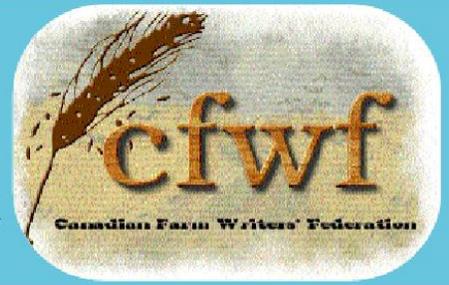


The Farm Journalist

NEWSLETTER OF THE CANADIAN FARM WRITERS' FEDERATION

[HTTP://WWW.CFWE.CA/](http://www.cfwf.ca/)



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May 2012

CFWF's first webinar: Social Media Strategy

By Teresa Falk, AFWA

Approximately 40 farm writers and communicators from across Canada met online to learn more about social media strategy in the first Canadian Farm Writers Federation (CFWF) professional development webinar on Thursday, April 26, 2012. While most of us in attendance were familiar with the basics of social media we wanted to delve deeper. Chuck Zimmerman (@AgriBlogger) with Zimm Comm New Media (<http://zimmcomm.biz/>) in Missouri led an interesting and informative discussion on social media strategy.

Zimmerman began by stressing the importance of developing a social media policy and setting goals. Determine what you're trying to accomplish and how you will measure your success. Other important questions to consider are: Will you utilize staff or outsource? Will you blog or not blog? Which social media tools will you use? What frequency will you post/tweet?

Zimmerman says it's important to post and/or tweet regularly. He thinks you cannot tweet too much because most of your followers won't see the majority of your tweets. And don't use Twitter only as a sales tool, but rather tweet other related news and encourage engagement. If you want to stand out on Twitter, you have to post quality content and post frequently.

Zimmerman also notes that if you don't have enough resources and time to utilize all social media tools, pick one and do it well. He says Twitter is a good choice for most businesses.

Measuring your social media success is also critical, says Zimmerman. Various free and subscription-based services are available to help you evaluate your social media efforts. Free tools include Google Analytics, Facebook Insights, Klout and Hootsuite. Spiral16 and Radian6 are two paid subscription-based services. Through these tools you will have access to detailed information and numbers. But all these numbers will

mean nothing if you don't set goals first.

It's also important to note that your followers and fans will not grow overnight, says Zimmerman. It takes time to develop relationships. And ideally you want people to recommend you through positive word of mouth. If you do need some help building your fan base, contests are a great way to do this.

As Zimmerman says, the social media conversation will happen with or without you. Join the conversation!

Upcoming Webinars

The Craft of Writing

with Diane Goski

Thursday May 24 at 3:00pm EDT

Adding Value to your Stories through Photography

with William DeKay

Mid-June, date TBD

If you are interested in attending either of these seminars, please email office@cfwf.ca for more information.

All webinars are free of charge and last for a duration of one hour.

Thank you to Farm Credit Canada for donating their webinar services to us.

News from the Secretariat

CFWF is in the midst of going online, in more ways than one. Yes, we've always had a website, but we're now making it more interactive for members. We're also running a series of webinars, as you see on the front page. All this is part of the effort to connect CFWF members from coast to coast.

E-newsletter

You may have already noticed as part of going online, along with our quarterly Farm Journalist we are providing a monthly e-newsletter. This provides quick snippets and updates about deadlines and events. If you have news you would like to share, deadline for submission is the second Friday of every month. You can submit snippets to office@cfwf.ca.

Website

Stay tuned for the new website which will be updated regularly with regional and national events as well as secretarial news. The new site will be live as of June 4.

Awards

With the new website, we will also release the new awards program online. You can now submit and pay for your entries all online. The process is quick, efficient and saves both paper and postage for members and the secretariat alike! We will begin taking submissions on June 4, 2012 and the deadline will be June 25. Mark it in your calendars!

Webinars

Finally, as you've heard and

some may have already participated in, CFWF is offering a series of spring webinars. The first webinar was a major success and we expect a similar turnout for the next two. We hope to also run sessions this fall, so if you have speaker or topic suggestions, please send them to office@cfwf.ca. These webinars are free and last one hour. If you are unable to attend, we plan on recording the sessions so you can catch up later.

