

Renewal Now!

News, information and resources for growing Alberta's Agricultural Industry **March, 2006**

Three Farm Renewal-Makeover Scholarships Awarded

Hopes and dreams of a farm makeover will become reality on three Alberta farms whose operators were awarded a \$10,000 Farm Renewal-Makeover Scholarship at AgChoices in Red Deer on February 15th.

The scholarships were awarded to Cherie Andrews, Chinook Honey Company Ltd., Okotoks, Troels and Laurie Hansen, LTH Farms, Fairview, and Keith and Ronda Reesor and family, Irvine.

The recipients demonstrated innovative thinking and creative ideas for growing and diversifying their farm businesses. Assistant Deputy Minister of Agriculture Brian Rhiness was on hand to make the awards. "The quality, innovation and passion in the applications we received were inspiring," he said. "The winners expressed



Cherie Andrews with Brian Rhiness, Assistant Deputy Minister with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD).

creativity, commitment and passion for our agricultural industry in Alberta."

"It's great that so many resources are made available through Alberta Agriculture," says Cherie Andrews. "I was overwhelmed with the scholarship, and I'm excited about gaining access to the expertise of consultants."

As well as substantial financial assistance, the scholarship also provides a one-day private consultation and farm visit with agricultural specialist Dr. David Kohl and a representative from Canadian Farm Business Advisory Services. They will assist with the development of plans

and implementation of changes. Winners also received free participation in Growing Alberta events in 2006.

Owner/operator Cherie Andrews says she plans to expand the Chinook Honey Company and add a meadery (honey winery). Troels and Laurie Hansen plan to take their 1,600-acre grain farm to the next level. They want to make it a self-sustaining canola operation that provides feed and fuel for their operation and also sell value-added products off the farm. Long term, they envision turning their canola into biodiesel to run machinery on the farm.

Keith and Ronda Reesor and family plan to move into agri-tourism and foster awareness of western heritage history through ranchland tourism. They also plan to move further into organic production of their range and commodity products. The family ranching operation, including cow-calf and yearlings, has been certified organic for five years.

The other winners at AgChoices were the more than 120 producers who took part in the one-day conference to discover "what's right on the farm." The conference was made possible through the Renewal Chapter of the Agricultural Policy Framework – a Federal-Provincial-Territorial initiative. Renewal focuses on helping farmers to access their operation and acquire the skills and resources to improve profitability.

For further information on Renewal, please visit Ropin' the Web and search "Renewal Services", or call Shari Smith, Program Communications Lead at (403) 340-5375 or visit www.agr.gc.ca.



Laurie Hansen with Brian Rhiness, Assistant Deputy Minister with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD).

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Keith Reesor, Tara Anderson, Ronda Reesor with Brian Rhiness, Assistant Deputy Minister with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD).

Agriculture – It's All About the Food!

At first glance, you would have sworn it was an actual salad.

But upon inspection, the appealing plate of mixed greens - drizzled with a raspberry vinaigrette - was a three-dimensional mock-up on thin cardboard, topped with a real mini wire whisk. A clever idea from the Alberta Canola Commission.

"We wanted to distinguish ourselves with a creative promotional effort that would get our message across," said Simone Demers-Collins, Industry Development Officer with the Alberta Canola Commission. "The vinaigrette was the easiest way to do this, plus it was useful."

At FarmTech 2006 held in Edmonton in January, the message was that Agriculture really is all about the food. At the entrance, you were greeted by a fragrant piece of freshly baked bread, courtesy of the Alberta Winter Wheat Commission. Blueberry barley muffins baked, by the Alberta Barley Growers, waited at a table nearby (see recipe on page 3).

"Why do we have agriculture?" asked Dr. Ross Welch, Professor of Plant Nutrition in the Crop and Soil Sciences Department at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. Dr. Welch was offering his research findings in a session titled Agriculture and Human Health: Soil Fertility and Plant Nutrition.

"Agriculture exists because we need food and we need nutrients," Dr. Welch explained. "If you don't get what you need, you get sick and die."

His message is clear and distinct, and he stresses the important role that producers play. "You as farmers are nutrient providers," he states. "Agriculture is the premier industry for survival of the species. I must admit; we're not doing a very good job of it."

FarmTech 2006

FarmTech is touted as Alberta's premier crop production and farm management conference, and it attracts some of the best in the agricultural industry. Nearly 80 exhibitors were showcased at the Mayfield Inn and Suites in Edmonton representing a diverse sampling from the agriculture industry including federal and provincial agencies, seed companies, fertilizer producers and agricultural colleges. Workshops included Farmers Helping Farmers, as well as, Friday Super-Panels. Forty-six concurrent sessions focused on technology, environment and agronomy management.

