



For immediate release:

Livestock care leaders recognized with Awards of Distinction

Calgary, Alta., March 30, 2006: Alberta's livestock industry saluted three leaders in promoting livestock care in the province, at the recent Livestock Care Conference, March 24, in Red Deer.

"The Awards of Distinction is an opportunity to recognize those in our industry who have worked hard to advance the well being of livestock in Alberta," says Susan Church, Manager of Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC), host of the Conference. "They apply new and innovative ideas, apply management practices to improve and ensure high standards of animal well being, and they understand the public's need for assurances that farm animals are humanely raised. All are ambassadors for the Alberta livestock industry, who can be held up as examples of those who are making a difference."

The Award of Distinction for Industry Leadership was presented to Jeff Ball and his company, Ballco Feeders of Brant, Alta. Ballco Feeders, with its 15,000 head lot, was recognized for its early implementation of the Alberta Beef On-Farm Safety Program and its animal care spin-off benefits.

Ball, the immediate past president of Alberta Cattle Feeders, says the program encouraged him to get employees involved in the development of standard operating procedures. Tangible parameters were set, gray areas were eliminated and rigid treatment protocols were put in place, especially for humanely and promptly dealing with sick or injured cattle.

"We are now able to give our employees evidence of our improvements – evidence of how their improved handling and adherence to protocols has improved bottom line outcomes," says Ball. "Our benefits have included improved humane handling, improved economics, improved food safety and improved employee job satisfaction."

The Award of Distinction for Communication was awarded to Dr. Roy Lewis, a Westlock, Alta., veterinarian. For 25 years, Lewis has taken an active role in 'getting the message out' about farm animal care in a factual and honest way, to build trust and credibility.

"Dr. Lewis holds a strong belief in the power of the written word," says Church. "Throughout his career serving the needs of livestock producers, Roy has felt a commitment to their continuing education, sharing with them the knowledge he has gained about the health and welfare of their animals. He has found that well-written articles about various aspects of veterinary medicine benefits far more people than he could hope to reach by speaking one on one with his clients."

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Lewis is a regular contributor to several industry publications, including *Alberta Express*, *Western Producer* and *Simmental Country*. Most recently, Lewis has written about humane transportation of livestock, as well as the need to talk about how to humanely euthanize large numbers of cattle to meet Canada's commitment to run BSE tests.

The Award of Distinction for Innovation was presented to Jennifer Woods of Blackie, Alta., for her role in creating the Livestock Emergency Response Course for Alberta.

In 1997, Woods was asked by local fire fighters who knew of her cattle experience to help them prepare a response for dealing with livestock when a rollover or fire occurred. She called AFAC to assist and the concept was launched. Since then, Jennifer has delivered 31 Livestock Emergency Response Courses to over 550 people representing 100 fire departments and other agencies.

Woods has worked with insurance companies as part of this effort. "The insurance adjustments and payments on cargo claims tend to be lower and are less complicated to handle when personnel Jennifer has trained respond to the accident scene," says Kevin Cornforth of Hartford Insurance.

Hartford and Canadian Farm Insurance have worked with Jennifer to set up a 1-800 number for roll-overs, provided to 911 dispatchers and fire departments, which Woods answers herself. She also leads a team across Alberta to help respond to accidents – a first team of its kind for Canada.

AFAC is a partnership of Alberta's major livestock groups, with a mandate to promote responsible, humane animal care within the livestock industry. The Livestock Care Conference drew over 170 livestock industry participants. More information is available at www.afac.ab.ca.

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