

Renewal Now!

Business ideas, information and programs for exploring opportunities in agriculture. **Spring 2008**

AgChoices 2008: Capturing Opportunities

Held in Red Deer on February 13, Renewal's annual conference introduced producers to dozens of business-building ideas.

How has your business changed over the last 10 years? For many farmers and ranchers, the answer lies in three important areas: more globalization, changing consumer tastes and an array of new production and management technologies.

On February 13 in Red Deer, the *AgChoices 2008* conference brought producers into contact with a wide range of new ideas, business strategies and global perspectives. The theme of the conference was *Capturing Opportunities*.

"No two Alberta farms are the same, and each farmer or rancher knows what's best for their business," says Wendy McCormick, conference organizer with Alberta Agriculture and Food. "The



Dr. Dave Sparling says networking is important to successful farm management and can help connect you with opportunities.

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Conference was designed to take a look at the global picture and identify trends and changes that are impacting agriculture. As the day progressed, the topics became more specific - providing ideas, tools and information that producers can readily apply to their farm business."

Conference speakers set the stage by looking at changes taking place globally and their impact on agriculture and farm management. In the afternoon, the Ag Info Market's 26 concurrent sessions drilled down into specific areas of interest.

Speakers shared diverse perspectives

Over the last few years, the *AgChoices* conference has attracted a high calibre of speakers, and the 2008 edition was no exception.

In his presentation *Farming is Changing, Farm Management Should Too*, Dr. Dave Sparling of the University of Guelph outlined his view that things have changed for Canadian agriculture. "We're no longer the low-cost producer. The impact of agriculture is shrinking and we have fewer farms and workers and a smaller percentage of the economy," says Sparling. "Farmers are still one of the most trusted groups in Canada, however. And on the international stage, Canada has a natural image. Farming is valued for more than just food, but the best opportunities are still in food."

In Sparling's view, farmers must do more than supply raw materials. They must invest in research, commit dedicated production to specific or higher-value markets, move along the value chain and develop products with a unique Alberta or Canadian difference.

David Anderson of Newly Weds Foods presented *Marketing Your Farm Products - What You Need to Know*. He highlighted some of the ins and outs of food marketing strategies and opportunities identified by Newly Weds Foods.

Leadership authority Jim Reger delivered two presentations with distinct yet complementary themes. In *Creating a Shared Vision - Successful Succession Planning*, he explored how to unite people around a shared vision for the future and how to make it happen. Reger's second presentation, *The Authentic Leader - It's About PRESENCE, Not Position*, conveyed his belief that genuine leadership is based on accountability and relationship building.

AgChoices also welcomed Deputy Minister Rory Campbell who spoke on behalf of the Honourable George Groeneveld, Minister of Agriculture and Food. The Deputy Minister spoke on *Alberta Agriculture's Vision and Where We Need to Grow*, outlining the government's strategy to

build a strong and sustainable agriculture industry within a globally competitive, agriculture and food industry.



Merle Good offers insight on how the right business structure can boost your bottom line at one of the Ag Info Market sessions.

Ag Info Market: ready, set, learn!

A unique feature of the *AgChoices* conference was the Ag Info Market. Attendees had their choice of 26 experts, presenting specific information to small groups in rotating 20-minute sessions. Several of these topics - branded beef (see page 7), farm direct marketing (page 6), shochu barley (page 4), carbon credits (page 3) and negotiating surface lease agreements (page 5) -- are the subject of stories in this edition of *Renewal Now*.

Other popular Ag Info Market sessions included:

- How to increase your competitiveness through unique business structures;
- How to improve the prospects of a new farm business venture;
- Current initiatives around livestock traceability and beef age verification;
- Using CropChoice\$ farm decision software to reach your business targets while managing risk;
- New opportunities growing pulses, fenugreek, flax, triticale, Rhodiola rosea and organic products in Alberta.

According to McCormick, the enthusiasm felt by *AgChoices* speakers and Ag Info Market presenters was infectious. Farmers and ranchers who attended the event went home with fresh perspectives and new ideas.

"The focus of *Renewal* is to bring farmers and ranchers resources they can use to build a more profitable, sustainable business," says McCormick. "We hope the ideas presented at this year's *AgChoices* conference will inspire producers throughout 2008."

For more information on *AgChoices* presentations visit: www.agriculture.alberta.ca/agchoices.

RENEWAL.
the way to grow

CLA Network: focus and cooperation leads to innovation

When diverse professionals are all pulling in the same direction, great things happen.