"This is a well-oiled show," said Doug Dion with Corporate Event Organization Inc. in Calgary, one of the organizers of FarmTech. "We try to present a global approach, so that farmers know what's going on globally."

International perspectives were presented by keynote speakers, including Christo Helm, who discussed the state of agriculture in Africa and Nigeria. His viewpoint was well-received from



The Alberta Canola Commission creates an eye catching promotional item for FarmTech 2006.

Dr. Welch described food systems as "very complex."

"They're linked through various environments including social, political, biophysical and educational. In order to be sustainable, agricultural systems have to be explicitly linked to human health."

"Dysfunctionalities have existed within agriculture for a long time" he says.

One of the primary dysfunctionalities, he explained, is the lack of link between agriculture and human health. "Human nutrition and public health have been working separately," Dr. Welch says. "We need to get out and find the linkages required. We need to talk to our policy makers and make an explicit link. We need to improve human health and become producers of nutrients."

some of the farmers in attendance, like Dawn and Reggie Ball, from Rolling Hills, Alberta who have realized their dream of farming in Canada. "We're trying to assess what is going on in the agricultural industry," said Reggie, who moved to Canada from England, nearly eight years ago. His family operates Coulee Farms, growing beans and sugar beets on 1,300 acres of irrigated land.

Ball believes, "The average farmer needs to group together with other farmers, in order to gain benefit from value-added products," he said. "It's difficult to effectively market a product on your own."

After the first round of afternoon sessions, conference-goers had a chance to walk through the exhibitor's hall. Duane Nichols of Charmich Farms had travelled from High Prairie to attend FarmTech. He was hoping to get a little help with his cattle operation, where he raises 275 head of Charolais. "The speakers have reinforced everything I knew, about marketing," Nichols said.

"We have to look at other ways of marketing, especially with BSE."

Providing the latest information to growers and people in the agriculture industry is one of the fundamental principles of FarmTech, says

Andrew Haarsma, chairman of the Alberta Canola Producers Commission, one of the founding organizations of FarmTech. "Agriculture provides so many solutions for people," he says. "It's so important for people to understand how their food is grown."

Haarsma shares a conviction with many in the industry and he hopes that conferences like FarmTech will help to keep farmers connected by offering information on the latest trends, while providing networking opportunities.

"The profound effect of agriculture is felt by all," he said.

After all, we all need to eat.

Jeff Nielsen grows grain on nearly 1,400 acres near Olds. He is a regular at FarmTech. "There is so much good information here," he said. "You get lots of food networking opportunities, too, and different ideas from different farmers. It's a good conference."

Echoing that opinion was Pat Jacobs, who is a council member with the County of Grande Prairie. Her family has 150 cows and farms 1,500 acres near Beaverlodge.

"This is my first time at FarmTech," she said. "I had a look at the agenda and liked the session topics. I'm going to share the information with my ratepayers."

Izzy Huygen works with the Alberta Grain Commission, as a research officer. This was his third year attending FarmTech. "This is a great place to network and to meet people," he said. "A lot of it is personal learning."

FarmTech 2006 concluded on January 27.

Peer Networks Project Launched

A conversation with a business associate offers more helpful information than anything you can read in a book, says Angela Santiago, managing director of the Little Potato Company, based in Edmonton.

“You get the benefit of people’s experience, as well as a chance to share confidential information about various issues, such as sales and human resources,” she says. “And, you can bounce ideas off each other.”

For the past five years, Santiago has been attending two peer network groups that regularly meet in Edmonton: Entrepreneurs’ Organization; and Agri-CEO.

“It’s great because you can learn different techniques on leadership, relating to staff,” she adds.

On March 1, Santiago was in Leduc, to speak openly about her experience and success with peer networks. She presented at the launch of a the Peer Networks Project, a pilot program through the Agriculture and Food Council that is partially supported and enabled, under the Renewal Chapter of the Agricultural Policy Framework.

“At Ag Summit 2000, agricultural experts confirmed that human resource issues exist within the agricultural industry,” says Rebecca Wurm, manager of the Peer Networks Project. “We’re positioned to take a leading role in addressing those issues, as well as those relating to management development.

“We want Alberta to be known by its professional farmers, who are highly skilled and who continuously develop new opportunities and find new ways to re-define success.”

