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# 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

Editor: Janet Kanters  
PO Box 2147  
Strathmore, AB T1P 1K1  
Ph: 403-901-1160  
Fax: 403-934-9263  
E-mail: janetkanters@shaw.ca

## Co-founder of AFWA, CFWF passes away

by Janet Kanters

Frank Jacobs, one of the founders of the Alberta Farm Writers' Association (AFWA) and the Canadian Farm Writers' Federation (CFWF), passed away on Friday, November 15, 2002.

Born in 1917, Frank is best known as long-time editor of Cattleman magazine, from 1954 to 1974. Before that he was a teacher of vocational agriculture for six years, a high school principal for two years and a rural school-teacher for five years.

In 1993, Frank published 'Cattle and Us, Frankly Speaking', a "frank and humorous account of why cattle come in five sexes, as well as other provocative facts about bovines."

Frank was an honorary member of the AFWA and the CFWF, a former president of the Calgary Branch of the Alberta Institute of Agrologists, an honorary life member of the Western Stock Growers' Association, a fellow of the Agricultural Institute of

Canada (1980), a member of the Alberta Agriculture Hall of Fame (inducted in 1975), a Canadian Cattleman's Association Cattleman of the Year (1981), an Outstanding Rangeman (Society for Range Management) and a Paul Harris Fellow of Rotary International.

Many AFWA members may remember Frank's presence at the CFWF 2000 annual meeting in Lethbridge. Frank also last joined the AFWA during their annual tour at Strathmore in 2001.



Frank Jacobs, second from right, poses with other long-time members of the AFWA during the annual tour at Strathmore in June 2001. From left, John Schmidt, Bill Owen, Frank Jacobs and Cliff Faulknor.

Photo by Janet Kanters

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## Meet a new AFWA member:

*Ron Montgomery is a freelance writer and consultant, currently residing in southwestern Alberta.*

*Originally a farm boy from southeastern Saskatchewan, Ron and Vi, with their two boys, lived in Lethbridge for over 20 years.*

*In early 1998, Ron elected to leave his 15-year Lethbridge-based position with Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) and move to the Crowsnest Pass to pursue freelance writing and public relations consulting. Writing and other assignments from various organizations, including DUC and the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), ongoing column writing for newspapers in the three Prairie provinces and book publication keeps him busy.*

*Ron has been published in the Conservator, Farming for Tomorrow, Irrigating Alberta, Birdscapes, Western Producer and many other newspapers and magazines.*

Ph: 403-563-5158

E-mail: [rvmonty@telusplanet.net](mailto:rvmonty@telusplanet.net)

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## ACC announces name change, staff change

by Ron Glaser

Effective immediately, the Alberta Cattle Commission has changed its name to Alberta Beef Producers (ABP). The name change was made to more accurately reflect the membership of the organization and the product they produce.

The ABP has been actively using the Alberta Beef name and logo in its consumer and promotion programs since the summer 2001 launch of the new RanchERs 'If it ain't Alberta, it ain't Beef' campaign at the Calgary Stampede and the World Championships in Athletics in Edmonton. The new name will help producers and the general public more readily identify and better understand the role of the organization as an advocate of the Alberta beef industry.

Along with the name change comes staff changes for ABP as well. After almost 20 years of exemplary service, ABP Manager of Public Affairs Joanne Lemke will be leaving

the organization at the end of December 2002. Joanne has made significant contributions to the beef industry throughout the course of her career and was instrumental in many of the industry's key promotional and public relations successes. Some



of her key contributions include pioneering market development work in Asia

and Quebec; the 'If it ain't Alberta, it ain't Beef' promotion launched at the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics; the launch of the Classroom Agriculture Program which has reached over 400,000 grade four students; and numerous important programs in the public relations, education, food-service and retail sectors. Joanne was also heavily involved with a lot of the cattle industry's early work on the animal welfare and animal rights issue.

Joanne will be taking some well-deserved time off, and


then will offer consulting services to the agricultural industry.