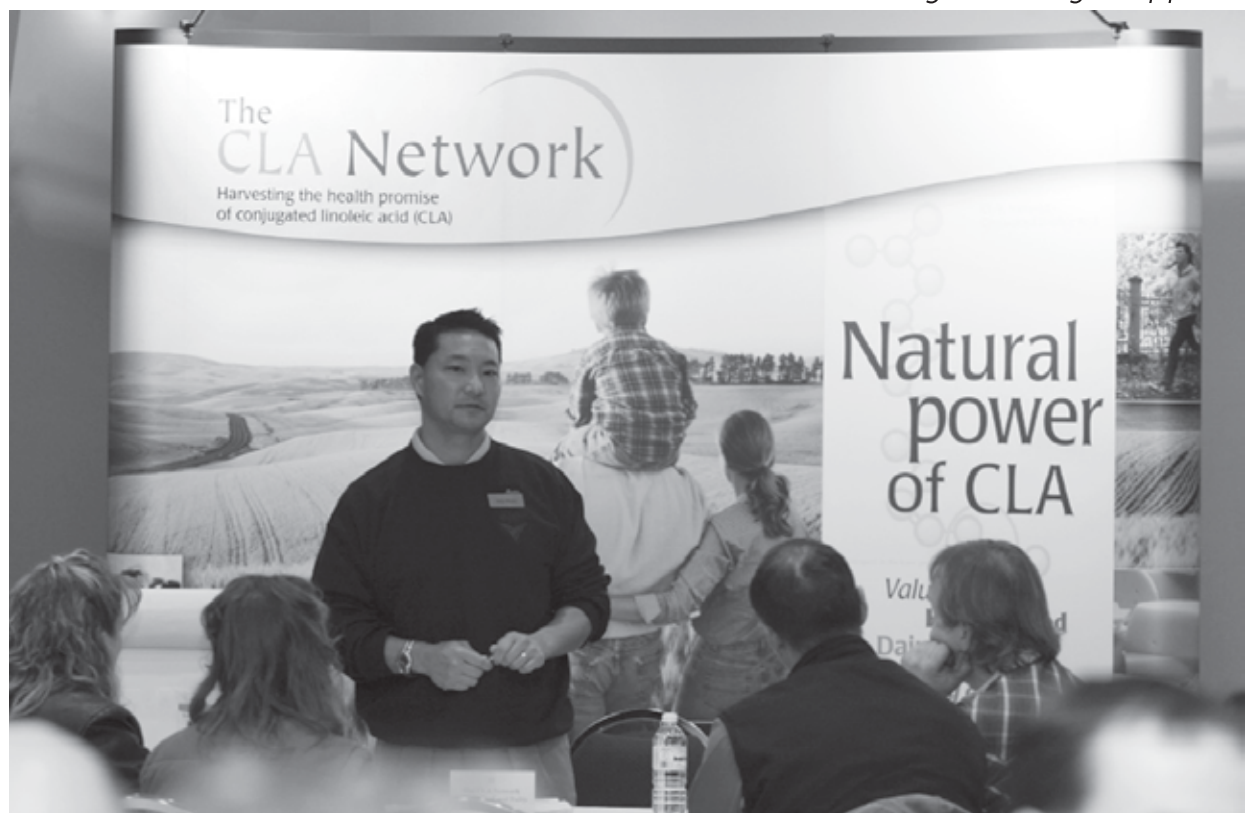
You have a consumer market that's crying out for healthy, novel, delicious food products. You have a technology that can deliver this in a product that's never been seen before. Putting the two together might seem simple, but in fact, true innovation rarely is.

When Alberta's Bles-Wold Dairy Farm (see below) recently launched Canada's first-ever CLA yogurt product, the team that made it happen was cheering. That team of people -- researchers, product developers, health experts and marketers -- is known as the CLA Network. "The CLA Network is a multidisciplinary group, founded in 2001, with representatives from government, academia, producer groups, the food industry and the health community," says CLA Network Manager Vince Ohama of Alberta Agriculture and Food. "Instead of working on a small project, you're tapped into a larger network. There's an exchange of different viewpoints and a high level of expertise directed toward a common goal."

The group's progress related to dairy production has been strongly supported by Alberta Milk, Dairy Farmers of Canada and the Agriculture Funding Consortium, with leading research and development contributions from the University of Alberta, Alberta Agriculture and Food and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

CLA, Bles-Wold an ideal match

Ohama explains that CLA stands for conjugated linoleic acid. It's a healthy, natural type of dairy and beef fat that research has linked to strong potential



Vince Ohama with Alberta Agriculture and Food, explains the how the CLA Network works with producers and industry toward a common goal.

for a range of human health benefits. These include advantages related to cancer, heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease, obesity and bone density.

Once the CLA Network examined the potential for a CLA dairy product, a cross-disciplinary working group was established. The Renewal program, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative under the Agricultural Policy Framework, provided project funding.

"Bles-Wold was an ideal company to work with," says Ohama. "They both produce and process, which not many companies do. They already have a health-oriented product, which provided an excellent fit in terms of CLA's health benefits."

By early 2008, the CLA Network and Bles-Wold put the finishing touches on this food/health breakthrough. The new Bles-Wold product line --

Canada's first regulatory-compliant CLA yogurt product -- is now available at supermarkets and specialty stores in Alberta.

With its first commercialization effort a success, the CLA Network is preparing to head in new directions.

Says Ohama: "We're very excited about the prospects for other CLA dairy products, as well as CLA/Omega 3 beef product. The regulatory environment is so complex, there are literally hundreds of pieces to the puzzle, but having gone through the process, we have expertise that we can apply to new products in the future."

Want to know more about CLA? Contact Vince Ohama at (403) 340-5545 or by email to vince.ohama@gov.ab.ca. Visit the CLA Network website at www.clanetwork.com.

Health focus drives progress

The relationship between Bles-Wold and the CLA Network grew from a mutual interest in enhancing and promoting the natural health benefits of dairy products.

For Bles-Wold, this health focus has long been the driving force behind its yogurt products. Bles-Wold Dairy Farm is owned by Tinie Eilers and her husband Hennie Bos. As part of a team of dedicated staff, Tinie and Hennie operate the farm, Bles-Wold Dairy Inc., and the yogurt business, Bles-Wold Yogurt Inc. The yogurt business is led by general manger Darren Bishop.

