

SCOOPS

ALBERTA FARM WRITERS' ASSOCIATION

Reesor presented Blue Ribbon Award

AFWA member and CFCW Agri-Services Editor Caitlynn Reesor is the recipient of the 2005 WFA Blue Ribbon Award.

The WFA Blue Ribbon is awarded by the Western Fairs Association to recognize and honour individuals or groups who have provided outstanding support to the fair industry.

The Blue Ribbon award was



presented to Caitlynn by Edmonton Northlands President Dale Leschitta at the Edmonton Northlands 2005 Volunteer Appreciation Night, December 7, 2005.



Caitlynn Reesor receives the 2005 WFA Blue Ribbon Award for her support to the fair industry.

Also recognized that evening was AFWA member Bill Owen for his 20 years of volunteer service to Edmonton Northlands.

Frank M. Jacobs "Bar None Endowment"

By Reg Norby

Frank Jacobs (B.Ed. '43 / B.Sc. Ag. '47) long-time editor of Cattlemen magazine, teacher and rancher, passed away in 2002 and was honored in 2005 through the creation of the Frank M. Jacobs Bar None Endowment at the University of Alberta.

Frank's second youngest child, Gavin, explains that he and his siblings were unanimous in their decision to create an endowed award in their father's name.

"It was obvious to me and to my siblings that it was the right

thing to do, to continue supporting the things he believed in: ranching, education and journalism."

This annual \$1,000 award will go to an agriculture or agricultural/food business management student who has shown an interest in journalism and education.

Gavin and Lorena Jacobs attended the 2005 Bar None Alumni Dinner on November

19, meeting the Awards inaugural recipient, Laura Nielsen, at which time they also presented her with a copy of Frank's 1993 book: *Cattle and Us - Frankly Speaking*.



From left, Gavin Jacobs; Laura Nielsen, Inaugural Award Winner; Lorena Jacobs.

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AFWA semi-annual meeting January 25

Where? Executive Royal Inn (West Edmonton)
Mirage Lobby Lounge
10010 - 178 Street

Time? 5:30 pm - ?

Agenda: AFWA annual summer tour and general meeting

Weekly update from AAFRD available

In a recent Ispos Reid survey, "E-Business in Agriculture 2004", Ropin' the Web was mentioned as one of the agricultural websites most frequently mentioned as a favourite site among the 437 producers surveyed.

Alberta farm writers might be interested in subscribing to AAFRD's weekly update.

RTW (Ropin' the Web) This Week, published every Monday, offers the latest news, research and information from the department, says editor and Alberta farm writer Tracey Feist.

"The e-newsletter is designed to provide subscribers with

quick links to areas of interest, such as current market statistics, timely press releases or newly posted research from the department," says Feist. "Our intention is to communicate new information on Ropin' the Web, and provide the links so that material is easy to find."

RTW This Week will also be undergoing another transformation in the next few months,

as Feist will be adding a visual component to the e-newsletter.

In the 10 years Ropin' the Web has been available online, there have been over 22 million visits to the site.

If you'd like to subscribe to RTW This Week, e-mail Tracey at tracey.feist@gov.ab.ca.

Watersheds in Action III conference

Local Watersheds in Action III conference, presented by the Red-Bow Regional Watersheds Alliance (Red-Bow). February 15, 2006 in Trochu Community Centre. This one-day conference (9 am- 4 pm) showcases on-the-ground projects undertaken by landowners within the local watersheds.

Six municipalities make up the Red-Bow including the MD's of Rocky View and Bighorn, and the counties of Wheatland, Kneehill, Mountain View and Red Deer. Each municipality has watershed initiatives span-

ning several years, and many on-the-ground-projects to highlight and illustrate watershed protection.

Contact Russ Evans, 1-866-443-5541, for more information or to register. You can also visit the Events page on www.umbel.ca for information posted as it becomes available.



Paris paralyzed at zero Celsius

... but TSE research still hot

**By Will Verboven
Alberta Beef Magazine**

One does get a jaded perspective about climates in other parts of the world particularly from the reactions of the locals. Early December found me in Paris attending the annual European TSE research conference.

