



2017 Annual Report



Who is Alberta Farm Animal Care?

Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC) is a non-profit, non-government livestock welfare organization, based in High River, AB. AFAC's mission is to promote best practices in farm animal care and handling and provide a forum connecting individuals with a stake in animal agriculture. Together we work towards continual improvement in responsible, humane animal care. We engage with consumers in a transparent manner to enhance public confidence in farm animal care.

AFAC was founded in 1993 by Alberta livestock organizations to be a collective trusted voice on matters of livestock welfare. AFAC is now one of the last provincial animal care organizations left in Canada, as many have either left or have been incorporated into larger national entities. Although the number of animal care organizations is decreasing, the public's interest and concern for farm animal care is increasing. We believe this is an opportunity to lead the country as a progressive animal care organization.

AFAC creates resources and training opportunities to assist producers in providing the highest level of care for their animals. We use various tools and speaking opportunities to share with the public on the many ways animal welfare is taken seriously within the agricultural industry. Additionally, we assist in and conduct animal welfare research that focuses on improving livestock welfare in Alberta. We depend primarily on funding provided by our members, contributors, and funding resulting from our resilient relationship with the Government of Alberta's Agriculture and Forestry department.



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ALBERTA
AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

*Office of the Minister
MLA, Whitecourt-St. Anne*

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, it is my pleasure to extend greetings on behalf of the Government of Alberta to Alberta Farm Animal Care members.

We know Alberta's agricultural producers are committed to the welfare of animals and their care. Farmers are also continuing to respond to the important expectations of their customers, who want to know more and more about the food they eat and are seeking greater assurances that high welfare standards are maintained throughout livestock animals' lives. They can rest easy knowing Alberta is a leader not only in high-quality products, but also in our commitment to animal health and welfare, environmental stewardship, and food safety.

AFAC is crucial to helping ensure our agriculture sector is able to meet those expectations while ensuring producers' needs are met. You also help ensure producers have opportunities to learn, share ideas and best practices, and form networks. As the agriculture sector continues to grow and diversify, the work you do is more important than ever.

Thank you, AFAC, for your hard work, dedication and for being a leader in advancing and promoting responsible livestock care for well over 20 years. The Alberta government shares your commitment to the agriculture sector, and I look forward to continuing to work together to ensure our province remains a leader in livestock welfare.

Best of luck in the coming years as you continue to be a strong, trusted voice.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Oneil Carlier".

Oneil Carlier
Minister
Agriculture and Forestry

Chair's Report

It has been a year of change and transition for AFAC, fitting as we enter into our 25th year of operation. Reflecting back on this past year, I am reminded that as an industry we are better together and we must continue to provide a united voice for animal welfare in Alberta.

AFAC is fortunate to have had the support of our members, partners, and government throughout this last quarter of a century. We were founded 25 years ago by the livestock industry and the continual support from these groups has been what's made AFAC the strong and effective organization it has become today.

AFAC continues to value the partnerships that have formed since we began. From the grass roots members such as producers, counties and MD's and ag societies to veterinary clinics, abattoirs, livestock transporters, exhibitions, colleges and universities and of course livestock associations and government – these relationships are the core of our success.



Advisory Council meetings continued this year and covered a range of relevant topics including communications, housing, and backyard/acreage livestock. These meetings bring together our members to discuss significant issues facing the livestock industry as a whole and fosters collaboration throughout the industry.

I would like to welcome our new Executive Director, Annemarie Pedersen, to the AFAC team. She brings with her a strong agricultural communications background, experience in the livestock sector and a commitment to agriculture advocacy that includes work developing the Beef Advocacy Canada program, long-standing volunteer work with Calgary Stampede and work on the McDonald's Sustainable Beef Pilot program.

As well, huge thanks are owed to staff, the Board, and contractors for meeting the challenges and changes of this past year head on. I am confident that AFAC is moving in a positive direction that will lead us strongly into the next 25 years and beyond.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Greg Bowie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Executive Director's Report

When you receive this report at the 2018 Livestock Care conference I will have completed my first quarter as executive director of AFAC – and what an incredible three months it has been.

As someone who has worked in agriculture communications for many years, joining the AFAC team as the Executive Director represented a new challenge for me. This challenge allows me to use the skills developed working for agencies, not-for-profits and everything in between, and it allows me to put my passion for bridging the divide between producers and the public to work.

