

# Scoops

*Quarterly publication of the Alberta Farm Writers' Association*

## **BSE fallout hits magazines**

**by Will Verboven**

The economic crisis that has hit the beef industry from that single case of BSE in Alberta has worked its way into the media that serves the industry.

Uncertainty has caused advertisers to review their advertising budgets. With no clear indication that the border closure would be resolved soon, advertisers began to pull their ads from cattle and livestock related publications. This has forced some publications to become even more creative in finding new advertising customers to stay in business.

Many regular advertisers felt that with little marketing being done by primary producers and the future looking very grim, much less money was going to be spent on cattle related products and services. When those perspectives are entertained, advertising is usually the first expense to be cut.

Sales gurus always advocate that when times are tough, that's when advertising is most important. But these times in the beef industry are more than just tough - they are devastating. Money will be spent on cattle this year, but producers are likely not going to spend a dime unless they have to - no matter how enticing the advertising.

Be that as it may, the consequences are severe for any media dependant on the whims of such nervous advertisers. Small independent publications focused on the cattle industry will be the hardest hit. Those publications that are part of a larger diversified publishing group may fare better because of the financial strength of the parent company. At the time of writing, the border was partially open. That may spell some relief and cause some advertisers to renew their faith in the cattle and beef industry. Whether that means a return to advertising is yet to be seen, hopefully it won't be too late, otherwise media casualties will begin to fall.

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## **New FBC owners stay the course**

**By Lee Hart**

Business as usual. That's the word around Farm Business Communications these days following the sale of Agricore United's publishing division to the Vancouver based, Glacier Ventures International Corp. The intention to sell which was announced in mid-August came as a surprise to most FBC employees involved with the long standing family of publications such as Country Guide, Canadian Cattlemen, Grainews, Canola Guide, Manitoba Co-operator, and Alberta Crops and Beef Magazine.

Glacier, a relatively unknown communications company, took its first step in agriculture publishing about 2 years ago when it bought the Western Producer from Saskatchewan Wheat Pool.

Word from the new owners in early meetings with FBC employees is they intend the two publishing companies to continue with business as usual and remain as competitive forces in the ag publishing field. WP and FBC will continue to maintain respective head offices in Saskatoon and Winnipeg with no staff changes.

Glacier, which plans to expand its publishing and communications business in Canada and the United States, appears to have a simple philosophy – if a business is running profitably there is no need to fix it. When all paperwork is completed, the sale should be finalized no later than September 30. Palmer Anderson, AU vice-president in charge of FBC, will remain as publisher and managing director of FBC under the new owners.

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## GALA Awards

In the midst of challenging times in Alberta's agriculture and food industry, the role of leaders is imperative. Be on the front line as Growing Alberta announces the 2003 Growing Alberta Leadership Award (GALA) winners.

Awards will be presented to Alberta agriculture and food industry leaders in five categories including: Food Safety, Environmental Stewardship, Innovation, Economic Development, Community Spirit, and Building Youth Leadership.

The awards will be announced and presented at an industry luncheon event. Media will have the opportunity to interview winners and sponsors at this time.

**Wednesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2003 11:00 AM – 1:30 PM**  
(Lunch will be served)

**WHERE:** NAIT Dining Room, 11762-106 Street, Edmonton, Alberta

**WHY:** Winners represent Alberta agriculture and food industry and government leaders in their respective categories. All winners are nominated and judged by industry and government peers. Winners are selected for outstanding commitment, proven leadership and professional integrity.

**INFO:** Please call Lynn Haley (media relations – Growing Alberta) at: 403-287-1094 or Email: [lhaley@westarcsi.com](mailto:lhaley@westarcsi.com)

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## Member news

AFWA member Wendy Dudley recently released her new book, 'Don't Name the Ducks and Other Truths about Life in the Country'. Wendy is available for an interview in Calgary on Oct. 1st and 2nd. Contact Wendy for more details, at 403-931-2630, [dudleyw@myalberta.com](mailto:dudleyw@myalberta.com)).

Leigh Patterson with Ducks Unlimited Canada has moved from the Edmonton office to the Oak Hammock Marsh (MB) office, as Marketing and Communications Coordinator. E-mail her at [l\\_patterson@ducks.ca](mailto:l_patterson@ducks.ca). Deni Cameron resigned from Alberta Pork at the end of August due to ill health. Alberta Pork is currently seeking a new Communications Specialist. Anyone interested can send their resumes to Paul Hodgman at Alberta Pork, [paul.hodgman@albertapork.com](mailto:paul.hodgman@albertapork.com).