The Peer Networks Project is meant to include the leaders and the future leaders of the Alberta agri-food industry.

“We also want to work with interested participants to establish groups in the Alberta Agri-Business Network and Production Network,” says Wurm. “Through the successes of established groups, we hope to be able to create further interest in the project and peer networking.”

“This will lead to the development of more peer networks in the Alberta Agri-Food Industry.”

An Ideal Candidate for Peer Networks:

- *A technological innovator and early adopter of new technology;*
- *A strategic thinker who thinks ‘outside the box.’*
- *A life-long learner who believes in the process of continual learning and uses opportunities to improve skills and knowledge. Also, is open-minded to new ideas and concepts;*
- *Politically and economically aware. Understands how current public policy affects their operation;*
- *Producers/managers of agribusiness who are aware of critical success factors that affect their operations and are looking for information/education on the management of these.*

Source: **Rebecca Wurm, Manager, Peer Networks Project**

New Web Site Highlights Careers in Agri-Food

It’s a job-hunter’s dream come true. Currently in Alberta’s agri-food industry, there are more jobs than there are people to fill them.

“We are launching the Human Resources Information Exchange Centre (HRIEC) in order to address the human resources gap that currently exists in the agri-food industry,” says Brad Salomons, project manager for the HRIEC. “Our goal is to provide a one-stop resource centre to motivate people to explore the possibility of careers in agri-food.”

Salomons wants to, “encourage domestic youth and early-career Albertans/Canadians into skilled positions from both external and internal sources in agri-food.”

“The bulk of the target audience will be Albertans aged 15 to 30, with either direct agri-food skills or skills that are transferable to the modern agri-food industry,” he says. “This includes information

technology, research, management, environmental or process and policy skills.”

His approach to addressing this issue is two-fold. “First, HRIEC will act as a web-based portal to existing information,” Salomons says. “Industry leaders in the private, public and education sectors of agri-food are putting resources into developing information and content to entice, inform and train potential employees. HRIEC will make this information central and accessible to those looking for it.”

Secondly, HRIEC will act as an exploratory tool with resources on career planning and opportunities in agri-food. “This will be in the form of career profiles, indexed by a number of factors around worker characteristics, job characteristics, education, etc.”

The HRIEC will be accessible on the web for no charge.

HEIEC is set to launch during the first week of April 2006. The Agriculture and Food Council is managing the project directly. “We hope we can act as an unbiased representative of the agri-food industry, representing the breadth and scope of as many levels as possible through this very public offering to potential employees,” Salomons says.

The web site is a partnership-based initiative. “Our success is highly-dependent upon the valuable information developed by industry leaders publicly, privately and in education,” Salomons says. “The Agriculture and Food Council is eager to build partnerships with as many of these leaders as possible and to share their information through this portal. Involvement is simple and we encourage interested groups or individuals to contact us.”

For more information on HRIEC, contact Brad Salomons at brad.salomons@agfoodcouncil.com or call (780) 955-3714 ext. 236.



Blueberry Barley Muffins

500 ml	Whole barley flour	2 cups
125 ml	Granulated sugar	1/2 cup
20 ml	Baking powder	4 tsp
2 ml	Salt	1/2 tsp
2 ml	Cinnamon	1/2 tsp
2	Eggs	
50 ml	Canola oil	1/4 cup
250 ml	Milk	1 cup
250 ml	Fresh or frozen blueberries	1 cup

Preheat oven to 400 F (200 C). In a large bowl, combine barley flour, sugar, baking powder, salt and cinnamon.

In a smaller bowl, beat eggs and then mix oil and milk.

Pour into flour mixture and stir until well combined.

Fold in blueberries.

Spray 12 muffin cups with non-stick coating and fill until almost full with batter.

Bake at 400 F (200 C) for 18 minutes or until center springs back when lightly touched.

Let cool for 10 minutes before removing from pan.

Barley flour is available in the flour section at your local supermarket and in the bulk bins at most health food stores.

Raising the Bar at AgChoices 2006

While a snowstorm brewed throughout the day, a dedicated group of 160 people discovered 'what's right on the farm' at AgChoices 2006 held in Red Deer on February 15.

"Technology, new business practices and new consumer demands are changing the face of our industry and have opened the door to new possibilities" said Brian Rhiness, Assistant Deputy Minister with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD). "We are here to explore those possibilities and the many programs, tools and initiatives available to help producers realize them."