AFAC's dual role of supporting animal care initiatives and aiding knowledge transfer to producers, and of informing the public about the continuous improvements in animal welfare by the livestock sector, is crucial to maintaining the social license needed in today's environment. Fake news, animal activism and an alarming mistrust of science are all challenges AFAC can help to address as one part of a united livestock sector in Alberta.

AFAC has the team in place to accomplish this work. I joined an organization that had been ably guided by a strong board of directors and a small-but-mighty staff; I am fortunate (as are all AFAC members) to have them. A huge thank you to Kristen Mortensen, Melissa Moggy and Sharron Johannesen for going above-and-beyond for several months last year. And welcome back to Kristen Hall who returned from maternity leave in December, and is the force behind the Livestock Care Conference and much of our outreach program.

We began the year with a renewed emphasis on communicating to our members – starting with monthly e-newsletters and communication through other channels such as the website and social media. My first priority was to meet with all of our commodity organization members and I hope to have completed that task by the time of our Conference. These meetings will continue, whether in person or by phone, as I welcome insights from the diverse group of individuals and organizations that share our commitment to the livestock sector and animal welfare. I encourage you, our members and stakeholders, to reach out to us and share your thoughts – I look forward to hearing from you.

The team will highlight their work of the past year with you on the following pages. The year ahead will be one of new beginnings, for all of us, as we start the work of developing a new three-year strategy for AFAC.

AFAC has been a collective voice for the livestock sector for 25 years – now is a great time to re-evaluate and decide what the next 25 years could look like. I am very excited to be part of the group of people who will develop that direction – and to build a planning process that will be as inclusive of our members' views as possible. I hope you will join us on this journey.



Financial Officer's Report

In December 2017, Alberta Farm Animal Care passed a notable milestone, its 25th Anniversary. 25 years as a not-for-profit organization serving Alberta's livestock and feather industries in support of responsible farm animal care. This a milestone on the path of an organization that has grown and evolved in its two and a half decades. In the grand scheme of things, AFAC has seen an evolution of social conscience, industry response and mindset of all those providing care to the animals that provide the myriad of products used and consumed in our daily lives. From an operational perspective, it has seen an evolution of strategic direction, governance, directors and staff, and adaptations to the changes occurring in the collective environments in which the organization operates, be it physical, fiscal or regulatory.



It has been 25 years in a landscape that is challenging to survive in, let alone thrive in. AFAC has seen the cost of review engagements go from hundreds of dollars to now thousands of dollars. AFAC continues to operate with a positive cash balance and a net financial position that is healthy enough to survive the challenges of “reimbursement” style funding of projects.

At the end of 2017, AFAC had 91 members in good standing, ranging from large industry associations that are committed to the mission and vision they helped create, to the smaller organizations, individuals, counties and businesses that show support for that mission and vision with their membership. Additionally, in 2017, AFAC received project funding support from Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, the Government of Alberta-Government of Canada's Growing Forward 2 program and; Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's AgriMarketing and Career Focus programs. As a believer in the philosophies that AFAC advocates, I greatly appreciate the support of members, contributors and funders. This support enables AFAC to strive to continue to attain the goals that have been set out for it and to ensure that the mission and vision is fulfilled in the years going forward. All of these members, contributors, funders and the network of people behind them should be proud of their contributions towards the vision that “all farm animals in Alberta are respected, well cared for and experience a high state of welfare.” In this fast-paced world, continuation of these efforts is expected to be even more important to the sustainability of the animal agriculture industry.

Recently, I encountered a motivational quote that suggested that if one changes nothing, then nothing changes. One's response to change is a conscious choice and sets a future path. I believe that AFAC's responses to the changes it has experienced have allowed it to endure and continue to be relevant beyond the foreseeable future. I hope you will take some time to review the financial statement. I believe it details strength, prudent financial management, and a commitment to best stewardship of the funds entrusted to AFAC.

May you, and all the animals in your care, experience the best possible 2018.

Insights

Two of Alberta Farm Animal Care's Strategic Plan goals are to support continual improvement in responsible, humane animal care, and to become a trusted, credible source for information on farm animal care and welfare. One way we pursue these goals is through our INSIGHTS e-publication.

Each INSIGHTS issue is a collection of three to four articles highlighting new animal care and welfare research. Research is a valuable tool for producers, but connecting producers with this information can be challenging. The ultimate goal of the INSIGHTS e-publication is to connect producers with research, changes and issues facing their industry. Armed with this knowledge producers can more effectively evaluate their operation's practices.

