

# Scoops

Quarterly publication of the Alberta Farm Writers' Association

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## Scoops

is published quarterly and is free to members of the Alberta Farm Writers' Association

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## CFWF 2005 conference in Lloydminster

Alberta and Saskatchewan farm writers and broadcasters will co-host the Canadian Farm Writers' Federation (CFWF) annual conference in 2005.

To be held in the border city of Lloydminster Sept. 22-24, the conference will celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CFWF, as well as the provincial centennials of both Alberta and Saskatchewan.

A joint AFWA/SFWA conference committee has been formed (please see sidebar), and all Alberta farm writers are encouraged to help out in some way with the conference.

One thing we need help with immediately is the development of a conference theme. Three things will be highlighted in some way during CFWF 2005 – Centennial of both Alberta and Saskatchewan; 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CFWF; Lloydminster as a 'border city'. It has been suggested that our theme reflect these three events in some form.

Please forward theme ideas to Janet at [afwa@shaw.ca](mailto:afwa@shaw.ca) as soon as possible. Some past themes to inspire you:

2004 Windsor, ON  
*See the South*  
2002 Fredericton, NB  
*The Atlantic Odyssey*  
2000 Lethbridge, AB  
*Farming on the Green Planet - The New Age of*

*Stewardship*  
1999 Ste-Adele, QC  
*Farming in the Shade of the City*  
1996 Winnipeg, MB  
*Global Food Security*

For more information, or to offer your help with the conference, please contact Janet at [afwa@shaw.ca](mailto:afwa@shaw.ca).

### CFWF 2005 Conference Committee

- Co-chairs and program: Janet Kanters [janetkanters@shaw.ca](mailto:janetkanters@shaw.ca), 403-901-1160; Karen Briere [karen.briere@producer.com](mailto:karen.briere@producer.com), 306-359-0841
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- Conference swag: Jodi Hesse [jodi.hesse@albertapork.com](mailto:jodi.hesse@albertapork.com), 780-491-3528; Bonnie Warnyca [bonniest@sasktel.net](mailto:bonniest@sasktel.net), 306-424-2650

We're still seeking a Registration sub-committee. If you can help out, please let us know.

## AFWA fees due this month

2005 AFWA membership fees are due January 31<sup>st</sup>. An invoice will be e-mailed to members within the next two weeks.

## Good industry stories lack sex appeal

by Lee Hart

As I and other agriculture journalists noted, it was disappointing to see the urban media paid lukewarm attention to an important agriculture story at the recent National Beef Science Seminar in Calgary.

A report by Dr. Ron Read of the University of Calgary revealing that routine antibiotic treatments in Western Canadian beef feedlots are not creating so-called super bugs in human beings, received as about as much urban media attention as the fact that 80,000 Alberta kids went to school that day.

There has been an underlying suspicion that the perceived heavy use of antibiotics in feeder cattle could lead to development of resistant bacteria in humans.

The five-year, \$1 million study, funded by the federal/provincial CABIDF

program lead by Dr. Read and several other researchers concluded there was no evidence the most common antibiotics were creating these resistant bacteria.

The study didn't address the fact that 95 per cent of us will go mad in six years due to other beef-related issues, but it did assure us that a good dose of penicillin will still fix just about everything else.

Read's presentation at the Calgary conference was detailed. In fact, it was far too technical for at least half the audience he was addressing, myself included.

But the press and electronic media, representing most of the major local and national news outlets were there for the presentation and following news conference. They were alerted. They should have been able to

ferret out the key facts.

Cameras and microphones rolled, and reporter pens were scribbling, but very little of that information ever made it to air or print. This was stuff consumers should know.

I dare say if the research had gone the other way – if the study had found drug treatments were creating a whole new class of untreatable, unmanageable, mutated bacteria in humans – the sensational headlines would still be rolling.

News directors would have been able to find – in time for the 6 o'clock news – at least one mother with three little kids who knew this sort of thing was happening because she had been dealing with ear aches and runny noses for weeks, and it all started right after they had

meatloaf for supper one night.

Here would have been more evidence that modern agriculture has failed us, and confirmation the whole industry was going to hell in a hand basket.

Either the urban media didn't understand the issue, or they just lost interest. Is it possible it was too much of a good news story, lacking the sex appeal of a good scandal or some life-threatening mismanagement that readers and listeners thrive upon?