AgChoices 2006 was an initiative made possible through the Renewal chapter of the Agricultural Policy Framework - a Federal-Provincial - Territorial initiative. "AgChoices really encompasses what Renewal is all about," says Shari Smith, conference organizer and program communications lead with AAFRD. "Renewal is about taking a look at where you are at and then finding the resources to get where you want to be. AgChoices gives producers information on what is needed to thrive within the new agricultural environment."

"When it comes to growing our product, we are second to none... but future success will depend on embracing more astute business practices," stated Rhiness. "Our products are here at home and halfway around the world. While this means greater opportunities, it also means competition... thinking and acting as a producer is no longer enough."

Dr. Michael Boehlje

The new business model in agriculture will change the way farmers make decisions, says Dr. Michael Boehlje, a professor in the Centre for Food and Agricultural Business at Purdue University in Indiana.

"We have seen profound changes in many dimensions," Dr. Boehlje says. "Agribusinesses need to develop strategies on how to deal with those changes."

For the last 30 years, Dr. Boehlje has examined the transformation occurring in the agricultural industry. He shared his research findings in February, during AgChoices 2006, at Westerner Park in Red Deer. "Ag-business needs to take advantage of future opportunities," he says.

Dr. Boehlje's research interests include: alternative systems of coordination of the food and industrial product chain; the industrialization of agriculture; and alternative financial and organizational structures for farm and agribusiness firms.

He believes that much of agriculture is moving from a commodity industry to one with differentiated products. "The produce-and-then-sell mentality of the commodity business is being replaced by the strategy of first asking consumers what attributes they want in their food products, and then creating or manufacturing those attributes in the products," Dr. Boehlje says. "This may, in fact, require changes in how the raw

Rhiness challenged all farmers and producers to ask themselves:

- *Who's buying my product?*
- *What are they doing with it?*
- *Who's in the value chain in getting my product from the field to the table?*
- *What kinds of partnership possibilities are there along the way?*

Rhiness' questions set in motion producers thinking about just what they wanted to achieve in their operation as they entered the AgInfo Market, a procession of mini informational sessions intended to make producers more aware of what is happening within AAFRD and what it means to them.

Earlier in the day, Dr. Michael Boehlje, from Purdue University's Department of Crop and Soil Sciences, forecasted the challenges facing the food and agribusiness industries. "The fundamental forces shaping agriculture include: growing and diversified global demand; expanded global production; consumer expectations; new science/technology; and government policy," Dr. Boehlje said.

Focusing on consumer and food industry expectations, Boehlje explained how consumer expectations go beyond price. "They're looking for convenience and taste," he said. "They want a variety of nutritious, high quality, low calorie products."

Tomorrow's farming, he predicted, would employ

material is produced and what it does not contain, as well as what it does contain."

He says there is a movement toward a more tightly aligned market arrangement with evidence suggesting these arrangements remain extremely critical for producers.

"Development of a contract market is one example of a new business model," says Dr. Boehlje. "Contract production has less price risk and market risk. The return on assets may be reduced, but many of our lenders are wanting their farm owners to manage their price risk, while producing their crop."

Dr. Boehlje says that contractual arrangements like these have become increasingly popular in the last 10 years, throughout the United States. "In 1992, nearly 20 per cent of pork was produced through a contractual alliance," he says. "Today, that number has increased to 85 per cent. Producers have realized that they're able to grow their businesses more rapidly this way."

In Canada, the agriculture industry continues to change at a dramatic pace. For example, technology is used throughout Canada's food production system to increase efficiency, improve quality, conserve energy and protect soil and groundwater.

Food safety and quality systems, farm and ranch management software and crop and soil monitoring systems have been used on farms for years.

new technology and new business arrangements, such as contract production and franchise growers.

Kevin Burns, the "instigational speaker", gave a laugh out loud performance as he urged the crowd to see what is good in their life and "trust the process." One of his ten life observations is, "You will never be given more than you can handle. And you will be able to handle all you are given."

"In life, it's important to look for the small miracles and the little victories, on a daily basis," Dr. Dan Baker, a pioneer in the positive psychology initiative and bestselling author suggested. "Make the most of every day and bring the best 'you' to the table. An important quality in farming is resilience," said Baker. "Resilient people live meaningfully and productively. They help themselves."

"An event like this is energizing," says Anita Lunden, head of the Opportunity Assessment Branch, Market Opportunities and Innovation Division. "It helps farmers to step back and re-evaluate. It helps to create awareness of the opportunities and assistance available."