In 2017, we released two issues, in May and November. In May, our issue included articles on sow enrichment, raising calves in groups, layer hen housing, and measuring anticipatory behaviour in cows to understand positive emotions. In November, our issue included articles on the Canadian Feedlot Animal Care Assessment Program, assessing broiler gait, and a summary of four equine projects.

Researchers and graduate students are welcome to contribute articles at any time. If you think a research project should be highlighted in our INSIGHTS article, please contact the AFAC office.

The INSIGHTS Newsletter can be found online at www.afac.ab.ca/insights.

Insights

TOGETHER. SHAPING THE FUTURE.

Research drives change and continuous improvement in how livestock are cared for. In Canada we have a strong contingent of dedicated researchers, providing a multidisciplinary approach to livestock welfare research.

INSIGHTS provides information on livestock welfare and reports on research, initiatives and issues.

Advisory Council

AFAC Advisory Council sessions are held regularly throughout the year (typically every two- to three-months) with an aim to support discussion and debate about current issues, information sharing and idea generation. All Alberta Farm Animal Care members are encouraged to attend as these meetings also are intended to bring together AFAC stakeholders.

This past year, our Advisory Council meetings covered a wide variety of subjects. We started off the year with a meeting on housing, which encompassed short updates on housing changes and improvements happening throughout the industry.

Our second meeting covered the topic of communications and featured media guru, Grant Ainsley who led us through a full day of how to “tell our story”, working with the media, and building communications strategies. There was a fantastic group of people who attended and at the end of the day we came away from a productive discussion with direction for where AFAC’s communications strategy should be pointed.

Our last council meeting of 2017 was focused on the impact of backyard and acreage livestock. There was a variety of speakers along with a small producer panel which generated much discussion around topics like euthanasia and regulations for small vs. large scale producers.

We look forward to seeing our members at our 2018 Advisory Council meetings and welcome any suggestions for upcoming topics for the next year!



Credit: Laura Manson Photography



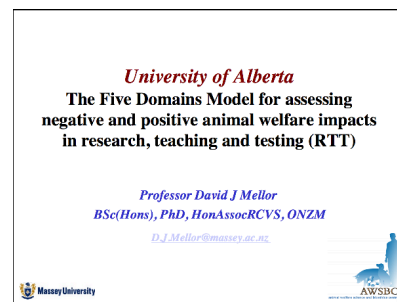
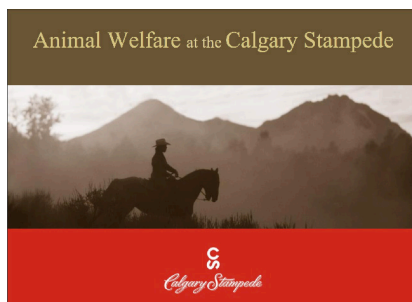
LCC 2017

The 2017 Livestock Care Conference was held in Leduc, Alberta on March 21-22. With a theme of “Pushing the envelope,” the long-standing conference was open to producers, industry and others with an interest in farm animal care. The conference delved into the latest progress, challenges and opportunities surrounding livestock care and welfare issues, with presentations by leading speakers highlighting an engaging and interactive format.

There was a great turnout at our Painful Procedures workshop with Dr. David Mellor on the first day where he covered how we think about pain, how we assess pain, and if painful procedures can be avoided. Next up, our Meet the Experts session brought together industry experts and students to ask questions, network, and hopefully learn a bit from each other! This was followed by the AFAC Annual General Meeting in the early evening, followed by a “Talking Posters” session featuring presentations from post-secondary agriculture students.

This year’s conference boasted a fantastic line up of speakers with Dr. Bernard Rollin and Dr. David Mellor kicking off the conference on the morning of the 22. We also heard from the Calgary Stampede on welfare concerns at the rodeo, learned how to talk to the public and consumers online from The Farmer’s Wife, took a look at animal welfare tradeoffs and consumer choices, we got an inside look at the day to day life of a chicken vet, and heard from Dr. Yolande Seddon on new thinking in pig care.

We can’t wait to see what next year’s conference brings and we hope to see everyone there!



All presentations are available on our website at www.afac.ab.ca/presentations



Awards of Distinction

The Alberta Farm Animal Care Awards of Distinction are a proud tradition started in 2001 to recognize individuals or groups for their exceptional contributions to livestock welfare. Every year, a call for nominations is heard throughout Alberta and an individual or group is chosen as a winner for each category, of which there are three, to represent Alberta's diligence and growth in livestock welfare.