As cynical as it sounds, after a background in working in weekly and daily newspapers earlier in my career, it appears the urban media perspective today is that the only good news is bad news.

## Member news:

**Tamara Stecyk** was promoted to Editor of the Edson Leader October 23, 2004.

*Tamara Stecyk:*  
vineberg@telusplanet.net

A series of articles by **Noel McNaughton** now appear in the *Western Producer*.

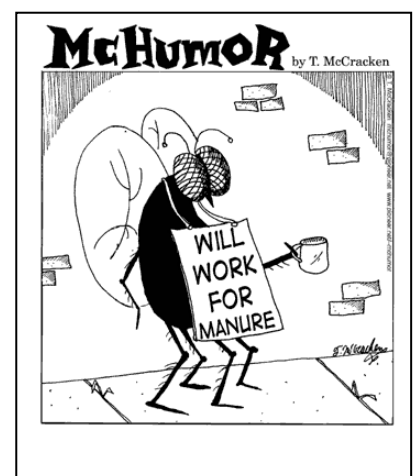
*Noel McNaughton:*  
noel@mcnaughton.ca

**Will Verboven** attended an international conference on BSE testing in Paris, France, in late November, and met with the European Union's chief BSE scientist. Will also toured a French Level 3 security lab that does BSE testing along with a packing plant that is carrying out commercial-scale testing. Watch the March issue of *Scoops* for a full report from Will.

*Will Verboven:*  
willverboven@hotmail.com

**Joan Sinfield** is program coordinator of a new pilot project at the Centre for Agribusiness Training and Education ([www.agtraining.ca](http://www.agtraining.ca)). The site connects those seeking agricultural or agribusiness training to those offering learning.

*Joan Sinfield:*  
sinfieldjoan@hotmail.com



## PETA protest in Edmonton

*In early December, PETA erected a billboard in Edmonton slamming the drinking of milk. On Friday, December 3, the Bear radio station in Edmonton hosted a bbq underneath the billboard, and ag industry turnout was phenomenal. A report from Dawn Ius, Communications Manager with the Alberta Livestock Industry Development Fund:*

*by Dawn Ius*

How incredible to see so many producers and staff from our agriculture industry at the Bear radio station's "peaceful protest" against PETA's anti-milk billboard last week.

More than 500 people lined up for free Alberta beef burgers, sausages and milk. The milk was donated by Alberta Milk, who had a full force of staff handing out toques, product and goodies.

Representatives from Growing Alberta, Alberta Pork, Alberta Chicken Producers, Alberta

Turkey Producers and the Alberta Hatching Egg Producers were also on site to support Alberta Milk, showing solidarity in our industry and making themselves available if consumers had any questions.

The barbecue was talked about for days afterward on the Bear radio station, with the deejays continuously repeating some of the industry's key messages about agriculture's economic benefits to the industry and the importance of agriculture in Alberta.

Speaking with the Bear's Ryan Zimmerman, he said the deejays were grateful to have the industry on side, but also pleased to learn about the commodity organizations and how staff can help them get the "good news about agriculture" on the air. This was a great opportunity for some media relations with a radio station that certainly has listeners who support agriculture and food.

These pictures show the spirit and teamwork from some of our industry's leaders. This was a great example of how

the industry can come together for a common message.



## Welcome new members

**Laura Laing** has joined AdFarm in Calgary as Senior Program Manager, Public Relations Services. Phone 403-410-7600, [laura.laing@adfarmonline.com](mailto:laura.laing@adfarmonline.com)

**Danielle Oberle** has joined Adculture Group in Calgary as Senior Account Executive, Public Relations. Phone 403-685-0938, [doberle@adculture.com](mailto:doberle@adculture.com)

**Carolynn Sinclair** has joined Adculture Group in Calgary as Junior Account Executive, Public Relations. Phone 403-685-0938, [csinclair@adculture.com](mailto:csinclair@adculture.com)

## Coming Event

**Alberta Irrigation Projects Association Conference 2005**  
**WATER'S FUTURE – OUR FUTURE!**

February 27-March 1  
Hyatt Regency Hotel, Calgary

Registration: \$250 before Jan. 31  
\$325 after Jan. 31

For details, visit [www.aipa.org/Conference\\_2005](http://www.aipa.org/Conference_2005)