"AgChoices hit producers on both the personal and professional side," Lunden added. "Renewal is about renewing of people and families as well as farms and businesses."

For more information on AgChoices 2006, visit *Ropin' the Web* and for information on the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF) visit www.agr.gc.ca.



Dr. Michael Boehlje, a professor in the Centre for Food and Agricultural Business at Purdue University in Indiana.

Global positioning systems (GPS) that enable farmers to precisely locate field positions are widely used in agribusinesses. In combination with other information systems, GPS technology enables farm managers to track crop production and monitor yields.

Dr. Boehlje suggests that there are four possible drivers for the rapid consolidation and coordination of the agricultural industry. These include: 1) efficiency gains; 2) risk management; 3) traceability; and 4) response to consumer needs and trends.

"The idea of 'Wal-Marting' agriculture explains a situation where all players in the value chain - including input manufacturer, input retailer, producer, processor and food retailer - are linked, to improve efficiency and overall performance of the entire system," he explains. "The supplier is

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Dr. Michael Boehlje

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informed when a product is needed, rather than having the retailer (Wal-Mart) keep a large amount of unnecessary inventory. The reduction of excess inventory lowers cost and improves the services available to the customer."

He notes that improved information-sharing will be necessary for all involved to succeed, and the trust along the entire chain will need to be assessed.

"Growers need to understand their customers," he says. "You need to know who you're doing business with, and you need to understand what that customer values and what he requires. Discuss with your customer how you can create value for him."

Growers and producers should keep abreast of change. "This involves broader reading," Dr. Boehlje says. "Farmers must stay informed on the current food trends in the marketplace." The development of food system value chains will dramatically impact the traditional relationships that exist between salespeople and their customers, throughout the agricultural sector.

"Rather than depending primarily on personal relationships to gain and keep business, the new system is increasingly based on business-to-business issues, where the relationships are based more on economics and technical value," he says.

Another potential driver of consolidation and integration is responsiveness to consumer trends. "As businesses continue to consolidate and integrate, the need for additional services that set the retailer apart become more important," he notes. "These services include anything that improves the customer's efficiency and subsequently, the customer's bottom-line."

Creating alternative ways of doing business also provides an opportunity for a farmer to have a longer-term relationship with his buyer and producer. "We're seeing lifetime customer valuation, where the buyer and producer maintain a relationship," says Dr. Boehlje. "A key issue in agribusiness is, how do I develop a relationship, and how do I create value for my customer?"

Dr. Boehlje's presentation from AgChoices is available on Ropin' the Web. www.agric.gov.ab.ca.

Kevin Burns' Destiny Manifesto

"Trust the process."

That was the key message during Kevin Burns' presentation at the AgChoices 2006 conference held in Red Deer on February 15.

"We need to focus on the opportunities that are facing us," said the self-described instigational speaker. "We have to stop focusing on the negative things in life."

Included in his presentation were ten life-observations. "When you embrace them fully, these will change your life and set you on the road to realizing your true destiny," Burns says.



Kevin Burns' Destiny Manifesto

1. You have been chosen to fulfill a purpose here on Earth. "Pay attention to your ideas," Burns says. "Trust the process."
2. You have been blessed by love. "Fear is your greatest enemy," he says. "Your choices and experiences have brought you to this very point in your life."
3. You will be tested daily.
4. You will never be given more than you can handle. "And you will be able to handle all you are given," he says.
5. Depend on only yourself and you will be rewarded with happiness. "Accept yourself for who you are and you will find happiness in everything you do and experience."
6. You have been given six senses. "The sixth and most powerful of all of the senses is your ability to sense from your heart," Burns says.
7. You will extend yourself to others. "Only in the service of others will you find life's great rewards. Your life is not about what you can take from it, but what you can give to it."
8. Your actions will determine your outcome. "You have been given the gift of words to formulate and communicate your actions," he says. "Formulate your plan and then get on with it."
9. You will be given a specific time frame to accomplish your task. "Every single hour of every single day counts," he said. "Today is all you've got. Make it the most productive day ever."
10. Become unreasonable. "Offer yourself no reasons, no excuses and no justifiers for your life," he concluded. "You are in charge of your own destiny."

Living a Productive Farm Life



Best-selling author, Dr. Dan Baker

We are all looking for ways to remain healthy and according to Dr. Dan Baker, a pioneer in positive psychology initiatives and author of the bestselling book, *What Happy People Know: How the New Science of Happiness Can Change Your Life for the Better*, people who experience positive emotions tend to be healthier.

