

TEACHERS

Animal Welfare is one of the compelling issues of our times.

Our society clearly holds varying views about the way we regard and treat different animals. The Animal Use Spectrum Chart describes both extremes and the middle ground. The majority believes it is acceptable to use animals for human benefit as long as they are treated humanely and protected from intentional or needless cruelty or harm.

The issue of how animals are raised for food, fibre, entertainment and companionship is a sensitive one. Many people, young and old, are increasingly inquisitive and even concerned about farm animals and their welfare. Are their beliefs based on moral and ethical principles? Are they based on media coverage of isolated incidents? Is our compassion for all animals anthropomorphized because of movies like Babe? Is our concern a natural need to know and understand how animals raised for human benefit live and die?

Concerns swirl around such issues as confinement or intensive housing systems, the laws, removal of horns, beak tips, tails, discipline training, exposure to weather, transportation, the use of antibiotics and corporate versus individually managed farms. Added to this mix, is our demand for inexpensive food, fibre, leather goods and pharmaceuticals.

In response to consumer's concerns, to counteract misinformation, to promote responsible animal care and to work with legitimate public animal welfare groups, the livestock farmers of Alberta formed the **Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC) Association**.

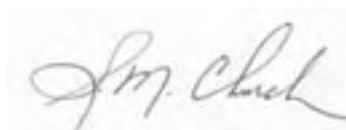
AFAC recognizes that responsible animal care practices are a key component to the long term sustainability of Alberta's growing livestock industry. The well being of the animals in our care is integral to all advancement in livestock production.

The livestock farmers of Alberta believe consumers, including your students, want assurance that the food they eat and the products they use, come from animals that are well cared for and have a gentle death without pain and suffering.

This resource has been prepared and financed by Alberta's livestock industry to better provide you with that assurance. It's one small step.

Your feedback is valued, please complete and submit the Teacher Reflection at the end of each Topic.

Regards,



Susan Church
AFAC Manager
April 2003

ABOUT THE CD

FARMERS CARE FOR THEIR ANIMALS

The 16 minute CD features discussions with people involved with animal welfare and animal behavior researchers.

The CD features:

Dr. David Fraser

- Senior Lecturer and Researcher of Animal Behavior at the University of British Columbia, Department of Animal Science and Centre for Applied Ethics
- Chair of the Animal Welfare Centre
- Member of the Animal Welfare Committee, World Organization for Animal Health

Dr. Temple Grandin (www.grandin.com)

- Associate Professor of Animal Science at Colorado State University
- Author of several books on animal handling
- Designer and consultant on animal handling facilities
- Scientific advisor to McDonald's and Burger King

Mrs. Joy Ripley

- Past President, Canadian Federation of Humane Societies
- Past President, Alberta Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Alberta SPCA)

Additional agriculture resources can be found at AFAC's website:

www.afac.ab.ca

ABOUT THE VIDEO

FREEDOM FIVE - LIVESTOCK WELFARE IN ALBERTA

This video assesses farm animal welfare. It is based on the Five Freedoms that are outlined on page 53. Logan McPherson takes students on a tour of Alberta farms - real farms and real people. Susan Church, manager of AFAC, is his guide.

DAIRY

Gordon and Cathy Speirs and their three children Travis, Tyler and Megan are third generation family farmers in Alberta. Gordon's family began dairying in 1948. Gordon and Cathy milk 130 cows out of a total herd of 320 on their farm outside of Olds. The Speirs use a unique open housing system for their herd and milk the cows three times a day.

For 26 years, owners **Don and Wendy Chalack** of **Wendon Holsteins** have milked 50 dairy cows twice a day on their farm east of Bowden. Their main business focus is raising Holsteins for breeding programs and embryo transplants. The Chalacks also raise purebred Black Angus beef cattle.

BEEF CATTLE

Alvin and Ann Kumlin are fourth generation cattle ranchers near Cochrane. They farm 6,300 acres and have 400 head of cow/calf beef cattle. The Kumlins, along with their children, Robyn and Matt, manage their land by rotational grazing moving the cattle from one pasture to another to avoid over-stressing the land.

