



For immediate release:

Alberta Farm Animal Care honours industry leaders

Calgary, Alta., March 29, 2004: Three industry leaders were recently honoured by Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC) for their commitment to animal care. The AFAC Awards of Distinction were presented at the organization's annual general meeting on March 26, in Edmonton, Alta.

The Award of Distinction for Industry Leadership honours an active producer or livestock production company that makes animal welfare an integral part of their overall business strategy and continually raise the bar on quality animal care. The Award of Distinction for Communications is presented to a person, organization or company that takes an active role in effectively informing the public and the industry about the importance of animal care in a factual, honest way that builds trust and credibility.

Two Industry Leadership Awards were presented this year – one to Granum, Alta. sheep producer Ed Morrow and one to the Highwood Livestock Auction of High River, Alta.

Morrow was born and raised on a beef and sheep farm in New Zealand, but has been active in Canada's sheep industry for almost 20 years. He and his wife, Dawn, maintain a small flock of commercial ewes and also operate Kaniwi Korral's Ltd., a company that specializes in the development and manufacturing of sheep and goat handling equipment.

Morrow continually upgrades his equipment and handling systems to ensure that animals are treated as humanely as possible. He has also written a number of safe handling and good stewardship articles for Shepherd's Journal. It is through those articles that Morrow raises the profile of AFAC and the ALERT line, while encouraging proactive responses to animal care issues. He also attends producer meetings and has held demonstrations and handling seminars at 19 different venues in 2003 alone.

The Highwood Livestock Auction's mission statement – "to treat every animal and producer with respect and make sure every animal that walks through the ring brings fair market value" – is the driving force behind the Auction's day-to-day business.

Workers at the auction stress the importance of animal welfare and unfit animals are not accepted. They make an ongoing effort to portray Alberta's beef industry in a positive light, and

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they diligently work to ensure that all cattle are cared for humanely and that facilities are safe for both cattle and workers.

AFAC's Award of Distinction for Communications was awarded to Peggy Johnson, an instructor at Olds College specializing in swine production, management, nutrition and welfare. She chairs the Olds College Farm Team, oversees the management of the College farm and was instrumental in the development of the Animal Welfare course at Olds College. The course has since become compulsory for all agriculture production students.

At every available opportunity, Johnson extends the message of responsible livestock care. To ensure her students receive the most up to date information about livestock welfare developments, Johnson frequently invites guest lecturers from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, AFAC, the Alberta SPCA and other industry groups. In Johnson's own words, the future of the livestock industry depends on responsible livestock care; as a farmer, treating animals properly is the right thing to do.

AFAC is an industry-led, industry-managed organization whose goal is to promote responsible animal care and continually search for advancements in animal welfare. The Awards of Distinction are presented annually as a way to honour those members of Alberta's livestock community whose commitment to livestock welfare serves as an example to their peers. More information and background on AFAC and the Awards of Distinction are available on the AFAC Web site at www.afac.ab.ca.

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