At AgChoices 2006, Dr. Baker demonstrated how health and happiness go hand in hand in leading a full productive life; pointing out to a crowd of producers "what is right on the farm"

"An important quality in farming is resilience," says Dr. Baker. "Resilient people live meaningfully and productively. They help themselves."

Ranchers and farmers are often very resilient, Baker says, due to their strong ability to cope with the "tides of influence" that exist in agriculture. Being an agricultural producer, by nature, "is the ultimate act of optimism," he says.

"You have a year where there is great rainfall.

You have three years of drought. That is Mother Nature," says Baker. "The question is how do we cope with those changing tides? What are the qualities of people who bounce back?" One answer: "They dwell on the areas where they can have an effect."

"Happy people aren't afraid to go beyond the boundaries of their own life. They are not concerned about dying; they are concerned about not living. They believe in something bigger than themselves," says Baker.

According to Baker, if you are happy, you have a purpose. You know why you are here on earth. You know why you get out of bed in the morning. You know what you are meant to do. And you know if you die today, you are satisfied with what you did in your life.

Happiness and health are interdependent says Baker. In his 12-Point Plan for Happiness, he describes how happy people see the world as a place of abundance. Do you have an abundance mentality or a scarcity mentality. One good way to determine the answer is to analyze whether or not you often experience feelings of jealousy. Jealousy demonstrates a scarcity mentality – another's accomplishment takes something away from you. On the flip side of that, someone with an abundance mentality might view another's accomplishment as proof that good things can happen.

People with an abundance mentality find joy in the good fortune of others because they realize that what someone else has or accomplishes doesn't take anything away from them. A quote from an unknown author suggests, "your candle does not go out when you light someone else's candle".

To find out more about Dr. Dan Baker's 12 Point Plan For Happiness go to AgChoices 2006 on Ropin' the Web. www.agric.gov.ab.ca

A New Generation Co-op Success Story



A New Generation Co-op saves Westlock's grain elevator.

Westlock farmers did not relish the thought of a wrecker's ball demolishing their grain elevator.

Yet, in 2002, the talk around town was grim: the local elevator might be permanently shut down. Luckily for Westlock, earlier that year the Alberta Government had approved a new type of cooperative arrangement, called a New Generation Cooperative (NGC).

"Our investors decided to go with a new generation cooperative, which had all the advantages of the traditional co-op, as well as the ability to raise investment dollars from non-producers," says Bob Heck, general manager of Westlock Terminals (N.G.C.) Ltd.

That summer, shareholders bought the terminal from Agricore, and became incorporated in August. They made history by becoming the first New Generation Cooperative in Alberta.

"We opened for business in December 2002," says Heck.

"The economic benefits of pooling resources is becoming more prominent in the agricultural sector," says Merle Good, provincial tax specialist in the commercialization division of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "With increasing competition and consolidation in the agricultural sector, a New Generation Co-op makes sense," Good says.

A New Generation Cooperative is governed by the same laws as a traditional co-op, whereby the one-member, one-vote principle is retained.

"However, in a NGC, there is the opportunity to have a 'closed' membership option," explains Good. "This option restricts membership to producers who can participate in the proposed business and have the capital to do so."

With a NGC, there is a class of shares that has exclusive delivery rights. "These are called designated shares and are available only to members," he says. "These shares ensure that the co-operative has a stable quality of producer-product."

Currently, Westlock Terminals has 200 shareholders and nearly 700 farmers and customers. "We process 125,000 tonnes of grain a year, which is our maximum," adds Heck. "We're making money, we don't have much debt and we're very

competitive with other grain companies. "The community has accepted us." Last year, a \$500,000 expansion was added. Another one is planned soon. The key, Heck says, is community support. "A co-op can be successful if it's managed properly," he says. "You have to have the commitment from the community."

Another advantage is the spin-off for the local economy. "Instead of grain flowing into Edmon-

ton, it flows into Westlock," says Heck. "Our machinery dealers, local stores, businesses and banks all benefit."

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development is committed to increasing awareness and implementation of NGCs throughout the province. "To date, approximately 10 NGCs have been incorporated in Alberta," Good says. "All aspects of agricultural production are represented, from eggs to the marketing of forest seedlings."

Farmers are looking to add value to their products through investment into a supply or value-added chain, he notes. "As well, they want to capture niche market opportunities," he says. "A NGC provides the vehicle where a significant number of individuals can combine their efforts, in order to create sufficient equity capital, a substantial commodity base and energy to commercialize new business ventures. "In essence, a NGC structure provides both the flexibility and discipline of a corporation, with a democratic principle of a co-operative."

