

New AFAC Executive Director Appointed

Alberta Farm Animal Care welcomed Lorna Baird as the organization's new Executive Director. Lorna took over from Interim Manager, Jim Haggins, on Feb. 1, 2010.

Lorna joins AFAC while completing her PhD in Animal Science from Queen's University of Belfast. Raised in Winnipeg, she obtained her BSc. in Agriculture (Animal Science) from the University of Manitoba and followed that with an MSc. in Agricultural Sciences (Animal Welfare Program) from the University of British Columbia (UBC). Her theses at UBC and Queen's, focused on various aspects of lameness in dairy cattle. Lorna spent four years working as a research scientist at the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute, Northern Ireland. She also has eight years of experience developing and delivering "Lameness in Cattle" training sessions and research



Lorna Baird

presentations to various audiences.

Lorna's clear understanding of welfare issues, experience in management and research, communication skills and her dedication and passion for animal behaviour and care will be excellent assets in fulfilling her responsibilities to AFAC. She is excited about the opportunity to work with the board of directors, staff and the Alberta livestock industries in leading AFAC into the future.

"I believe the most powerful way that animal agriculture will move forward in Alberta is through collaborations between industry, government and research to provide a clear, cohesive, forward-thinking message to the media and consumers," says Baird. ^A

AFAC Board

AFAC's executive officers for 2010-2011 are:

Doug Sawyer was re-elected chairman. He runs a cow calf and backgrounder operation in the Pine Lake area, is Vice Chair and on the Governance Committee of ABP. Doug is ABP's rep on Growing Alberta, he is involved with the Red Deer Watershed Alliance and is the alternate for the Intensive Livestock Working Group on the Alberta Water Council. Doug also sits on the board of the Red Deer Feeders Association.



David Hyink was also re-elected to the executive. He joined the AFAC board in March 2004 and served as chair from 2005 to 2007. David is vice chairman of Alberta Chicken Producers and runs a broiler operation with his family in Ponoka.



Duane Landals was re-elected to the executive as vice-chairman. He is Registrar for Alberta Veterinary Medical Association, he has been a rural practitioner for over 27 years and is owner of a veterinary practice in Morinville.



Duane is a past president of CVMA, vice president of the World Veterinary Assoc. and was the chair of the 29th World Veterinary Congress.

Please join us in welcoming those who are new to the board representing their member organizations:

John Middell, Alberta Pork

John Haarman, Alberta Lamb Producers

Jason Hagel, Alberta Cattle Feeder's

Russell Wolf, Wildrose Agriculture Producers

Larry Delver, Western Stock Growers. ^A

Livestock Care Conference 2010

Over 180 people attended the 2010 Livestock Care Conference in Red Deer. Visit afac.ab.ca to download/read the conference presentations, media releases and articles (listed below):

- Future is now as farm animal care takes centre stage
-“Responsible livestock care is important to everyone from producers to consumers to obviously the animals themselves,” says Dr. Ed Pajor, professor of animal behavior and welfare at the University of Calgary. “The new level is about showing – not just practicing – responsible care. As a result, we’ve seen a rapidly growing focus on standards and processes of verification at many levels, both globally and locally. It’s not just about the future of animal agriculture, it’s happening now.”
- Lessons from the timber industry
-Bruce Vincent, a consultant and logging company owner shared his perspective based on challenges from environmentalists. “We need to lead – not fight – the discussion,” he says. “The trap is to adopt a bunker mentality. What we need is a dialogue direct with the public. If we speak openly and honestly and also listen, we can create our future.”
- Alberta case study: H1N1 and lessons from crisis
-Paul Hodgman of Alberta Pork illustrated that challenges can also come from unforeseen crisis such as when H1N1 flu blindsided the province’s pork industry last year. “Protect yourself from the unknown by having crisis management plans in place,” advised Hodgman.
- Big picture shows rising ‘culture of standards’ for farm animal care
-Failure to shape the terms of change can leave the livestock industry vulnerable to attacks. Examples include several case studies in the United States, where animal rights groups including the powerful Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) have aggressively pressured for legislated changes, using tactics such as massively funded public relations campaigns orchestrated around state ballot initiatives.