Ron Glaser has been appointed ABP Manager of Public Affairs and is responsible for public affairs, producer liaison, communications, media relations, issues management, print and electronic materials and special events such as annual and semi-annual meeting planning, and government MLA reception.

Christie Cockwill has been appointed Promotion and Education Manager effective Dec. 9. Christie will have responsibilities for Alberta beef marketing and promotion, including sponsorships, partnering projects, promotion materials, and oversight of the Alberta foodservice program and education programs. Christie comes to ABP from the Beef Information Centre where she worked on Western Canadian food-service programs and promotions.


[www.cattle.ca/acc/](http://www.cattle.ca/acc/)

## This and that.....

 Michelle Lang, formerly of the Regina Leader-Post, joined the Calgary Herald in October, to fill in for AFWA member Gina Teel, who is currently on maternity leave.

Gina recently won a Silver award from the CFWF for her daily news story, *Drought hardly one for the ages*.

Gina gave birth on Oct. 15 to 9 lb. 4 oz. Hamish.

 Stan Klassen is retiring his position as Executive Director of Alberta Irrigation Projects Association (AIPA) on Jan. 31, 2003.

Stan has been a member of the AFWA for 12½ years, and has sponsored many AFWA events on behalf of the AIPA.

Stan will be moving to Kelowna upon retirement.

 After almost nine years of freelancing, Janet Kaners has accepted a full-time position as Communications Officer with AFSC (Agriculture Financial Services Corp) effective Jan. 2, 2003.

A member of the AFWA for 10 years, Janet will continue her role as sec/treas of the AFWA, and as member-at-large with the CFWF.

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## Comment

# Observations from recent sojourn in the Netherlands

by Will Verboven

The Netherlands, or Nederland as the locals call it, is known for two exports that affect agriculture in Canada – people and intensive agriculture. Few would argue that it isn't difficult to find a Dutch person or descendant in Canada. Whether that's good or bad is debatable, but it does seem to provide fodder for tedious Dutch jokes of dubious humour. Did I mention I was of Dutch descent?

Considering that the Netherlands is smaller than Vancouver Island and yet contains 13 million people, it's hard to see how this country has much room left for agriculture. Well it doesn't. And that's why the Dutch, along with the Danes, invented intensive agriculture. Their success is world renowned, but it is also brings some problems, particularly with animal agriculture.

Dutch technology dominates the worldwide greenhouse industry. It's so advanced that it sees flowers, peppers, tomatoes and other crops grown under glass and exported worldwide. My relatives grew rich from inventing greenhouse gadgetry that now includes sensors inserted into plants that indicate when the plant needs water and certain nutrients.

The Netherlands has a long history of raising quality livestock, particularly dairy cattle, hogs and sheep. The misnamed Holstein is the most famous example. It should be

called the Frisian cow, from the area of the country where it was developed. Interestingly, Dutch dairy persons acknowledge importing Canadian dairy genetics to improve their production.

Much of Dutch dairy production has now been intensified through semi-confined loose housing with minimal grazing – if any. Remaining grazing areas have become inundated with sheep, mostly the well-known Texel meat breed, with a burgeoning Muslim population a growing market. Other reasons for sheep expansion are the absence of predators, such as coyotes, and the reluctance of sheep to jump the ever-present water barriers of innumerable canals and drainage ditches.

However, over the years it is Dutch intensive hog production that has gained much interest and some notoriety. Ten years ago the hog population was 15 million; it is now down to 10 million and is expected to stabilize at eight million. The decline is not due to market or production concerns. Dutch technology and marketing savvy is unstoppable – save for one annoying and exasperating matter – manure disposal.

The Dutch ran out of land to dispose of manure long ago, and resorted to composting and finally to dumping it by the barge load into the North Sea. That all ended and the government decided to begin a process to buy out existing

hog production. That had a side effect, because some of the money and people from those buy outs relocated to Canada – some of them to southern Alberta.

The hog industry in both the Netherlands and Denmark, in order to survive, responded by investing in industrial waste disposal methods. Most involved some sort of bio-digestion anaerobic process. They are well along developing a process that will see 100 tons of manure reduced to 10 tons or less. It's being achieved by extracting methane, minerals, fibres and other by-products out of manure and marketing them into the industrial and horticultural market.