After 20 years in the dairy industry in The Netherlands, Eilers and Bos moved to Alberta in 1994 and established their operation in the Lacombe area. Producing yogurt was not in the original plan for Eilers and Bos as they built their dairy, but that changed when Eilers became interested in producing a mild, all-natural yogurt as a hobby to provide an attractive, healthy food option for the couple's daughter, then 13, who is diabetic.

"When we first came over from Holland there was an adjustment period and our daughter missed some of the foods from back home, including a yogurt her uncle made," says Eilers. "So we began looking at making our own yogurt. We wanted a type of yogurt that was milder, with no artificial sweetener, that she could enjoy but that would not be too sweet to affect her diabetes."

What began as a hobby steadily grew into a modest but successful product initiative, with Bles-Wold Farm Yogurt becoming a reliable seller at retail outlets throughout the province.

"Bles-Wold has been serving Alberta consumers with its yogurt products since 1997, with farm fresh natural yogurt, unique in taste and flavour," says Bos. "The support from Albertans has been great. When approached by the CLA Network we recognized that adding a CLA yogurt is a good fit with the Bles-Wold philosophy."

Carbon credits: is there a dollar in it for farmers?

Yes, if you've made your farming practices more climate-friendly since 2002. But the cheque isn't in the mail quite yet.

For years now, Alberta farmers and ranchers have known about an intangible asset they own, and looked forward to the day they could capture some financial value for it.

That asset is carbon credits, and that day is moving closer. On several fronts, the rules for carbon trading are coming into focus and the infrastructure for the carbon trading marketplace is just about set. At the heart of Alberta's carbon credits system is the Climate Change Central organization.

"We work with Albertans -- industry, government, non-government agencies, consumers and farmers and ranchers -- to understand the actions that result in greenhouse gas reductions," says Climate Change Central's Karen Haugen-Kozyra.

Because the main purchasers of carbon credits are large emitters of greenhouse gases, these organizations are looking to buy in volume. Very often, Haugen-Kozyra explains, companies are looking to purchase 50,000 tonnes or more at a time.

This has led to the development of market service providers, also known as aggregators, who purchase credits from smaller sources like farmers, and bundle them for sale to emitters.

"There's a real success story coming soon out of Central Alberta," says Haugen-Kozyra, "relating to farmers who have reduced their tillage. An aggregator has put together credits for about 1,000 farms." In the Alberta carbon credit market, there are buyers and there are sellers. The place they come together is the carbon offsets registry at

their project and the third-party verification assurance information for prospective buyers."

The registry will not function as an exchange; all actual trading will occur off-line. The website also features a listing of aggregators looking to contract offsets and bundle for the sale to large final emitters.

How much are your carbon credits worth in cash? At the moment, it's hard to know. Parties on the website registry don't list prices, just projects available and the tonnes of offset they represent.

Mimi Lee, Stony Plain-based New Venture Economist with Alberta Agriculture and Food, cites a 2007 World Bank study that indicates an average price of \$10.70 U.S. per tonne for project-based emission reduction offsets sold internationally in 2006.

"There's also a cap mechanism in Alberta that says large final emitters may not have to pay more than \$15 per tonne," she says. "If it reaches that level, they have the option of paying \$15 per tonne into a technology fund."

How many tonnes of carbon credits do you have? Ron Hockridge, Financial Business Analyst with Alberta Agriculture in Leduc, also recommends a visit to the carbon offset solutions website.

"There are a series of accepted protocols that relate to agriculture," he says. "These are for management changes like going to zero-till and sequestering carbon in the soil, or changing livestock rations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the rumen and manure."

As the system develops further, farmers and ranchers will find it easier and easier to turn their sound management practices into cash. How much cash remains to be seen.

"The dollars aren't as big as a lot of people had hoped," says Hockridge. "But for now, the best thing you can do is go to the website and see what's available for you."

To learn whether your farm has saleable carbon credits, visit www.carbonoffsetsolutions.ca.

Criteria to Participate in the Alberta Carbon Offset System:

- result from actions taken on or after January 1, 2002;
- be real, demonstrable and quantifiable;
- not be required by law;
- have clearly established ownership;
- be counted once for compliance purposes;
- be verified by a qualified third party; and,
- will have occurred in Alberta.

Resource Information:

Carbon Offset Solutions: www.carbonoffsetsolutions.ca
Alberta Environment: www.environment.alberta.ca
Alberta Agriculture and Food: www.agric.gov.ab.ca



Most relevant to farmers and ranchers, Climate Change Central has set up the infrastructure through which landowners can determine whether they have saleable carbon credits, and register to sell them.

Carbon trading basics

The largest creators of greenhouse gases have been mandated to reduce their emissions by 12% annually. They can do this in three ways. First, they can reduce emissions at the source through cleaner technology. Second, they can pay \$15 per tonne of greenhouse gas emissions into a Climate Change and Emissions Management Fund – to invest in R&D and building technology for the future. Third, they can purchase Alberta-made carbon offsets. Many large emitters are expected to use a couple of these options to meet their targets. "A carbon offset is an investment in a project that results in a decrease of greenhouse gas emissions," says Haugen-Kozyra. She notes that of the 15 approved protocols that support project development in Alberta, nine apply to agriculture. These include the use of biodigesters, growing crops for biofuels and a reduction in field tillage operations.

