



For immediate release
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Manager of Alberta Farm Animal Care recognized with Humane Award

Calgary ... Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC) has been recognized by the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) for its leadership in supporting the well-being of livestock across the country.

The CVMA presented its annual Humane Award to AFAC Manager Susan Church. The award is presented to an individual whose work is judged to have contributed significantly to the welfare and well-being of animals.

“AFAC, under the leadership of Susan as manager, has been instrumental in advancing the humane care of food producing animals in Canada over the past decade,” says Dr. Duane Landals, the CVMA Executive Board member who nominated Church. “In working directly with commodity groups and the public, AFAC has taken action to bring animal care to a high level of interest, awareness, and progress in Alberta and beyond.”

AFAC is supported and funded by the livestock producers’ organizations of Alberta, along with many other agribusinesses and individual members. Its mandate is to enhance livestock welfare in Alberta by supporting humane treatment of livestock, seeking ways to continually improve livestock care, and meeting the expectations of today’s public that the food they eat and products they use come from animals that are humanely raised. Church has managed AFAC since its inception in 1993.

“This award is a reflection of the work AFAC has done, and of the influence that it has had across the country to raise awareness and help ensure proper livestock care,” says Church. “AFAC places a lot of emphasis on leading and taking action. This is what Alberta livestock producers and their partners have done consistently over the past 10 years. It’s a testament to their hard work and has led to real improvements.”

Both livestock producers and veterinarians have critical roles in continually promoting and ensuring responsible animal care, says Landals, a past president of CVMA and current AFAC board member.

“Humane animal care is something that can be taken for granted, because it’s so fundamental to everything we do,” he says. “That’s why efforts to increase discussion and awareness, and to continually strive for better approaches to standards and practices is so important. Through AFAC, the livestock industry has really taken this issue to heart and has shown great leadership and dedication in ensuring responsible animal care. That’s something Canadian veterinarians are pleased to recognize as we continue to support animal welfare as our top priority.”

A key effort that led to Church's Humane Award selection was AFAC's recent Farm Animal Care project aimed at students from grades seven to 12. The project included a 22-minute video, "Freedom Five-Livestock Welfare in Alberta," a compact disc called "Farmers Care for their Animals" and a Teacher's Guide to Farm Animal Welfare in Alberta. Church was a driving force behind the project's inception, planning, production and delivery.

Other core AFAC initiatives have included supporting research in animal welfare, producing regular publications that focus on farm animal welfare issues, developing surveys and reports on animal welfare, and contributing to the development of standards on humane handling of livestock.

"A major highlight for AFAC has been progress on the issue of dealing with unfit livestock," says Church. "AFAC has led a campaign on this issue for the last five years. The industry has gotten behind the campaign, sending a clear message that it's unacceptable to ship unfit livestock. The industry and AFAC have also delivered a series of guidebooks on humane handling of different livestock species that will go a long way to ensuring proper care."

The CVMA Humane Award, sponsored by Schering-Plough Animal Health, was established in 1986 to encourage advancement in the care and well-being of animals. More information on AFAC is available at www.afac.ab.ca.

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For more information contact:

David Hyink, Chairman
Alberta Farm Animal Care Association (AFAC)
Phone: (403) 588-0990