For more information, contact Merle Good at (403) 556-4237 or by e-mail at merle.good@gov.ab.ca.



Westlock Terminal Board: Back Row Left to Right - Ken Maffey, Wayne Peyre, Chris Rottier, Richard Krikke, Bill Hall
Front Row Left to Right - Gil Dubrule, Lonnie Brown, Dave Feltad, Johann VonRennekampff, Alan Watt

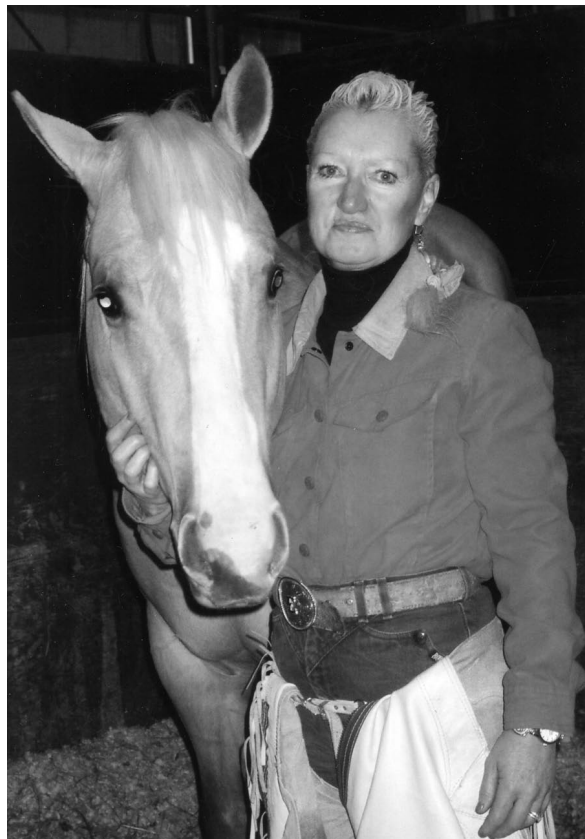


Westlock Terminal Staff: Back Row Left to Right - Rod Fischer, Mark Desranleau, Ken McRae; Front Row Left to Right - Stephane Gervais, Beth Lockwood, Bob Heck

The Peace Country Classic: Something for Everyone

A restored 1967 Camaro convertible in Bolero Red being offered up at the Sunrise Car Lottery booth is a midlife crisis waiting to happen, some might say. Tickets were \$20, and all the proceeds go toward three different charities in the Peace Country.

The light-hearted atmosphere at this year's Peace



Equestrian trainer Elaine Besuijen-Wyatt

Country Classic -which ran from March 9 to 11- was a welcome antidote to what has been a challenging time in agriculture in the Peace Region.

"Farmers here have gone through a drought, two BSEs, a monsoon, high input costs and low commodity prices," says Ag Show president, Ray Montroy. "There are a lot of challenges, and

farmers have had to manage those challenges to maintain their operations."

The theme of this year's event was 'Managing the Challenges,' a reflection of the issues facing local farmers. With over 250 displays and exhibits, show-goers could discuss their issues and come up with solutions with industry experts and specialists.

After lunch on Thursday, in the Drysdale Arena, Martina Shaw is showing the crowd how to massage a horse.

"Look how much he loves this," she says, as she rubs down a lucky gelding, nearly swooning with rapture.

Equestrian trainer Elaine Besuijen-Wyatt is one of the spectators, watching the massage. She's dressed in a pair of tan

leather, fringed chaps, and she's waiting to demonstrate her reining technique with Teddy Wyatt, her three-year-old Palamino quarterhorse.

In the stables, Shammie Ross of Ross Farms is astride Chip, her 12-year-old Clydesdale gelding. He's standing patiently while Ross explains how to braid a mane-roll.

"The geldings have to be braided for shows," she says, as her nimble fingers expertly weave a ribbon into Chip's coarse mane.

Over at the Pig-Rig, there's a long line-up of kids waiting to have a closer look at a litter of chubby piglets suckling on their mother. The weanlings are so spotlessly clean, they look as if they've been groomed.

Part of the event's appeal is the animals, says show president, Ray Montroy. "Having animals on display helps to create an awareness about agriculture for city kids," he says. "When they can actually pet a bull or a pony, it gives them a taste of farming. That kind of awareness is very important."