Dr. Ed Pajor



Bruce Vincent



Ernie Miciak poses a question to one of the speakers



Dave Heaslip



Sam Hines

- Growing trend fueled by pets, dollars and ‘ag alienation’
One of these factors is that society has elevated the status of pets and this has influenced how it thinks about livestock used to produce food. The pet industry in the U.S. is now a \$41 billion industry, Hines points out. Almost 60 percent of households have pets, compared with 35 percent that have children. One newspaper story trumpeted that pet lovers would spend over \$400 million on their pets for Valentine’s Day. Another key factor is affluence, he says. “People have a high disposable income and they pay relatively little for food. They’re in a position where they feel they can dictate practices.” And of course, “ag alienation” or the lack of connection between urbanites and the places where their food is produced, breeds misconceptions and mistrust that fuel greater interest in controlling farm practices.
- Windows to the world of farm animal care innovation
These included information on the progress in training livestock transporters, evaluating the emerging euthanasia technologies, how the dairy industry is evaluating hoof health, new developments in early disease detection and meeting the challenges in the horse industry. ♪

AFAC Award of Distinction -Leadership

For over 15 years as the manager of Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC), Susan Church has served Alberta's livestock industry with an energy and enthusiasm that is admired by all.

Susan obtained her B.Sc. in Agriculture at the University of Manitoba and since then has held numerous positions with Alberta Cattle Commission (Alberta Beef), Alberta Agriculture and Fieldstone Marketing and Public Relations. The experiences she gained led her to the position of Manager of Alberta Farm Animal Care - a post she held for over 15 years.



In 1993, Susan was hired by the new Alberta Foundation for Animal Care. "To us, she was the obvious choice as a manager at the time. She had been working with us on a contract basis and she had the passion for animal welfare" notes Will Verboven, a founding member of AFAC. Susan had her challenges in establishing a new organization and beginning the process of communicating the messages of animal agriculture to the public. At the time many people wanted to fight the messages coming from other organizations like PETA. Susan was convinced that the messages coming from agriculture needed to be proactive and positive. Her success with

these messages has stood the test of time and they are just as relevant today.

"Susan had an innate understanding that first and foremost, actions speak louder than words, that confrontation is not the answer, that the public needed to be educated about the livestock industry, that the industry itself needed to clean up its act, and that the youth needed to be engaged. She felt that AFAC could be the best advocate for this," says Pam Miller, dispatch coordinator for the ALERT Line.

Ray Fenton who was also one of the founding members of AFAC points to a number of milestones that were achieved during Susan's tenure as manager. "Susan was instrumental in getting the first ever review of livestock transportation completed. She also pushed to create the Care and Handling of Compromised Animals procedure manuals for all species, which became a great tool for trucking firms and law enforcement as well as industry."

Without a doubt, because of Susan's passion and the livestock industry's support, AFAC has become one of the leading voices, in this country and arguably across North America, for the welfare of animals. ^A

Consumer Perceptions of Farm Animal Welfare

A recent literature review by the Animal Welfare Institute of farm animal welfare and consumer perceptions provided some interesting statistics and food for thought to everyone involved in food animal production.

Americans care about how farm animals are raised

- 68% said they wanted to know more about what farmers were doing to ensure animal care and that the label is the way 80% of them wanted to learn about it.
- The welfare and protection of food animals was seen as very or somewhat important by 79% of people surveyed. 73% of those people would vote for a law that gave animals enough space to behave naturally.
- 92% of Ohioians agreed that it is important that farm animals are well cared for and 81% said the well-being of farm animals is just as important as the well being of pets.

Consumers are willing to pay more for food that is "humanely raised."

