



Media Release

Animal care champions recognized with AFAC Awards of Distinction

Awards presented at virtual Livestock Care Conference “LCC 2.0”

March 23, 2020

Calgary, ALBERTA — Bright lights of progress in the midst of challenging times were highlighted as several champions of farm animal care in Alberta were recognized with Awards of Distinction at the recent Livestock Care Conference, hosted by Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC), March 19.

With a theme of “Raising the Bar” this leading animal care conference, re-structured for 2020 as a virtual event “LCC 2.0” in light of COVID-19, featured a speaker series and interactive features along with the annual presentation of these prestigious awards. The AFAC Awards of Distinction recognize individuals or groups who have made exceptional contributions in the field of livestock welfare, with awards in three categories: communication, leadership and innovation.

“Each of the 2020 Award of Distinction recipients serve as outstanding examples for our industry,” says Annemarie Pedersen, Executive Director of AFAC. “They have made strong contribution to animal care and we are very pleased to recognize their accomplishments. Congratulations to our award winners.”

The Award of Distinction for Communication was awarded to Barbara Duckworth of the Western Producer. Duckworth joined the Western Producer editorial team in 1988 and has focused primarily on livestock coverage for the past 32 years, including reporting on developments in animal care. Known for her professionalism, integrity and devotion to informing Canadian farmers and ranchers on a broad range of important livestock issues and developments, she is a recognized and respected figure at the provincial, national and international levels.

“As Barbara’s colleague, I have always relied on her integrity and honesty in the field of journalism in general and livestock-related reporting in particular,” says Barb Glen, Livestock Editor of the Western Producer. “With her extensive contributions to the livestock industry including coverage of animal care she is a very deserving recipient of this award.”

The Award of Distinction for Industry leadership was awarded to Rich Vesta, CEO of Harmony

Beef, who since the inception of the company 10 years ago has emphasized and focused on good animal handling practices exceeding industry standards.

“In all meetings Rich always talks about how we must respect the animals that feed us and that we must treat them with dignity and respect – this is entrenched in Harmony Beef GMPs,” says Cam Daniels, Director of Marketing, Harmony Beef. “There is no question he is deserving of this recognition with the committed and dedicated work that he has done integrating animal care in building and operating the Harmony Beef facility.”

The Award of Distinction for Innovation was awarded to Gateway Carriers, for their efforts in livestock transport innovation to take animal care-friendly hauling to the next level. This Taber, Alberta, based company working with industry partner Wilson trailers succeeded in developing a unique self-contained electric powered liftable doghouse for livestock trailer use.

This innovation for use with cattle allows for much greater back clearance giving room for tall breed cattle, which eliminates humane transport issues and associated reduced grading costs due to back rubbing. Relocating the loading ramp for access to the top deck has also eliminated a rub point for tall cattle in the belly of the trailer. “We currently have 10 of these units in our fleet,” says Currie, Manager of Logistics at Gateway Carriers. “We are thankful to everyone who worked on this innovation including Wilson trailers who were eager to step up to the challenge.”

More information of the AFAC Awards of Distinction and the Livestock Care Conference is available at www.afac.ab.ca

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[About AFAC](#)

Alberta Farm Animal Care works to ensure farm animals in Alberta are respected, well-cared for and experience a high state of welfare through collaboration with and support of our members. For more information go to www.afac.ab.ca