Award of Distinction for Communication

The Communication award honours those that take an active role in effectively getting the message out about livestock issues. Recipients succeed in credibly informing the public and agri-food industry about farm animal care, building trust and confidence in the sector.

Alberta Beef Quality Starts Here (ABQSH) was presented with this award. ABQSH is a non-profit, industry supported organization that serves as the Alberta delivery agent for Verified Beef Production. They educate beef producers about best management practices and verify those practices at the farm level. ABQSH bridges the gap from on-farm practices to consumer confidence.



Award of Distinction for Leadership

The Leadership award honours those who integrate animal welfare into their core business strategy, setting their own bar higher for expectations regarding animal welfare.

Jackie Wepruk was presented with this award. She spent many years support AFAC's work through regular communication to producers, highlighting farm animal care information relevant to producers and others associated with the industry in Alberta and beyond. She now manages the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC), where she continually supports the industry's efforts to revise the Codes of Practice for all livestock sectors nationally.



Award of Distinction for Innovation

This award honours those who have developed a new process, product, or source of knowledge that has made a significant impact on improving the welfare of livestock and the industry.

Dr. Merle Olson was presented with this award. He has worked in research, development, and the commercialization of pharmaceutical products for the mitigation of pain and parasite control in livestock. Additionally, Dr. Olson has been involved in research assessing humane slaughter. Dr. Olson's commitment to improving livestock welfare throughout the animal's life is commendable.



Marketing and Membership Manager's Report

As I am sure some of you are aware, I spent the majority of 2017 off on maternity leave, with a return to the office on December 1. We welcomed a beautiful baby boy on January 14, 2017 along with a brand new beekeeping business shortly after that and although I wasn't physically at Alberta Farm Animal Care, a lot of my roles transitioned quite nicely.

Growing the AFAC family by attracting new members is always one of my big tasks, and I was successful in growing my personal family by one as well. A big welcome to all of those new members that came on in early 2017! I look forward to getting to know you, and can guarantee that your funds are going to a very valuable organization.

The ALERT Line- A 24/7 "Producers helping Producers" call line transitioned nicely into 1am diaper changes, 3 am bottles, and all in all a lack of sleep. Kristen Mortensen and I will be jointly taking over the task of ALERT Line Coordinator as of January 1, 2018.

My social media experience with AFAC allowed me to post far too many pictures of my baby and my bees on my own personal social media feeds. As I am a big 'bee'liever in education, I started a specific page just to talk about Beekeeping and all that goes into it.

As for giving presentations, that was still accomplished. As a 4-H leader, beekeeper and Mom, I always had somebody to talk to, even if they didn't necessarily respond. Bees are great listeners if you ever need hundreds of thousands of insects to hear you out!

Anyways, I am excited and newly motivated to return to work, and to continue to raise awareness about this organization. Upon my return I have jumped right into the planning process for our 2018 Livestock Care Conference on March 14 & 15 in Olds, Alberta. See you there!

As like my previous years, I am eager to see where 2018 will take this amazing organization, and I can't wait to resume right where I left off!



Communications Coordinator's Report

This past year brought a whole lot of change, very quickly. January started off my first year of full-time work with AFAC since I graduated from university. Left as the only Kristen in the office meant less confusing phone calls, but a whole lot more work! Luckily, over the summer we had fantastic summer students who helped to keep the office running smoothly. LCC came and went in a blur and the summer was packed full of my favourite things – farm visits and ag events!

Though there was much change throughout the year, the hard work and support that we had to keep the office running smoothly was truly inspiring. I couldn't be luckier to work with such amazing coworkers and to be supported by a dedicated and passionate board. Assuming the role of Office Manager for a few months really let me get a better understanding of the organization as a whole and if I could take away anything from this past year, it's that we are better together.

One of my favourite things is to be out at our booth talking to farmers, industry stakeholders, and the public because the feedback you get makes everything worth it. Working with people who actually believe in the organization, what we do, and improving farm animal care and welfare throughout the province, and country, is one of the highlights of my job.

So, I want to say a huge thank you to our members and the stakeholders that give us the funding and the licence to continue making impactful and meaningful changes in this industry. I'm not exaggerating when I say neither AFAC nor I could do what we do without your support.



Telling our Story

Telling our story is a phrase that has been used a lot in the industry lately – and we so often talk about the importance of getting your voice heard and having your side of the story told. Representation is so critical and over this last year at AFAC we have worked to help “tell the story” of farm life and farm animal care in Alberta.