Dutch agriculture is different, advanced and highly productive, but it is precarious. The impression one gets is that except for some polders reclaimed at great expense, the government and people are resigned to the fact that most agricultural land will eventually be used for housing and industry. The only respite to that development is to export more people – to Canada – and that's no joke!

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*Do you have a comment to make about the state of agriculture and/or agricultural coverage and farm writing/broadcasting? E-mail your opinion for the March issue of Scoops by February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2003, to the editor, [janetkaters@shaw.ca](mailto:janetkaters@shaw.ca)*

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### Meet a new AFWA member:

*Deni Cameron is the new Communications Specialist with Alberta Pork.*

*Deni is responsible for media relations and writing with the organization.*

*Ph: 780-491-3528*

*E-mail: [deni.cameron@albertapork.com](mailto:deni.cameron@albertapork.com)*

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## Coming agricultural events in Alberta

### DECEMBER 2002

Managing Through Drought, with Dave Pratt & Tim Ball

**Dec. 10:** Olds College Alumni Centre. Karen Carson, 403-556-4218; karen.carson@gov.ab.ca

**Dec. 11:** Camrose Regional Exhibition. Shirley Damberger or Jennifer Hart, 780-672-3640

**Dec. 12:** Westlock District Community Hall. Bill Chapman, 780-674-8248; bill-chapman@gov.ab.ca

Alberta Canola Producers Commission Annual Growers Meetings

**Dec. 11:** Berwyn Legion Hall. Albert Primm, 780-338-2271

**Dec. 12:** Trumpeter Inn, Grande Prairie. Nico van der Giessen, 780-539-2891

**Dec. 13:** Log Cabin, Falher. Dan Gauthier, 780-925-2130

Alberta Pulse Growers Annual General Meetings

**Dec. 12:** Trumpeter Inn, Grande Prairie; Heritage Inn, Taber. APC, 780-986-9398

Beef Pen Show and Ranchland Agri-Trade Show

**Dec. 20-21:** Medicine Hat Exhibition and Stampede Grounds. Leslie Mayer, 403-527-1234; mhstampede@mhstampede.com.

### JANUARY 2003

Chronic Wasting Disease Conference

**Jan. 11:** Days Inn, Nisku. Judy Jacobs, 780-492-3554; accru@afhe.ualberta.ca

Canadian Alfalfa and Grass Seed Conference

**Jan. 12-14:** Banff Park Lodge. Gordon Frank, 403-362-1310; gordon.frank@gov.ab.ca

Agronomy Update 2003

**Jan. 13-14:** Lethbridge Lodge Hotel. Ross McKenzie, 403-381-5842; Rob Dunn, 403-381-5351

Banff Pork Seminar

**Jan. 13-17:** Banff Centre. 780-492-3651; bps@afns.ualberta.ca

Provincial Seed Cleaning Plant Conference

**Jan. 16-18:** Westin Hotel, Edmonton. Bill Witbeck, 403-782-8022  
Canadian Bull Congress

**Jan. 17-18:** Camrose Regional Exhibition. Teryl Fankhanel, 780-672-3640; tfankhanel@cre.ab.ca  
Recropping Strategies for 2003

**Jan. 21:** Westlock. Bill Chapman, 780-674-8258; bill.chapman@gov.ab.ca

**Jan. 22:** Legion Hall, Calmar. Curtis Henkelman, 780-955-3555; curtis@leduc-country.com

**Jan. 23:** Agri-plex, New Sarepta. Curtis Henkelman, 780-955-3555; curtis@leduc-country.com

Alberta Branch of Canadian Seed Growers Association – Annual Meeting

**Jan. 29-30:** Banff Park Lodge. Bill Witbeck, 403-782-8022  
FarmTech 2003

**Jan. 29-31:** Mayfield Inn & Suites, Edmonton. 1-866-327-6832; reda@compusmart.ab.ca