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## CFWF or bust!

IF there is enough interest, the AFWA will rent a van or bus to transport brave AFWA souls to the CFWF shindig in Kelowna, Oct. 1-5. The "CFWF Kelowna or Bust" road trip will stop for passengers in Edmonton, Red Deer and Calgary, departing Wednesday (Oct. 1) and returning Sunday (Oct. 5).

IF you are interested in hopping aboard this fun-filled frolic through the frosty fir-lined mountains of AB and BC, contact Jack Howell (780-422-3981, [jack.howell@gov.ab.ca](mailto:jack.howell@gov.ab.ca)) or Reg Norby (780-436-0590, [norby@shaw.ca](mailto:norby@shaw.ca)) by Friday, September 19.

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## Environmental Stewardship Awards, 2003

The 2003 Canadian Cattlemen's Association Environmental Stewardship Award was presented to Bruce and Valve Forrest from Ontario. With the generous support of Merial Canada (Ivomec), this award is given each year to a Canadian cattle producer doing a particularly outstanding job of protecting and enhancing the environment.

It was their Environmental Farm Plan development in 1994 that focused their energies on environmental efficiencies. They began with two lagoons to catch the runoff from their barnyard. That led to a cementing of their feedlot and main corral. They also put eaves troughs on the barn to divert water away from the livestock yards.

The Forrests maintain a grass buffer along the creek at the bottom of the barnyard and control-graze the area lightly in the summer. They have put in riparian fencing and fenced around their bush areas and windbreaks. The pastures have been rotationally grazed for over 30 years.

The national Environmental Stewardship Award winner is selected from the winners of stewardship awards presented by provincial cattle associations. This is the fourth year of a successful partnership between CCA and Merial Canada (Ivomec) to recognize and promote excellence in environmental management in the Canadian cattle industry. Merial is an international animal health company with a focus on the development of products to keep livestock and pets healthy and productive. Merial is a Merck and Aventis company.

Merv and Shirley Furlong are the provincial winners from British Columbia. In their cow/calf operation pasture utilization is carefully monitored. Over time the Furlongs have built water storage for irrigation and conservation, developed off-stream stock watering and put in riparian fencing. This water management strategy has benefited the wildlife in the area

Alberta provincial winners, Stephen & Dawn Hughes and Jim & Barbara Hughes, balance grazing between the moist bottomlands and the rough fescue uplands. Most of the rough fescue cover is stockpiled and grazed in the fall and winter to reduce the reliance on hay. That fall and winter grazing enhances the health of that native species.

Raymond and Donna Prefontaine won the Saskatchewan provincial award. This four-generation ranch developed a system of rotational grazing with a central watering system. A series of limited access points and a solar watering system stabilized vegetation, reduced erosion and improved water quality. Managing Fife Lake and surrounding area for long term sustainability is providing good habitat for wildlife in the area specifically the threatened Piping Plover who uses the lake shore for nesting habitat

The Manitoba winners are Hugh & Robert Blair who, with their families, keep winter feeding costs to a minimum by keeping cattle on pasture using barley, German golden millet, annual and fall rye for swath/fall grazing and early spring grazing.

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## Lee Hart joins Meristem Information Resources

**Calgary, Alta., Sept. 29, 2003:** Well-known agricultural journalist Lee Hart has joined Meristem Information Resources Ltd. in Calgary, Alberta as a Senior Editor.

Hart brings a broad base of experience in agricultural communications to his new position. Born and raised on an Eastern Ontario dairy farm, he has worked as a writer, photographer and editor for more than 30 years in weekly and daily papers across Canada, as well as in government communications. Most recently he was based in Calgary, Alberta, with Farm Business Communications as Associate Editor of the well-known national agricultural magazine, *Country Guide*, and Editor of the company's provincial publication, *Alberta Crops and Beef*.

Meristem is an independent information company providing communications services in agriculture, food, the environment and related life sciences. The company provides strategic planning services to reach audiences with quality information, creative content and tailored information delivery. It also provides educational products for these markets including *Meristem Land and Science*. That service, featuring "Progress and perspective from the best minds in science" is anchored at [www.meristem.com](http://www.meristem.com).