We developed three new infographics over the summer that you can see below; one about hormone and antibiotic use, one that defines livestock care in general, and one busting some common ag myths. These were used at both public and industry events throughout the year and received great feedback! We released a new Heart of a Farmer featuring Alberta Milk staff member, Jodi Flaig, and her beef operation.

Our website has continued to be updated with new resources and this year we added a “Q & A” page with common questions about agricultural practices and a place to ask any questions that we haven’t covered and a blog!

[Check it out here](#)

OUR SOCIAL MEDIA SNAPSHOT



TWITTER

January 2017
1521 followers
January 2018
1693 followers

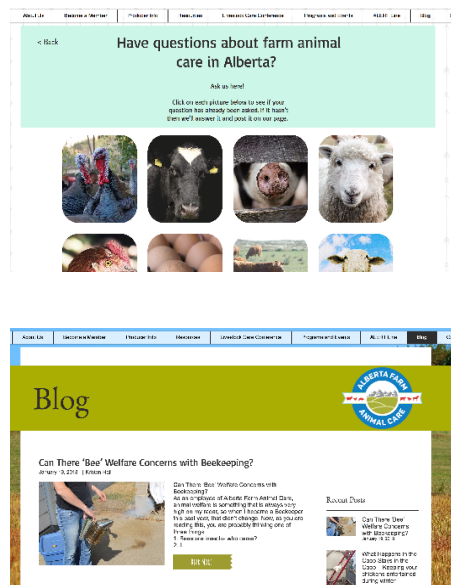
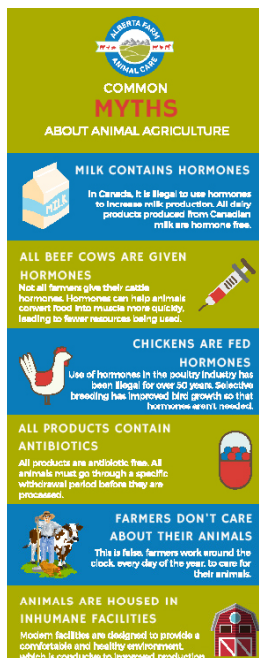
FACEBOOK

January 2017
1068 likes
January 2018
1260 likes



INSTAGRAM

Started June 20, 2017
259 followers



ALERT

The ALERT Line is an anonymous 1-800 line for producers, stakeholders and the general public to ask questions or report livestock welfare concerns.

It was a steady year for the ALERT Line in 2017. Our busiest months were **April, May, and July**.

There was a total of 45 cases: 17 beef, 22 horse, and one call each for dairy, poultry, donkey, goat, and other, aiding approximately 1749 animals. Of these only 17 needed to be referred to the SPCA and only four cases are outstanding.

We received 15 information calls: seven beef, five horse, and one each for laying hen, llama, and dairy. We also received four calls requesting the Livestock Emergency Handling Equipment Trailers.

We received a number of calls about livestock that were “at large”. For animals that are close to a major road or highway, the first call should be the RCMP as this becomes a human safety issue. If there isn’t an immediate human risk, contact Livestock Identification Services at (403) 509-2088.

Also common were calls concerning body condition score and lack of feed. Body condition scoring (BCS) can depend on the species of animal and even the time of year. See the chart below for a quick how-to guide on BCS for cattle.



When should you call the ALERT Line?

- If you think livestock are being neglected or are in distress
- If you have a question about livestock care or livestock care practices
- If you are in need of assistance or support in taking care of your own livestock
- If you need an Emergency Livestock Handling Equipment Trailer

Call 1-800-506-2273

BCS 1



BCS 1 – Emaciated

- All skeletal structures prominent and sharp to touch
- Minimal tissue cover over back bone, ribs, hooks, and pins
- No visible fat around tail head
- No muscle tissue visible

BCS 2



BCS 2 – Thin

- Vertebrae along topline are prominent, but not as sharp
- Visually identify individual ribs
- Muscle tissue is not abundant
- Some tissue cover around tail head, over hips and flank

BCS 3



BCS 3 – Ideal weight

- Hooks and pins slightly visible
- Good covering of muscle tissue
- Back bone is no longer visible
- Each side of tail head well filled but not rounded

BCS 4



BCS 4 – Overweight

- Can't feel individual vertebrae or ribs
- Fat cover around tail head evident on both sides with slight rounding
- Folds of fat beginning to develop over ribs and thurl (area over pelvis) area

BCS 5



BCS 5 – Obese

- Flat back
- Bone structure not noticeable
- Tail head and hips covered in fat
- Folds of fat apparent over ribs, thurl (area over pelvis), and thighs
- Tail head to pin area buried in fat

Emergency Livestock Handling Equipment Trailers

Awareness of the Emergency Trailers has grown this year along with the number of trailers in service. A big welcome to the newest trailer in the program that is based in Vauxhall and forms part of the MD of Taber Regional Fire Service. This brings the total number of Emergency Livestock Handling Equipment Trailers in Alberta to 17! This is really something that our province should be proud of.