2012 Annual Conference

Registration for the 2012 Annual Conference, "Mud, suds and floods" in Winnipeg, Man. is now open. The event will be September 20-23. To register, find out about tours and deadlines, go to www.cfwf2012.com

Early bird deadline closes June 30, 2012.



Behind the scenes of the first webinar—Christina Franc's ready to roll with notes, headset, and of course, a working computer.

We're still growing!

By Allison Finnamore, ACFWA President

The Atlantic Canada Farm Writers' are officially online with our own website: www.AtlanticFarmWriters.ca. Check us out, link to us and watch for updates... as we're still kind of young. The website will soon have past editions of our newsletter posted, as well as upcoming events and news. Gwyn Bellefontaine and Kim Waalderbos co-ordinated the website with the help of the expertise of ECFWA's Kyle Maw.

Our annual meeting will be June 14 and 15 in the Fredericton, N.B. area. Kim Waalderbos has cooked up an awesome apples, dairy, potato, greenhouse tour for us during the meeting, along with some great meal stops. We continue to work on growth, so if you have contacts in Atlantic Canada, especially the Fredericton area, who are potential members, please help us reach out them.

2012 SFWA Spring Tour and PD Seminar

By Lisa Guenther, SFWA

Saturday, June 16th
Saskatoon, SK

The tour will start with a behind-the-scenes look at the small and large animal clinics at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan.

Then it is off to Rosthern---a 45 minute ride north of Saskatoon to visit the Horizon Pet Nutrition plant. It uses locally grown products to make premium dog and cat food.

Our lunch will be served at the Station Centre Arts and Tea Room in Rosthern. Tasty soups, salads and sandwiches are on the menu. There is also a small art gallery.

We will cap off the tour portion at the Art Pruiim farm near Osler. Art has a large dairy operation and recently embarked on a new business by adding 10,000 chickens.

There will be two professional development seminars----one in the morning and the other at the end of the day. Photographer Roberta Wells will give an overview of how to frame and capture good images. Monica Krueger, President of Global InfoBrokers, will have a 30 minute presentation on "How to Start Your Own Business" during the beer and burger session at the end of the day.

The registration fee for a SFWA member is \$50. The registration fee for a non-SFWA member is \$100 (includes annual membership). To register, please contact Marlene Hursh before May 31st.

AFWA AGM

By Janet Kanters, AFWA

AFWA members joined CAMA Alberta for a Lunch & Learn session on Tuesday, Apr. 24 in Calgary. Janisse Routledge, Regulatory and Government Affairs Associate with Dow AgroSciences and western representative for Crop Life Canada, presented highlights from a recent Crop Life report: 'Cultivating a Vibrant Canadian Economy'.

Congratulations to AFWA/CFWF member Alexis Kienlen who was one of 10 young journalists from around the world chosen for the 2012 Young Leaders award. The award allows Alexis to attend the 2012 IFAJ Congress in Sweden this August.

The 2012 AFWA Tour and AGM will be held June 7-8 in the Drayton Valley area. Tour stops being planned including the Cynthia Solar Aquatics Water Reclamation System, Pembina Provincial Grazing Reserve, 100km Kitchen Company, Breton Plots, Premier Tech Horticulture, and Em-Te Town. CFWF members from around the country are welcome to join our tour and AGM! If you are in Alberta during that time and would like to join us, contact Janet Kanters, janetkanters@gmail.com, and she will provide you all the information you need.

<p>The AFWA executive for 2012 is: President: Mary MacArthur Vice President: Megan Oleksyn Sec/Treas: Janet Kanters Website: Madeleine Baerg Directors: Ivor Bernatsky, Karlee Conway, Will Verboven</p>

ECFWA AGM mixes business with whiskey

By Claire Cowan, ECFWA



April saw farm writers gather in Collingwood for the Annual General Meeting of the Eastern Canadian Farm Writers Association. The new location for this year's meeting was chosen for its proximity to the Canada Mist distillery where they make Canada's newest whiskey, named for its home town of Collingwood.

Business meeting

A bus from Guelph transported members to the location and many others joined on their own. The meeting began with business with reports presented from the President, Secretary-Treasurer and Newsletter Editor. Also within the business portion of the meeting was a presentation by Kathie MacDonald, winner of the ECFWA bursary to attend the IFAC congress in 2011. Kathie was very involved in the planning and execution of the congress and was an excellent representative of ECFWA at an international level sharing her activities through stories in the Nib and Twitter.