"There is lots of opportunity for producers to examine their operation and see how they've changed their production practices," says Haugen-Kozyra. Significantly for landowners, these changes must have taken place since 2002. An exception is tillage, which has a unique policy approach to allow early adopters (pre-2002) to still participate in the market. If these guidelines apply to your operation, you might have credits to sell.

www.carbonoffsetsolutions.ca/offsetregistry.html. Not unlike an online match-making service, this is where each party lists what it has or needs.

Kerriane Koehler-Munro, Climate Change Program Planner with Alberta Agriculture and Food, urges Alberta producers to go on the website and see what it offers them.

"Agriculture and forestry are the two industries that can sequester carbon," says Koehler-Munro. "The offset registry will function as a 'meeting place' for buyers and sellers. It will allow Alberta project developers, farmers and/or aggregators to showcase



Kerriane Koehler-Munro, Climate change Program Planner with Alberta Agriculture and Food, explains how the carbon credit on-line registry provides a place where buyers and sellers come together.

Growing opportunity with shochu barley



Exports to Japan for shochu barley could increase 12-fold in the next five years. Here's what you need to know before seeding time.

the world's finest ingredients to make one of that country's signature beverages.

"They like a plump, two-row barley, probably a malt type, thus far ideally AC Metcalfe," says Chapman. "We can grow a product like this in some of our better malt barley areas around Three Hills, Drumheller and Olds. I'm also thinking of the Edmonton area, Morinville to Westlock and the Peace Country. The buyer also wants delivery to centralized loading facilities as early as November 2008."

Can you make a buck with shochu barley?

"Alberta currently has exported 5,000 tonnes of shochu barley to Japan last year" says Chapman. "We have the potential to increase that to 60,000 tonnes in the next five years."

In his view, the key is to grow a quality product with characteristics similar to malt. Shochu barley

should have plump kernels and a kernel hardness score between 55 and 60 on the SKCS machine. By planting a variety like AC Metcalfe, growers can maintain flexibility in targeting either shochu or malt. Under current Canadian Wheat Board programs, the shochu price is generally similar to the malt barley price. Chapman emphasizes that variety selection and field management are critical.

"We're looking for Alberta producers to grow AC Metcalfe or another malt barley variety in this new value chain, according to the highest agronomic standards," he says. "That boils down to five recommendations: seed as early as possible, achieve an optimum seeding rate for your growing area, achieve a uniform plant stand, harvest early at 18% moisture, and aerate it down in August to 13.5% moisture."

For more information on opportunities in shochu barley, please contact Bill Chapman by phone at (780) 674-8258 or by email bill.chapman@gov.ab.ca.

It's taken years of research and years more of market development, but Alberta is now poised to increase sales in a fast-growing, value-added market for your barley.

The market is shochu, a liquor product made in Japan from pearled barley fermented with a mould known as *koji*. Australia was strongly represented in the shochu barley market until recently. Persistent drought in that country has some buyers questioning their ability to provide the desired supply and quality on a consistent basis. That's provided a market opening for Alberta, and Bill Chapman suggests that farmers take advantage of the opportunity.

"Barley shochu is the fastest growing liquor drink in Japan," explains Chapman, Provincial Cereals Agronomist with Alberta Agriculture and Food's Ag-Industry Commercialization group in Barrhead. "Sales of shochu have increased by 20% to 40% annually in recent years, and it really appeals to all walks of life in Japan, from business people to university students."

A focused, integrated program

While the shochu opportunity is now moving forward, the road has been paved by a multi-year, multi-disciplinary effort. With research funded by the Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food (ACAAF) Program, delivered by the Agriculture and Food Council of Alberta, market development work has been a joint activity of the producer-funded Alberta Barley Commission, Alberta Agriculture and Food and Rahr Malting Canada.

Chapman and Alberta Barley Commission CEO Mike Leslie visited Japan on a market development mission for 16 days last September. Their agenda included consultations with key barley users and a visit to Sanwa Shurui Co. Limited to see the production of their barley shochu *lichiko*, translated as #1.



Shochu is a liquor product made from high quality barley and is the fastest growing liquor drink in Japan.



Barley grown for Shochu should be a quality product with characteristics similar to malt.

Website sheds light on surface lease agreements

Is the opening offer fair? This new online benchmark tool and map can help.

When a representative from an energy exploration company visits a landowner to negotiate land access and a surface right, who is holding the cards? Arguably, some say, it's the company. After all, companies negotiate land deals every day. Producers might sign a lease agreement only once in their lifetime.

This is when the Farmers' Advocate Office (FAO) can play a role. Established 35 years ago to help farmers deal with surface rights, the FAO saw a need in recent years to address this knowledge gap.

"We are often asked, 'what is the going rate?'" says Assistant Farmers' Advocate Graham Gilchrist. "We're trying to move the teeter-totter a little closer to the center by providing landowners with knowledge. We decided to take the same approach as any other commodity. That is, publish the prices."

Research attaches dollar signs to lease agreements

With funding from the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF), the FAO secured a three-year license agreement with William D. Marriott & Associates, a private Alberta company specializing in surface lease data. The FAO will publish 2007 surface lease maps on its website.

"There is still a lot of work to do," says Gilchrist. "It doesn't quite go down to the township level, but you can see a map of the province as far as the highs and lows. It's a place to start negotiations with."

He notes that producers can contact Marriott directly to access township-level data reports. More work is also needed to continue to feed the database. The energy industry is the only current source. Producers need to feed it, too.

