access to, including:

- **Enhanced farm insurance coverage**
Available on Co-operators farm insurance policies, this benefit gives you up to 24 additional coverages and increased policy limits. This additional protection is valued at \$300, but is available for a cost of only \$25.
- **Discounted travel insurance**
Members can purchase travel medical insurance plans and receive a 15% discount. There is no age limit and coverage is available worldwide 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- **Group insurance**
A competitive member insurance plan offering medical, dental, life and disability coverage. Call 1.866.761.7851 for more information.

Your membership gives you access to all of these exclusive coverages and discounts - they are not available to the general public.

To learn more, contact a Co-operators Financial Advisor today and identify yourself as a member of the Alberta Federation of Agriculture.



SAVE THE DATE! JANUARY 21 & 22, 2014

By popular demand, our 2014 AGM is once again taking place at the Banff Park Lodge.

If you missed it last year, you have another opportunity to see what all the excitement was about and enjoy a great winter getaway.

REGISTRATION FORMS COMING SOON.