Although this program has come a long way since it started, there is still room to improve, and we are still seeing instances where trailers were not called out to livestock emergencies. This is where we need everybody’s help in shining light on how crucial these trailers can be- especially when it comes to saving the lives of animals.

Contact AFAC if your county is interested in developing a trailer.

IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY

CALL 911

and request the

Emergency Livestock Handling Equipment Trailers

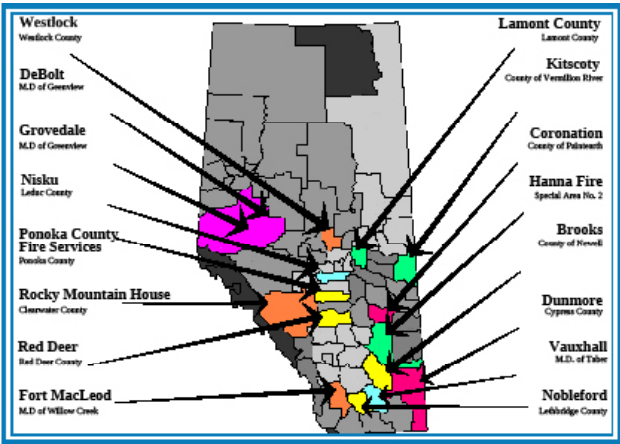
In the rare event that 911 cannot connect you to the Emergency Livestock Handling Equipment Trailers, please contact our ALERT Line at

1-800-506-2273

If you can't reach somebody at either number, flip card over





HOW WERE THE TRAILERS USED?

WHAT KINDS OF ANIMALS?



THE TRAILERS WERE IN ATTENDANCE AT THE FOLLOWING EVENTS IN 2017:

- Ranching Opportunities Conference
- Olds Young Farm Worker Training Workshop
- Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue Workshop- Operations & Awareness Level
- Ag Services Tour Lakeland College Training
- Medicine Hat Stampede
- Equine Conference
- Rate Payer BBQ's in MD of Greenview
- Vermilion Ag Society Fair
- Volunteer Fire Fighter Training(s)



SPCA SEIZURES



A big shout out to all of the passionate people who take the initiative to raise awareness of this program.

Alberta Farm Animal Care is always pleased to provide support by sending along promotional items, coordinating appearances and making presentations when needed.

Speaking to the Future

In 2017, we presented to post-secondary students at Olds College, Lethbridge College, Lakeland College, University of Alberta, and Grande Prairie Regional College on topics including an AFAC overview, animal welfare in general, and the animal welfare system in Alberta.

STUDENTS REACHED : 260

Increasing our connection with students is essential to strengthening the knowledge of the next generation of farmers and consumers. Sharing best practices and resources with the students that will be working directly with animals in the future, and informing the next generation of consumers, serves the entire industry. The students are taught the difference between animal welfare and animal rights, the five freedoms, and they learn about current issues that producers are facing.

This year, we focused on **transportation**, **pain mitigation**, and **housing systems**. We also taught the students about programs that AFAC offers and how they can be useful to them and how they can get involved in them! Students are always asking great questions and asking us to look at an issue from a different angle. They keep us on our toes and we wouldn't have it any other way. We welcome students to our Livestock Care Conference, as volunteers and as members!

Provincial Passport

In 2017, we attended several industry meetings and events. These events allow us to stay connected to our members and ensure that they are up-to-date on our activities. They also provide us with the opportunity to share animal care information with the Alberta livestock industry and increase the public's awareness of AFAC. These events included:

Wheatland County Agricultural Service Board Meeting
Meat Goat Seminar
Alberta Poultry Industry Emergency Preparedness Information Session
Technical Large Animal Emergency Response Training
AB Livestock Expo
Saddle Hills County Agricultural Service Board Meeting
Low-Stress Handling Workshop