During my week there, the temperature hovered around zero degree Celsius which to my amazement is considered a severe cold spell in Paris. It felt more like summer in Calgary to me. It was heartening to see that Parisian women are not afraid to wear real fur coats in public, unlike politically correct women in Canada. I suspect that with the French obsession with fashion, that anti-fur PETA protestors would be an endangered species in France.

Fashion does of course overcome common sense particularly so it seems with young Parisian women. They sported waist length fur coats with thick colorful scarves and hats whilst wearing thigh high mini skirts. An interesting sight but it would seem an uncomfortable price to pay for fashion.

No such interesting sights at the TSE research conference, which is an annual event that has been running for the past four years in Paris sponsored by a large global pharmaceutical company. It features speakers on some of the most advanced TSE research being done in the world. Most topics

cover BSE, scrapie and CJD and other diagnostic studies related to those TSE's. No reports on CWD in the past two years of this conference but that may change.

I was told that European Union zoos and wildlife areas were quietly testing their cervid and even camelid populations for CWD - even though the disease has yet to spread to Europe.

One of the reason CWD testing is going on in Europe is that TSE testing initiatives are beginning to focus on finding atypical or sporadic cases.

From the many millions of TSE tests done on cattle, sheep and goats in Europe such cases are beginning to be found in small but increasing numbers.

Scrapie in sheep is becoming the main focus with a vast well-funded EU sponsored program to step-up scrapie testing in the next few years. Recent research and testing in Europe have found atypical scrapie in sheep and even a BSE case in a goat. These cases are of concern because they tend to undermine the sheep geno-typing programs being carried out in some European countries.

These conferences do give one a clear indication that TSE research is far more advanced in Europe compared to North America. Although my own research has found that fact does not deter our research establishment from reinvent-

ing the wheel and carrying out the same type of research just slightly tweaked to address that mythical "under Canadian conditions research" a surefire way to keep grant money rolling flowing.

Research reports at the conference continue to identify ever closer steps to finding reliable TSE blood markers as a diagnostic route. Research continues to be carried out to find TSE's in meat and other organs and not just in SRM's.

Sheep are the most ominous with scrapie found in kidneys and the liver. It would seem that finding BSE elsewhere in cattle is just a matter of time.

Researchers are cognizant of the repercussions of such a discovery on the beef industry but for them it is just interesting research. In reality their goals are more directed towards finding CJD in humans with animal science TSE research being used as conduit to achieve that goal - after all human diagnostic testing is where the real money is to be made.

Notwithstanding my cynicism, one can only marvel at the progress that has been made in TSE research in Europe. As to any progress in Parisian women's winter fashions, that remains mystifying but interesting.

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Will Verboven hard at work being interviewed by French farm radio broadcaster.

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The Alberta Farm Writers' Association (AFWA) exists to serve the common interests of agricultural journalists, including reporters, editors and broadcasters, as well as those in business and government whose primary responsibility is agricultural communications.



Founded in 1955, the AFWA is a provincial off-shoot of the Canadian Farm Writers' Federation (CFWF). Membership in the CFWF, as well as the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ) is automatic upon an AFWA membership.



For more information: www.cfwf.ca



Thirty-five years ago, John Schmidt wrote:

"History as written by the professional historians can be deadly dull and stuffy and full of dates and places that never bring out any human interest. And what is history other than a great number of human experiences told by the people who were actually on the scene at the time?"

John T. Schmidt was the quintessential 'farm writer' of his day, right up until his passing last May.

The Alberta Farm Writers' Association (AFWA), of which John was an Honorary Life Member, is pleased to offer for sale John's last book, "John T. Schmidt's Beat: From Barnyards to Boardrooms," a random collection of his newspaper articles covering a span of 60 years.

Purchase this collector's item today, at a cost of \$20. All proceeds from the sales of the book go to John's widow, Margaret.

Send your \$20 cheque or money order, payable to the AFWA, to:

Alberta Farm Writers' Association, P.O. Box 2147, Strathmore, AB T1P 1K1