Meanwhile, a crowd has gathered at the Ateo Electric display, where a technician is illustrating some of the safety hazards on a farm. He's also explaining how to avoid those dangers.

Kids are stuffing their goody bags with all kinds of trinkets. At the Peace Country Sun booth - the major sponsor of the show - kids can try to win a bike by guessing the number of colourful carbiners stuffed in a jar. Adults can guess the number of keys in a bottle, to win a wicker patio set.

For the first time, a free seminar on succession planning was offered at the show. "This will help farmers to go forward, as well as give them information on how to set up for the future," Montroy says.

The Northern Classic Bull Sale was held on Friday, and brought in "the highest gross ever in the history of the 21-year-event."

"The show was a great success," Montroy adds.

Crazy, But It Just Might Work

John Nyland makes no apology for his laugh lines.

"My wife calls them 'lines of experience,'" he laughs.

Nyland and his wife run Nyland Farms, a grain operation on 2,600 acres near La Glace, located 50 kilometres northwest of Grande Prairie. One would imagine that he needs to take a break once in awhile; as well as running his farm, Nyland is also the vice-president of the Sexsmith Seed Cleaning Plant.

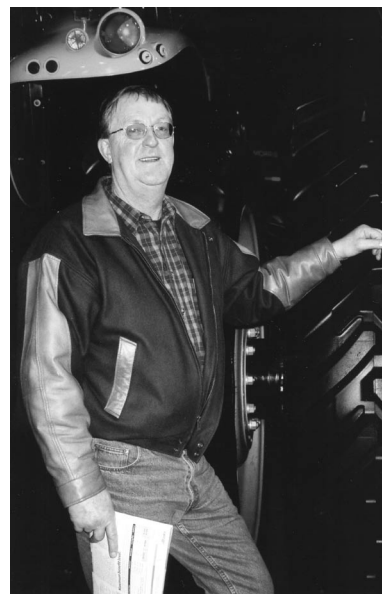
When asked how he achieves a life-work balance, Nyland suggests, "Always take time for your family. That's the most important thing. You could have a million dollars, and have no family. That would be pretty boring."

The father of four says that it's important to prioritize. "I always took my kids skiing in Jasper when they were little," he says. "In the summer, we'd go camping."

"I would also suggest that people become involved in their community," he says. "You get in a room with 100 different people, you'll get 100 different ideas. This will help you to become a well-rounded person and increase your knowledge base."

In recent years, Nyland has discovered the joys of traveling. "I cashed in some air miles and took my two sons to Europe," he says. And two years ago, he took off for a month and traveled through Spain, France and the Canary Islands with his wife.

"I'm not crazy," he says. "I take breaks."



John Nyland, Nyland Farms

Alberta's Ag Tourism Initiative Thrives



By definition, ag tourism is the blending of two of Alberta's top industries - agriculture and tourism.

Wandering through the rows of corn at the Lacombe Corn Maze you have to come up with the correct answers to questions at each junction, in order to know which direction to turn.

Lacombe's Corn Maze is just one example of an ag-based attraction, which is a direction Sharon Stollery, Leader of AAFRD'S Ag Tourism Team suggests some producers should consider. "Recent research tells us that there is significant potential in the ag tourism industry," says Stollery.

By definition, ag tourism is the blending of two of Alberta's top industries - agriculture and tourism - and according to Stollery, it's poised to nearly double in value by 2010.

"Ag tourism presents the consumer or tourist with an opportunity to engage in a direct exchange of values between themselves and the farm community," she says. "This could happen at a farmers' market, on a farm tour, at an agricultural festival or at a country vacation farm. Consider Ag Tourism as a collection of ag-based attractions, events and services."

Whether you're picking saskatoons at Pearson's Berry Farm in Bowden, or digging your own carrots at the Little Red Garden Market in Westward Ho, ag-based attractions are growing in popularity.

Stollery's team offers strategies to help with the development of an ag tourism venture, including education through workshops conferences and mentorship consultations. "We develop educa-

tional materials such as fact-sheets and videos," she says. "As well, we provide web-based information and an Alberta Ag Tourism Directory."

The ag tourism team also acts as a catalyst and a resource in seven different ag tourism geographical clusters in the province.

For more information, check the Ag Tourism website at www.agtourism.ca or call the Ag Info Centre at 310-FARM.



Ag-based attractions are growing in popularity.



Ag tourism presents the tourist with an opportunity to engage in the farm community.

For more information on the Agricultural Policy Framework, please visit the APF website at: www.agr.gc.ca/puttingcanadafirst/

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