SPCA/LIS/RCMP/AFAC Alberta Animal Protection Act Meetings
Group Sow Housing Seminar
Stockmanship Workshop
Agriculture and Forestry Meat Inspection Branch Industry Day
Ladies Calving Clinic
Canadian Centre for Food Integrity Public Trust Summit
Ponoka County Emergency Preparedness Meeting

Out and About

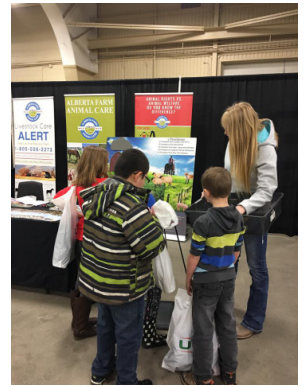
While you might think that summers here at AFAC slow down quite a bit, for some of us this is when everything really picks up. Between public and producer events, stampedes, fairs, and farm visits we really take advantage of the great driving weather and get out to as many places as we can!

At the Calgary Stampede we debuted our brand new kid's Five Freedoms game in the UFA Cattle Trail! We made the rounds at both Calgary and Lethbridge Aggie Days as well as Amazing Ag in Edmonton where we were able to engage with and teach kids about animal welfare in Alberta. We were also out at the Ardrossan Farm/Rural Safety Fair, Kayben Farm's Barn Babies event, City Slickers, Open Farm Days, and visited two schools through the Classroom Ag Program! We also had the opportunity to visit a variety of farms throughout Alberta to meet farmers learn about how they take care of their livestock.





Top: Jodi Flaig in her Heart of a Farmer video
Middle: Cassandra Kirkpatrick at Northlands
Bottom: Kristen Hall with her bees



Top: Marisa Moe and Kristen Mortensen at Lakeland College
Bottom: Aggie Day volunteer with thank you card from student
Right: Dana Stoyberg at Calgary Stampede booth

Top: Kristen M at Open Farm Days
Middle: Volunteer at Aggie Days
Bottom: Volunteers at Amazing Ag

Extension Coordinator's Report

2017 has been anything but dull for Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC), and it was no different for me! I've been AFAC's unofficial Extension Coordinator since December 2014, as a part-time sponsored student employee. I began this year, focused primarily on the Cattle Benchmarking Project, but half-way through the year I transitioned back into the Extension Coordinator position, this time officially. I also took on extra duties during our transition period between Executive Directors to keep AFAC activities running. During this year, AFAC has produced many resources based on industry demand.

This year I was able to attend several industry meetings and events to stay connected to members and ensure that members are up to date on AFAC activities. These events provide the opportunity for AFAC to share animal care information with the Alberta livestock industry and increase the public's awareness of AFAC. These events also allow us to keep current on issues affecting our industry and either learn strategies to manage these problems or brainstorm solutions with others in our industry. Thanks to Kristen Mortensen our blog is back up and running, and we can share more about what we learn at these great events!

This year, the Poultry Handling and Transportation project was completed, and the Urban Hen project is in its final stages. We also finished data collection and preliminary analysis of the Cattle Benchmarking Project. Goals from this project include published scientific papers and resources for producers and industry groups based on study results.

I was able to speak to producers, the public, and students at agricultural, public, and post-secondary events about AFAC and requested topics. I love speaking to the public about how producers raise their animals, and I love speaking to producers and students about the different strategies available to them to raise their animals. I'm the nerd that loves to read articles and do all that math and tell you what it all means. Just ask the question, and we'll figure it out!

We have some exciting projects being planned, and we are currently working on those project proposal. We hope to submit those applications in the new year.

I look forward to an incredible 2018 and welcome Annemarie to the team!



Cattle Benchmarking Project

The goal of AFAC's compromised cattle benchmarking project was to observe cattle arriving at auction markets and abattoirs throughout Alberta and catalog the incidence and type of compromised conditions observed upon arrival at these locations. The project was supported by, Alberta Beef Producers, Alberta Milk and Alberta Cattle Feeders Association in consultation with a large expert panel.



This year we completed the site visits for the Benchmarking project. Information was also collected regarding disposal, and associated factors such as trip distance and weather. This project runs until spring 2018, and AFAC is now focused on summarizing the data to understand how often animals that would be considered compromised arrive at different facilities, and to identify possible risk factors associated with cattle arriving in a compromised condition.

It is very exciting to see this project draw to a successful close, as it is a notable example of how a diverse team can come together to address an industry research need. The members of the project's advisory team include producer group representatives, researchers, and industry professionals all keen on better understanding the condition of cattle arriving to central collection points in Alberta. AFAC is proud to have been able to bring these groups together, as well as secure additional funding through the Assurance Systems stream of the AgriMarketing program under Growing Forward 2, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.