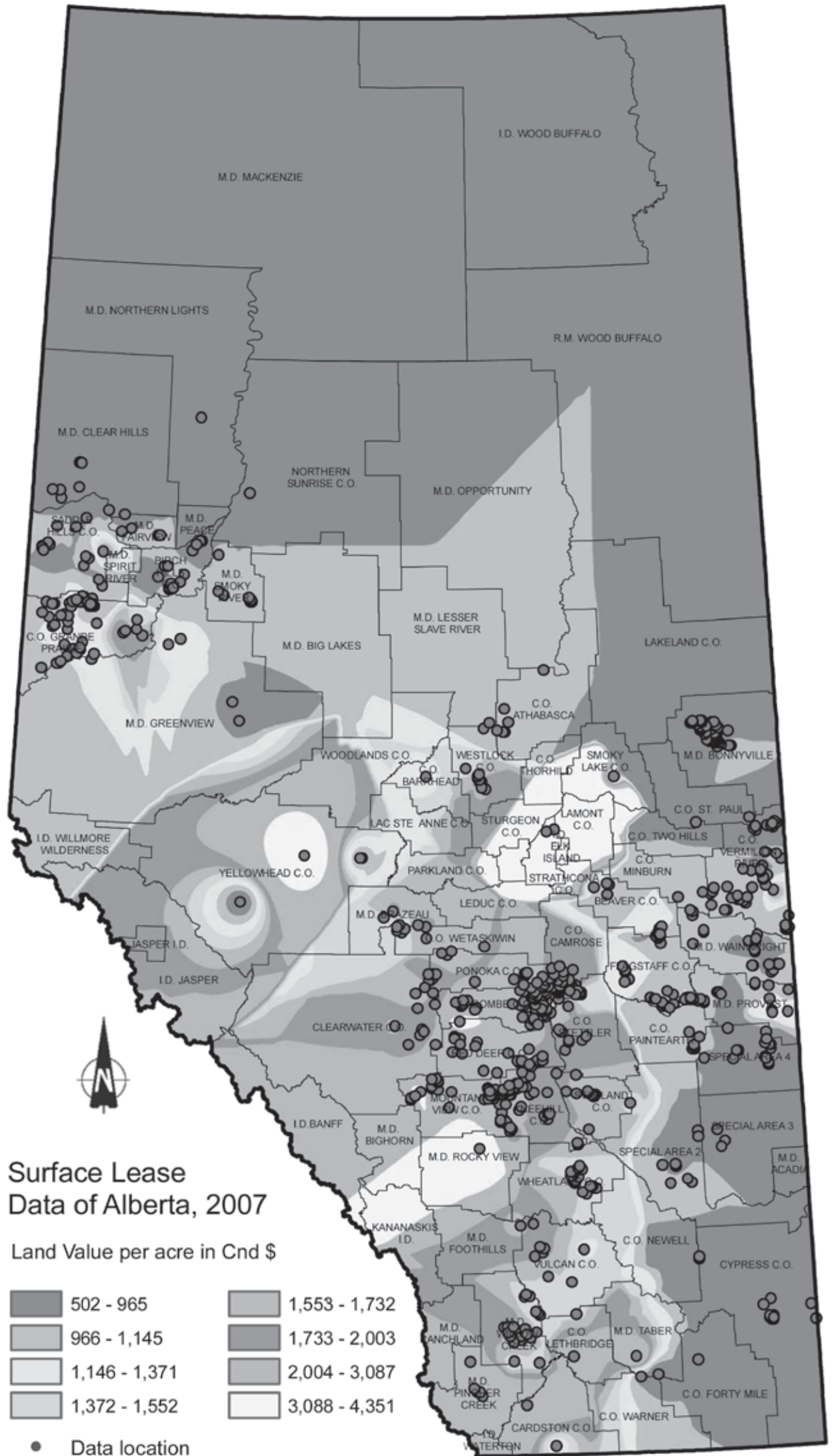
"There is value in sharing this data with your neighbours," Gilchrist says, adding that knowledge has power and the more a community knows, the more they can change the perceived level of that power.

He believes that the better idea you have on price to start with, the more the agreement can meet your needs as a landowner. Gilchrist reminds producers that if the two sides ultimately fail to reach an agreement, the resource company can eventually get a right-of-entry order, with compensation set by the Surface Rights Board.

Says Gilchrist: "The job of the producer is to be ready with a counter offer. You need to determine your best offer and your walk-away offer. At the end of the day, both sides have to benefit."

Visit the surface lease agreement pricing map at www.farmersadvocate.gov.ab.ca. You can contact the Farmers' Advocate Office at 310-FARM (3276) or by email to farmers.advocate@gov.ab.ca.

Land Value for Surface Leases



This map is an inverse distance weighted (IDW) interpolation of values maintained by William D. Marriott & Associates Ltd for the year 2007.

The Farmers' Advocate Office acknowledges the financial support of Alberta Agriculture and Food under the Renewal Chapter of the Agricultural Policy Framework, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.

February 2008

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Compiled by Alberta Agriculture and Food, Information and Program Management Branch

Tips to get you started direct marketing meats

If you've ever visited the meat case of a major supermarket chain, you know the experience can be bittersweet.

On one hand, you'll be impressed by the high quality and abundant quantity of Alberta-grown meats. On the other, you'll likely reflect on just how much, or how little, of the retail price actually ends up in a producer's pocket.