- Fifty-seven percent of consumers responding to a survey said they would be willing to pay 1% to 10% more "for food that promises to be produced to higher ethical standards." Twelve percent were willing to pay 10% more.
- Fifty-one percent of consumers said the claim "humanely raised" was very important or important in causing them to believe a food is ethically produced. Of the 29 food claims studied, "humanely raised" ranked fourth highest, above "no antibiotics," "produced in the USA," "natural," and "sustainably produced."

For further information on consumer perception studies or to see the full review and sources visit <http://www.awionline.org/ht/a/GetDocumentAction/i/20912>. ^A

AFAC Award of Distinction -Communication

For over 14 years, Pam Miller has been the voice that answers calls and responds to concerns of callers to the ALERT Line 24 hours a day.

Pam lived on a farm for years raising Black Angus cattle and race horses. When she moved to the city she became the manager of the Western Stock Growers (WSGA). It was during her time at WSGA that Pam became involved in the creation of AFAC and a member of its original board of directors.

When Pam left her position as manager of the WSGA in 1996, Susan Church, the manager of AFAC approached her and asked if she wanted to work with AFAC responding to ALERT Line calls. Pam felt that animal welfare was a concern to consumers who were watching the industry carefully. She felt that working with the ALERT Line would be a great opportunity to help educate these people about livestock production practices. Pam admits that her knowledge of some livestock production practices was quite high while in other areas she did a lot of "on the job" learning. She gratefully acknowledges the help of skilled livestock personnel who responded to her requests and also helped educate both producers and members of the public.



Pam admits that there have been challenges with the ALERT Line and educating the public. - Primarily with the public's perception of "factory farms" and trying to convince them that such practices are not found on an average farm. It has been key to let the public know that producers want to look after their animals well. Pam feels that through educating both consumers and producers, the ALERT Line has made industry more aware of animal welfare and has led to producers doing a better job. The biggest success of the ALERT Line has been that the public now has confidence that the livestock industry has heard their voice and is

prepared to act. The ALERT Line and AFAC can also be the biggest advocate for producers when the concern is unfounded, by taking the time to educate the caller about industry's production practices.

Ray Fenton, who has worked with Pam responding to many ALERT Line calls says, "Pam has a great ability to answer the call, ask questions, sort out legitimate concerns and educate the others. Her passion for AFAC, ALERT and the animals are what has made it a success."

2009 ALERT Line Update

2009 saw an increased number of calls to the ALERT Line. There were two reasons for this, the first being an increased awareness of the 1-800 amongst producers and the public. The second reason was the drought conditions that were seen in many areas of the province, which led to animals in thin condition going into winter, low

livestock prices, high feed costs, a struggling economy, and even the good managers were challenged to find solutions to the problems.

December was the heaviest volume month the Alert Line has ever experienced we received 150 calls. 38 resulted in

cases, 7 were unfounded, 17 were resolved, and 11 cases were, either pending or still being monitored at the end of the month. All of those cases have been resolved since (3 cases were referred to the SPCA). All cases referred to the SPCA are sent because there are 10 or less animals (acre-age animals), dead animals on the property or pets.

Breakdown by species of 2009's 188 cases

Beef	91	Bison	3	Dairy	2	Horses	75
Pigs	7	Elk	1	Sheep	2	Other	7

The rest of the calls were resource people calling with reports, more information etc or what we call information calls. ^A

Canada's Livestock Industry Backs National Livestock Transport Training Plan

As early as 1994, AFAC recognized that transportation was a sector of the livestock and poultry industries that needed attention. In that year and again in 2002, AFAC commissioned studies that recommended comprehensive training and certification for farm animal transport drivers and handlers.

Seeing no viable alternatives on the horizon, AFAC led the development of the Certified Livestock Training (CLT) program, and launched it in 2007. When other provinces saw what was happening in Alberta, they started getting involved and to date, CLT instructors have trained more than 1,000 drivers and handlers, with courses held from BC to Quebec.

However, increasing national demand for CLT training and certification is a double edged sword. While it's gratifying to see a home-grown idea gain attention from across the country, the program has rapidly outgrown its Alberta base.