We were able to enrol 20 sites to voluntarily support this project by allowing the research team to observe cattle arriving to their facility. The final products will be robust, factual reports for the cattle industry and scientific publications. It also provides the opportunity to recognize any issues of concern as an industry, and work towards improvements.

The findings of this project will be provided to stakeholders in the form of a report with recommendations following completion of the project. The key findings and learnings from this project will also guide AFAC's future activities, including resources available to interested parties.

This information is important as we can now credibly report that the arrival of compromised or unfit cattle is very rare. Overall, the results are quite positive and the overwhelming majority of cattle arriving to auctions and abattoirs are fit to withstand transport.



Poultry Handling and Transportation

Updates to the Health of Animals Act will soon require that each person involved in, and responsible for, transporting livestock must be trained to knowhow to prepare, load, and monitor birds, as well as understand how driving affects birds during transport. Training must include knowledge of the animals' needs; normal and abnormal behaviour; signs of discomfort, stress, or suffering; humane handling and transport; the carrier's contingency plan; and the risks associated with the transportation of animals as well as how to mitigate these risks. As part of the Poultry Handling and Transportation Project, AFAC offered training during the spring to meet the new regulation expected to be passed in 2018.

Alberta Farm Animal Care hosted five Poultry Handling and Transportation workshops throughout southern Alberta. These workshops were given to mainly poultry transporters and handlers of broilers, layers, and turkeys. A manual was created by AFAC that was based off of an Ontario poultry handling and transportation manual.

Workshops and manuals are available upon request, as certification regulations change in 2018.



Urban Hens

In recent years, there has been increased interest from individuals and communities on keeping backyard chickens. Several communities across Alberta currently allow residents to raise backyard chickens or are considering amending their bylaws to allow it. Residents may be interested in keeping chickens for various reasons including for fresh eggs, as an educational opportunity for children, compost, pest control, or the desire to know more about how their food is produced.

Our Urban Hen project took flight over the summer with a “Fowl: Your Feathered Friends” manual and an evening workshop series. A video series for potential backyard chicken owners was created and consists of 10 videos that cover topics from cost to euthanasia. These videos are available on the AFAC website.





URBAN HENS

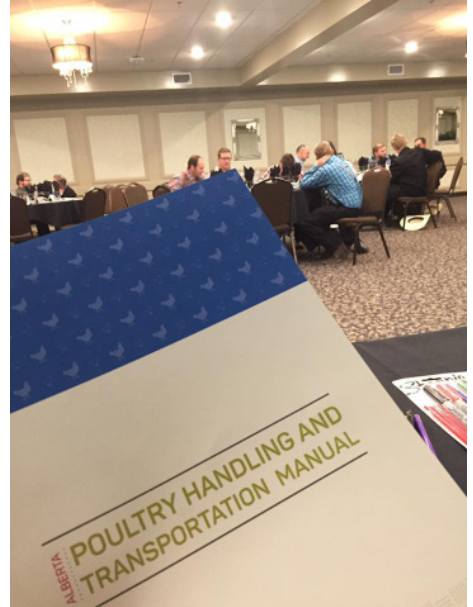


Three backyard chicken and small flock care workshops were delivered to towns in southern Alberta



90 people attended the workshops

Over 500 towns and cities in North America currently allow backyard chickens



AFAC Members

Thank you to our 2017 members for your support of animal welfare and the Alberta livestock industry.

Commodity

Alberta Beef Producers
Alberta Chicken Producers
Alberta Goat Association
Alberta Hatching Egg Producers
Alberta Lamb Producers
Alberta Milk
Alberta Pork
Egg Farmers of Alberta

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University of Alberta
Western Stock Growers Association



Bronze

Alberta Auction Markets Association
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Alberta Equestrian Federation
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County of Two Hills
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Edmonton Northlands
Exhibition Park Lethbridge
Farm Animal Care Associates
Feeder Association of Alberta
Feedlot Health Management Services

Flagstaff County
Gateway Livestock
Grande Prairie Regional College - Fairview Campus
Leduc County
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Sturgeon County
Sunterra Meats/Sunterra Farms
Verdant Valley Ag Society
Walbern Agri Systems (1991) Ltd.
Western Hog Exchange
Wheatland County

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Thank you to the AFAC members, supporters, Board, contractors, and staff for ensuring the success of our organization!

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