In Bert Denning's view, that's the bottom-line rationale for producers who want to market their beef, pork, chicken, lamb, bison, deer and other products directly to consumers.

"With meat, like any commodity, there are lots of hands between the producer and the consumer," says Denning, Business Development Officer with Alberta Agriculture and Food in Barrhead. "Farmers see a benefit to eliminating the middlemen and keeping more of the revenue for themselves."

Even though it's easy to grasp the benefits of direct marketing, relatively few producers market this way. That might be because direct marketing, while straightforward in concept, is complex in its execution.

To encourage more producers to consider direct marketing, Alberta Agriculture and Food has posted a fact sheet on the Ropin' the Web site. Start at www.agric.gov.ab.ca and search on DIRECT MARKETING MEAT. In summary, here are quick answers to direct marketing questions producers often ask.

How do I ensure food safety? "Any meat products sold in the province of Alberta must be inspected at an approved abattoir," says Denning. There are between 50 and 60 such facilities in the province. A listing is available on the website of the Alberta Food Processors Association, www.afpa.com.

How do I choose a processor? Denning recommends that producers develop a short-list of suitable facilities in their trading area. From there,

A provincial specialist offers advice on pricing, processing and more.

visit or telephone and ask questions about their policies on pricing, cutting, wrapping, disposal of by-products and options for less-desirable cuts. "In some cases, you may be able to make sausage, jerky or pepperoni from the less saleable cuts," says Denning, "but that's a different proposition with a different business plan."

To expand options available to producers, Alberta Agriculture and Food and Olds College are working together on developing a multi-location abattoir.

This self-contained, professionally equipped facility is designed to bring inspection and animal slaughter to the farm gate. Producers will still need either their own processing facilities or arrange to have someone else further process the meat before sale. The unit will hit the road this spring for a season of testing and refinement, with emphasis on the unit's ability to reduce animal stress and thus improve meat quality.



Meat products sold direct to consumers in Alberta must be inspected at an approved abattoir.



How much should I charge? Denning sees most direct-marketers going in one of two directions. Some know their cost of production down to the penny and can price their product to achieve the margin they want. Others price the product comparably with a similar product they've seen in a farmer's market or other retail outlet. Either way, Denning offers a rule of thumb.

"If people aren't complaining about the price being too high, then you probably have set the price too low," he says. "You need to get away from the idea that you will sell to everybody, because some people won't see the value. But others will."

For more information on direct marketing of meat products, or to arrange a visit from the multi-location abattoir, please contact Bert Denning at (780) 674-8247 or by email to bert.denning@gov.ab.ca.

Brand strategies add value to Alberta cattle

With today's beef industry facing challenging economics, many producers are looking for alternatives to boost revenue and secure markets. For these producers, Pat Ramsey says: think brand.

"A brand is a way to differentiate a product and stand out in the consumer's mind," says Ramsey, Opportunity Analyst with Alberta Agriculture and Food in High River.

To gather available research on branded beef, and share lessons learned by producers, Ramsey leads a team looking into *Branded Beef Marketing Opportunities*. The team summarizes consumer trends that support branded beef (see below), with the aim of identifying market factors and potential new markets.

They are creating an inventory of potential new suppliers to branded beef programs, helping to nurture strategic relationships along the supply chain and describing in detail how producers are making branded beef programs work sustainably. "There are certain 'credence attributes' that some consumers are asking for," says Ramsey. "We're seeing a lot more interest in organic, in naturally raised product and in lean beef."

Three categories, three success stories

These three credence attributes – organic, naturally raised and lean – are behind the success of three remarkable branded beef programs.

Organic. To be certified organic, which can take three years, producers do not use growth promoting implants, feed additives or antibiotics. Organic

A new project calls for greater focus on brand, with organic, naturally raised, and lean beef the biggest opportunities.



feed has not been exposed to chemical fertilizers or pesticides.

A standout example is Diamond Willow Organics, founded in 1997 by seven ranch families, whose beef sells for a premium price at both large and specialty retailers.

Naturally raised. This is similar to organic but protocols are not as rigorous, since animals can be fed conventionally raised feeds. Animals are grown without growth - promoting implants, feed additives or antibiotics. Price is lower than organic, but higher than conventional.

Spring Creek Ranch Premium Beef started in 2000, as a sister company to Highland Feeders near Vegreville. Their boxed, branded beef has multiple marketing channels: food service distributors, restaurants and retailers.

Lean. In this segment, animals are raised for their leanness and so production focuses on breeds that are naturally leaner: Limousin, Blonde d'Aquitaine and Piedmontese. The price point is similar to natural.

Laura's Lean Beef, founded in 1985, is the largest provider of natural, lean, fresh beef in more than 5,200 grocery stores in North America.

New Branded Beef Strategies website on the way

Ramsey cautions producers about keeping price expectations realistic. "There is not as much premium as producers might think," he says. "Much of the benefit comes from reducing transaction costs and optimizing the supply chain."

Still, Ramsey believes branded beef can enable producers to increase revenue and access new markets. But *which* markets? To help producers navigate the possibilities, and find the opportunity that suits them best, his team is developing a website.

"We see the website being the hub of information for anyone who's looking to get into branded beef programs," says Ramsey. "It will allow producers to look into alternative production methods, and compare different branded beef programs."