In a major initiative aimed at making CLT truly national, AFAC has joined forces with Canada's key livestock commodity groups, meat and poultry processors, as well as governments. Over the past several months they have been working on the development of a new national livestock transportation program using Alberta's CLT as a pilot. Together, these groups have struck a National CLT Project advisory team and a smaller working group, which will meet in the next few weeks to lay out a foundation for the new program.

Support for a national program is broad-based and compelling. Livestock are moved across provincial and international borders on a regular basis, and it's crucial for drivers to have Canada-wide certification that is also recognized in the US.

ADVISORY TEAM MEMBERS

Alberta Cattle Feeders Association (ACFA)
 Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC)
 Animal Transportation Association (AATA)
 Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA)
 Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)
 Canadian Pork Council (CPC)
 Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors Council (CPEPC)
 Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF)
 Chicken Farmers of Canada (CFA)
 Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC)
 Equine Canada (EC)
 Funk's Transport, Manitoba
 National Cattle Feeders Association (NCFA)
 National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC)
 Ontario Farm Animal Care (OFAC)
 J. Woods Livestock Services, Alberta

We have received funding to continue this program until July 2010 from the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency and industry. ^A

The National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) represents the interests of virtually all of Canada's livestock producers, processors, government departments and other organizations that are concerned with farm animal welfare. NFACC agrees that a national program is essential. At its September 2009 meeting, NFACC's executive passed a unanimous resolution supporting the National CLT initiative and pledging support in finding long-term sustainable funding.

Canada's livestock commodity associations support the project, and are anxious to see it move ahead. Several have passed resolutions to that effect. Bryan Walton, Alberta Cattle Feeders CEO and National Cattle Feeders board member says, "We think it's a good program. There's strong support and the timing is right to move it to a national level. It's really important that we have one program right across the country, and that it's also recognized in the US. A driver shouldn't need more than one certification card to haul anywhere in North America." ^A

Sponsors

We would like to thank the following organizations who sponsored the 2010 Livestock Care Conference. ALMA, Co-op Feeds, Government of Alberta, Lilydale, Royal Bank of Canada, Olymel, Steve's Livestock Transport, Masterfeeds, Elanco, Sunterra Farms, Canadian Premium Meats and Sunterra Meats.

We look forward to LCC 2011 and more great sponsorship support.

Dealing With Drought - Managing Your Resources

The harsh reality of drought was felt in many areas of the province last summer. Unfortunately, there are areas that have not received much moisture this spring and are still suffering from dry conditions. Livestock producers could be facing pasture and forage shortages this summer and into next winter. What steps can be taken now to reduce the impact of little or no moisture?

1) Let the forage grow this spring. Prevent grazing until the plants have a minimum of 3 to 4 leaves growing. For every day the animals are turned out early in the spring, the cost will be a reduction in fall grazing by 3 days. So, if turn out is a week early now, you will lose 3 weeks of grazing in August or September.

2) Minimize stress on the forages. Many pastures were over-grazed last fall and looked like pool tables going into the winter. The root systems did not have an opportunity to replenish root food reserves. The lack of root food reserves may result in plants dying, and at least a 20% reduction in forage growth this spring. To help the root zone recover, use heavy or intensive grazing management with a long rest period between grazing. One method is to use electric fences to break large areas into smaller paddocks. Graze an area for 3 – 5 days. Allow the grazing animals to harvest only 50% of the forage growth that is present, and then leave the remainder to stimulate re-growth for the next grazing event. Allow 30 days rest between grazing events. These practices will improve stand longevity and productivity.



3) Creep feed young ruminants. Forage demand is reduced when calves have access to a creep ration. Weight gains are improved on pasture. Expect an extra pound of gain for every 4 to 5 pounds of creep feed consumed. When the animals are weaned, they experience less stress because they know what grain rations are and they take less time to get onto feed. With the animals

eating more in a shorter period of time, the incidence of diseases is reduced.