In 2001, the Kumlins won the *Alberta Beef Producers Environmental Stewardship Award*, *Peter Smallman Memorial Award* from Trout Unlimited, *Outstanding Achievement for Fisheries Conservation* and the *Rangeman of the Year Award* from the Old Time Rangeman Association. These awards commend their sensitivity towards managing the fragile habitat of Jumping Pound Creek which runs through their ranch.

Arnold and Mary Hanson are the third generation on their cattle farm near Viking. They have a 50 head cow/calf beef cattle operation. Mr. Hanson is also in the trucking business, hauling cattle for other producers. Their three children Lisa, Kyle and Nicole actively help with the care and handling of the animals on the family farm.

ELK AND BISON

Canadian Rocky Mountain Ranch is managed by veterinarian **Dr. Terry Church** and his wife **Pat**. They manage 45 head of bison and 300 head of elk on the ranch just south of Calgary. The meat from these animals goes to specialty restaurants and the elk velvet is sold as a health product.

PIGS

Sunterra Farms' pig operations reflect the efforts of over four decades of intensive genetic selection, high herd health and environmental standards.

In the video we visit the 4,000 sow Mountain Vista barns. The sows in the gestation stalls are pregnant. Just before they give birth (farrow) they are moved into farrowing units. This is Sunterra's first venture into multiple site pig production which is a way to maintain high herd health status. Nursery and finishing barns are at different locations.

Most of the pigs raised at Sunterra Farms are directed through a family-owned abattoir, which processes pork for Sunterra Markets as well as customers in the United States, Mexico and Japan.

BROILER CHICKENS

Skyline Poultry Farms Ltd. is owned and operated by **Aaron and Audrey Falkenberg**. They live just outside of Edmonton. Mr Falkenberg has been raising chickens for meat (called broilers) for 30 years. In 1998, Mr. Falkenberg and his family were named *Northlands Farm Family of the Year*. They raise about 80,000 chickens every 10 weeks, or about 400,000 chickens every year.

In the video, Mr. Falkenberg is shown tasting the feed that his birds eat—making sure it is fresh and clean. The birds in the barn were 5 days old at the time of filming. They are shown walking on a layer of bedding that is made from shredded newspaper. This is an innovative way to recycle and reuse everyday materials. When the barn is cleaned out, Mr. Falkenberg sells the manure and shredded paper for compost.

HORSES

Will and Dorothy Janzen have been raising Morgan horses for 25 years on their farm east of Edmonton. When we visited their farm, they had 116 horses. In the video, the foal shown nursing is less than 12 hours old. As Mrs. Janzen said, “we raise them like animals, not pets.” Their horses prefer to be with the herd and are kept outside year round.

LAYER HENS

Charlie and Jo-anne VanArnam care for 17,000 birds annually. Each year their hens produce about 2.4 million eggs. The VanArnams recently built a new barn using the latest European design cages and handling facilities. When this video was taken, the birds were at the end of their egg production cycle. The birds stay in the cages for about a year. The birds are producing well, are alert and well feathered.

In the video, you will see a close-up of a hen with a sharp beak. Normally these hens have their beaks trimmed at the hatchery when they are very young. This bird was missed. You can see the sharp curved tips that make it difficult for the birds to eat.

SHEEP

Mr. Chester Fowler and his family have been raising sheep on their farm west of Airdrie since 1930. Mr. Fowler’s sheep are purebred Suffolks and he has a flock of about 100 head. The entire family (children and grandchildren) helps with daily chores. Chester’s sheep are shown and sold at agriculture fairs all over North America.

TURKEYS

Dale and Jean Enarson are third generation farmers. Their farm is southeast of Edmonton at Ferintosh. Their oldest son, Jason, is also farming which means they are a four generation farm family. At the time the video was taken, the Enarsons had 9,000 ten-week old ‘toms’ (male) turkeys. The birds stay at the farm until they are 16-17 weeks old. The birds are housed in a barn with access to the outside when weather allows.

The birds in the film are muddy because they were out in the sun on the muddy ground after a morning rain.