For more information on branded beef opportunities, contact Pat Ramsey at (403) 652-8303 or email pat.ramsey@gov.ab.ca or contact Laura Lee Billings at (403) 948-8519 or lauralee.billings@gov.ab.ca

Presentations made by Diamond Willow, Spring Creek and Laura's Lean at the Choices for Consumers Conference last March at Olds College can be seen at the conference web site: [http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/ind11317](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/ind11317).

Consumers are driving change

According to a July 2005 study by Serecon Management Consulting, these are the top-12 Canadian food trends that will be in evidence through 2020.

1. Aging Canadians. More seniors than ever, with implications for type, quantity and consumption patterns of food.

2. An evolving society. Smaller households, greater workforce participation, globalization and environmental awareness will make brands less a status symbol and more a statement of individuality.

3. Changing meal patterns. Fewer whole meals, more snacking and more eating on the go.

4. Shifting expenditures. We'll spend less on food, but more of our food dollar on prepared meals and takeout.

5. Food for health. The most significant health driver will be obesity, leading to cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Nutraceuticals will help, though.

6. The educated consumer... fads or trends? A focus on zero trans-fats, low sodium, healthy/high fibre carbohydrates, reduced sugar, allergen identification, fortification and health claims.

7. The new face of Canada. Immigration will be driven from regions off the Pacific Ocean, especially in larger urban

centers where visible minorities will make up to 50% of the population.

8. No trade-off for convenience. Consumers want it all -- taste, quality, nutrition, convenience, variety, value -- and food companies will go all out to give it to them.

9. Veggies anyone? True vegetarianism may not grow dramatically, but consumption of meatless meals will continue to increase.

10. Organic foods. Growth rates have been about 28% per year, with 70% of organic food imported into Canada. Alberta organic producers, over to you.

11. Small indulgences. Canadians will embrace gourmet foods and boutique brands, savoring slow foods, high quality, smaller portions and sound nutrition while shrugging off premium prices.

12. Food safety and production issues. If a food safety issue makes the news, growers and processors of the offending food will pay dearly, though often temporarily.

Green Certificate launches online directory

Want a farm job? Seeking trained employees? Now, it all begins at www.agriculture.alberta.ca/gced.

The new Green Certificate Employment Directory website went live on Valentine's Day. Nicole Hornett believes agricultural employers and employees will quickly find lots to love about it.

Hornett, Edmonton-based Green Certificate Program Coordinator with Alberta Agriculture and Food, describes the website as a natural extension of the program's three-decade mission.

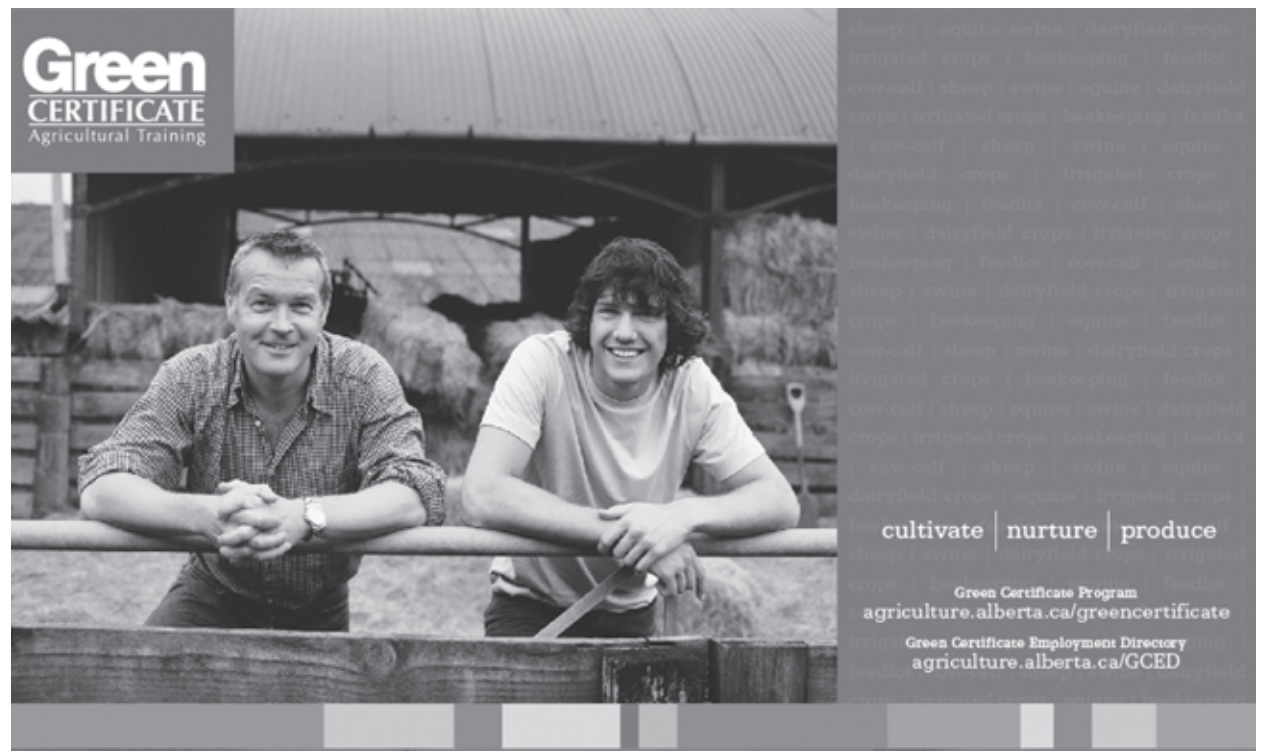
Founded in 1975, the Green Certificate Program is an agricultural apprenticeship training program that's offered throughout Alberta. Trainees access Green Certificate learning through an employer such as a feedlot, pig barn or dairy farm, or through the high school system. The curriculum covers eight key sectors—feedlot, cow-calf, sheep, swine, dairy, irrigated crops, field crops and beekeeping—with an equine module now under development.