4) Have animals drink water out of a stock tank or other mechanical device rather than allowing direct access to a dugout or watering hole. Herd health, and average daily gains improve when animals drink out of a tank, or use nose pumps. Water quality is reduced when animals walk into the water; they stir up the dirt, increasing total dissolved solids in the water. Some animals urinate and defecate into the dugout which increases microbial contamination potentially causing more health issues.

5) Wean animals early. Calves can be weaned at 140 to 150 days of age, lambs at 45 days of age, and foals at 60 to 80 days. Prior to weaning, creep feed the young animals. They must be eating dry feed prior to weaning. Once weaned these animals need to be put on a high quality ration to maintain growth rates and proper skeletal development. The nutritional requirements for a dry cow, ewe or mare are 25% to 30% lower than when they are lactating. Supplementing a non – lactating animal with average quality forage at 25 to 30% of total feed

intake will meet nutritional requirements and reduce grazing pressure on the pasture. If the animals are on the thin side, it is easier for them to gain weight as a dry animal, during warm temperatures rather than in the cold of winter. If a cow is 100 pounds lighter than normal going into winter, (body condition score 2 rather than body condition score 3) on average, it requires an additional 1400 pounds of hay to meet energy requirements to get the thin cow through the winter. This principle also applies to the other species as well.

These management suggestions can help stretch the forage supply that is on the farm. To obtain additional information on the points mentioned above, call the Alberta Agriculture, Ag-Info Centre at 310-3276 and ask to speak to a beef and forage specialist.

Aggie Days

Every Spring AFAC attends Aggie Days in Calgary to share the message of livestock care with the many students and families that come through the event. This year over 25,000 people attended Aggie Days and learned about agriculture and its impact on their lives.

Events like Aggie Days and Westerner Days are invaluable opportunities for AFAC to reach out to the mainly urban population of Alberta. ^A



Horse Hauling Course

Transporting your horse does not have to be a stressful event for you or your horse. This is the message the Alberta Farm Animal Care is delivering with their new Horse Hauling Course.

Twenty-six people attended the inaugural course in Gibbons, Alberta on April 10. The audience consisted of horse owners, caregivers and commercial transporters with experience ranging from new to the industry to extensive equine background. The course is aimed at assuring the safe and humane handling of horses before, during and after transport.

The course covers trailer design, animal behaviour and handling, handler safety, biosecurity, horse comfort during transport and incident (accident) response. It includes transport regulatory requirements for Canada, insurance requirements, manifests and horse permits. Participants are also made aware of existing industry resources, including the Recommended Code of Practice and the unfit guidelines that will assist them in making decisions on behalf of their animals.

The need for this training session was identified over a



ALPN

The Alberta Livestock Protection System has experienced a rebirth as the Alberta Livestock Protection Network (ALPN). The name was changed to reflect the nature of the group: ALPN is a network of organizations with and without enforcement responsibilities who work to support the livestock protection system.

After some fruitful discussion, ALPN members have agreed upon a mission statement:

“To enhance livestock welfare practices in Alberta by sharing information, creating opportunities for partnership among members, and collaborating to provide advice on education, policy and legislation.”



year ago when AFAC began receiving calls from horse owners and stable personnel who had questions and concerns about the transport of horses.

Mikki Shatosky, the course developer, says “We, the livestock industry, must continue to provide education to the people in the field. Livestock handlers and haulers must be open to new information and learn techniques that will ensure the safe relocation of the animals in their care. This course provides that information. If we can get people to think about the animals as individuals and consider their needs – then we have achieved something.”

The course includes both classroom lecture and hands on activities involving a variety of trailer designs. “It was a very interactive training session”, noted Leita Lawrence, a trainer and instructor with Shenfield Ranch in Gibbons. “There were a lot of ‘Aha!’ moments in the training session. A few people said they wished they had this information before they bought their trailer”.