The Green Certificate Employment Directory website (www.agriculture.alberta.ca/gced) allows potential employees and employers to find each other, fast and free.

"The website is very easy to follow," says Hornett. "There are four headers on the home page: jobs available, workers available and two for training opportunities. The first step for both employees and employers is to register who they are and what they're looking for."

Once registered, visitors can dig deeper into what the Green Certificate Employment Directory can do for them, and it's a lot.

Employers can post job opportunities, specifying a preference for Green Certificate trainees and



graduates. They can scan directory postings to assess interest and education levels of potential employees in their area.

Employees can browse a wealth of employment opportunities for those involved in various stages of the Green Certificate program: potential trainees, current trainees and program graduates. Personal privacy was a key consideration in building the website. You can indicate an interest in finding employment in your sectoral specialty without posting personal information.

Students and schools can scan a list of farms willing to take on new trainees in specified Green Certificate specialties, helping improve the placement of training-minded students.

When the Green Certificate Employment Directory opened for business on February 14, employee, employer and training listings weren't yet present. These will be added by website visitors over time. To help achieve a strong volume of initial listings, Nicole Hornett plans to criss-cross the province this winter and spring, attending agricultural trade shows and other events to put out the word. In Hornett's view, there's a lot at stake in the success of this project.

"Agriculture is Alberta's largest renewable resource-based industry and it impacts one out of every seven jobs in the province," she says. "To remain competitive and to grow the industry, we need to keep young, skilled people in rural communities and attract workers who will help maintain vibrant communities. One way we can do this is through the Green Certificate Program and its Employment Directory."

To register as an employee, employer or student, visit the Green Certificate Employment Directory website at www.agriculture.alberta.ca/gced. For more information, please contact Nicole Hornett at (780) 644-5378 or nicole.hornett@gov.ab.ca.

Upcoming Events 2008

Mar 31 - Apr 2	Growing Rural Tourism Conference	Camrose	Jun 13 - 15	Elvin Kopp Stockdog Clinic	Smoky Lake
Apr 4	Alberta Farm Animal Care's 2008 Livestock Care Conference	Red Deer	Jun 14	Drayton Valley Livestock Show	Drayton Valley
Apr 10	Women in the North Conference	Peace River	Jul 21 - 23	2008 International Conference on Flax and Other Bast Plants	Saskatoon
Apr 12	Rare and Exotic Sale	Lloydminster	Aug 14 - 17	CPCA Chuckwagon Finals	Lloydminster
Apr 21 - 23	Alberta's Environment Conference 2008	Edmonton	Aug 16	Castor Horse Show	Castor
May 16 - 19	Westerner Spring Horse Show	Red Deer	Aug 16	Wild Horse Buck Off	Cold Lake
May 22 - 25	Westerner Quarter Horse Show	Red Deer	Sep 27	Rare and Exotic Fall Sale	Lloydminster
May 23 - 26	4-H Show & Sale (Teleford)	Millet	Oct 23 - 25	Westerner Championship Dairy Showcase	Red Deer
May 26 - 30	Green Certificate Testing	Vermilion	Oct 31 - Nov 1	Stockade Roundup	Lloydminster
May 27 - 28	Green Certificate Testing	Olds	Nov 1	Ranch Horse Competition and Sale & 2-year old Show & Sale	Lloydminster
May 28 - 29	Green Certificate Testing	Fairview	Nov 20 - 21	The Green Industry Show & Conference	Edmonton
May 29	Green Certificate Testing	Lacombe			
May 31 - Jun 2	Strathcona Country Classic	Josephburg			
Jun 2	Green Certificate Testing	Olds			
Jun 4 - 5	Green Certificate Testing	Lethbridge			
Jun 5	Green Certificate Testing	Spruce Grove			

For a current listing of events please visit www.agriculture.alberta.ca under Information/Coming Events or call the Ag Info Centre toll free 310-FARM (3276).

Correction

The story on *Rhodiola rosea* in the Winter 2008 edition of *Renewal Now* contained three errors we'd like to correct.

- international demand is estimated at 3 metric tonnes, not 3 million tonnes;
- the grower group ARRG stands for Alberta *Rhodiola rosea* Growers Organization; and
- 400 acres of crop in the ground is the program's ultimate goal, not its 2008 goal.

For more information on Renewal projects and programs, please visit: www.agriculture.alberta.ca/renewal

If you know someone who would like to be added to the RenewalNow! newsletter mailing list, please contact:

Tammy Elmhurst at (403) 340-5672 or email: Tammy.Elmhurst@gov.ab.ca

Renewal is one of five chapters of the Agricultural Policy Framework – A Federal-Provincial-Territorial initiative. Renewal is about moving forward one decision at a time. To be successful in the "new agriculture", farmers must make a personal commitment to on-going learning in the areas of technology and new products and practices. Market demands also show the need to combine production skills, management skills, and leadership skills. The RenewalNow! newsletter strives to provide Alberta Farmers with information on programs, projects and events that support these ideals.

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 the way to grow