To learn more about the horse hauling course visit www.afac.ab.ca/courses.htm ^A

With renewed focus, ALPN is embarking on some high-impact activities, including:

- Coordination of and clear communication between livestock emergency responders that work towards the common goal of improved animal care
- Concerted efforts to develop clear, cohesive messages for all ALPN members in response to media coverage of animal care issues

Member organizations of ALPN are: ABVMA, AFAC, ARD, CFIA, LIS, SPCA, RCMP.^A

We Care message Delivery Program

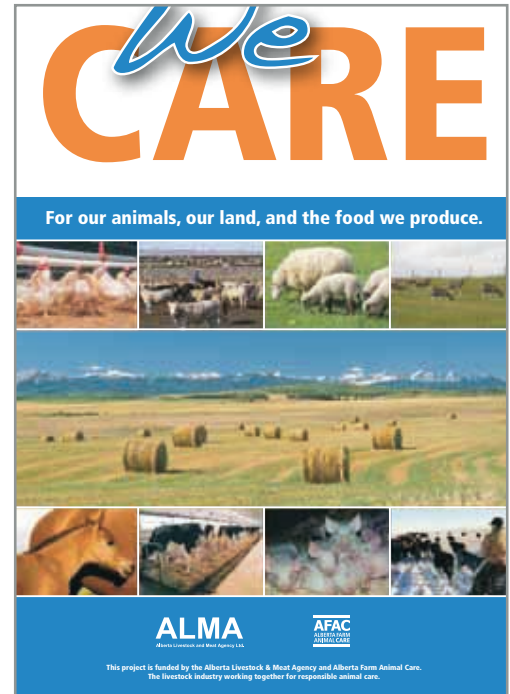
The *We Care* program (formerly *I Care*) was developed originally as a way to help bridge the gap between producers and the public, promoting a simple, yet powerful message on how farmers care for their animals, their land and the food they produce. The program tools include:

We Care badges for exhibitors to wear at events, which conveys the message to fairgoers that they care. It also encourages the public to talk to the exhibitors about their animals.

We Care table top boards and posters -- a poster to display at each exhibit reinforcing the animal care message.

Livestock Exhibitors Code of Practice -- the proper care of animals is just as important at a show or exhibition as it is on the farm. Fairs and exhibitions use the Livestock Exhibitors Code of Practice as a guideline for what is expected of exhibitors in the handling care and exhibiting of all farm animals.

This is a province wide no charge program. *We Care* program materials are available on request to CAP Representatives, Ag Societies, fairs, agriculture commodity groups, and individual producers to use at public events. ^A



On Call Veterinarian Update

In the last Update, AFAC announced that it had received funding to continue the On-Call Veterinarian (OCV) program.

In October 2009 a group of veterinarians interested in the program met with AFAC and were given information on the ALERT Line and what would be expected of them if they wished to participate. The meeting was a success with 16 veterinarians agreeing to help the ALERT Line with early intervention for farm animal concerns. AFAC brought the vets together again in March 2010 to provide some case studies and information to the vets to assist them in their work as OCVs.

In 2009 OCV's handled 50 cases for the ALERT Line. ^A



Kevin Link Photo

AFAC Board Members

Alberta Auction Markets Assoc.
 Alberta Beef Producers
 Alberta Chicken Producers
 Alberta Egg Producers
 Alberta Elk Commission
 Alberta Equestrian Federation
 Alberta Hatching Egg Producers

Alberta Lamb Producers
 Alberta Milk
 Alberta Pork
 Alberta Turkey Producers
 Alberta Veterinary Medical Assoc.
 University of Alberta
 Western Stock Growers Association

Wild Rose Agricultural Producers
 Alberta Agriculture & Rural
 Development

AFAC Active Members

Alberta Cattle Feeders' Assoc.*
 Alberta Poultry Hatchery Association
 Bison Producers of Alberta
 Canada/Alberta Livestock Research Trust
 Calgary Stampede
 Canadian Professional Rodeo Assoc.
 Edmonton Northlands

Feeder Associations of Alberta Ltd.
 Horse Racing Alberta
 Lakeland College, Agricultural Sciences
 Olds College
 North American Equine Ranching Information Council
 University of Calgary, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine*

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