The 2012-2013 board of directors (full list available at

www.ecfwa.ca) was elected and special thanks were given to two retiring directors. Kelly Daynard has played an integral role to the ECFWA always engaged and providing excellent direction and support for our activities. Although she still holds the position of Past President, a new constitution change provided her to step down from her official position on the board of directors. She will be missed but we're confident that she'll still be involved and act as a great resource for the current board of directors.

Also stepping down from his role as Secretary-Treasurer, Andrew Campbell was recognized for his hard work over the years on behalf of Eastern Canadian farm writers. He made the decision to step away from his official role on the board to have some more time for his growing family. His dedication will be missed and we wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

Grain market development

With the business wrapped up, the farm writers in attendance heard from Nicole Mackellar of Grain Farmers of Ontario. Nicole provided an informative talk on the growing

market opportunities for Ontario corn, soybeans and wheat.

Ontario growers produce 5.5 million tonnes of corn, 2.3 million tonnes of soybeans and 1.5 million tonnes of wheat. With growing yields, there are a lot of marketing opportunities for our crops within the province and in export markets.

One such market is the food grade and identity preserved non-GM market for Ontario soybeans. Of all soybeans grown in the province, 35 percent fit into this market niche and serve the needs of Japan, the Netherlands, China and Malaysia. Our products are also making headways in countries like Thailand, Taiwan, Vietnam and South Korea where exports have risen over the years.

Within these markets, Canadian farmers have a reputation for producing high quality soybeans that are perfect for soy beverage, miso and tofu production.

To build on this reputation and expand our market share in these areas Grain Farmers of Ontario is involved with a number of market development initiatives including on-farm research and trade missions that connect farmers with end users.

Taste testing

Another market opportunity for Ontario grain is the reason the AGM was held in Collingwood. The recent launch of Collingwood whisky by the Canadian Mist distillery shows a great use of Ontario corn. Similar to nearly all Canadian rye whiskies, Collingwood is made with a blend of corn whisky and rye whisky.

Farm writers had a unique opportunity to tour the distillery where we experienced the many steps involved in making a very unique product that is revered around the world. Fortunately, the tour ended with a chance to taste Canada's newest whisky.

Andy Sirski made lifetime member

By Maureen Fitzhenry, MFWBA

Manitoba Farm Writers and Broadcasters Association awarded former *Grainews* editor Andy Sirski with a lifetime membership.

“I’m extremely honored to receive the life membership award from the MFWBA. It does seem a little strange to receive an award for doing something I enjoyed so much,” Sirski says. “I’m grateful to (former *Grainews* editor) John Clark for teaching me how to write clearly and for the *Grainews* administration for giving me the opportunity to work for and with farmers for 26 years. I encourage young people to get a degree or diploma in agriculture. The industry is blooming and offers many opportunities for people with the right set of skills and attitude.”

Jay Whetter made the presentation during a luncheon meeting in Winnipeg March 22.

“It is my pleasure to present this award to Andy because he gave me my first full time farm writing job,” Whetter said. Whetter had been working with Golden West Broadcasting as their Manitoba agriculture reporter when Sirski called him in 1998 to offer him a job with *Country Guide*. As well as being *Grainews* editor at that time, Sirski was also editorial director for all of Farm Business Communications, which included *Country Guide*.

Sirski’s farm writing career began in 1970. He was working with Manitoba Agriculture in *Vita*, and started a column for *The Steinbach Carillon*. The topic was “Farming in the district,” and as Sirski says, it was like a PR campaign for the department and his chance to show in print how much he cared about farmers.

Then, from the mid to late ‘70s, he worked with the federal-provincial Small Farm Development Program. He says those five years were a great opportunity to learn more on the business side of farming, which he used a lot in his writing for *Grainews*. Sirski joined *Grainews* in 1979 as managing editor, working with editor John Clark.

In 1993, he developed his “5-legged stool idea,” which is an overall financial plan. “The idea works for anyone, but for farmers it includes the farm, another skill, proper insurance for the time in a person’s life, money set aside for education for children, and learning how to make money with stocks,” Sirski says. “It’s a teachable concept or strategy that has helped many farm families and their children plan their financial path in life and put it to work.”

Through his farm writing career, Sirski always promoted two compounding principles: “One is the magic of compound interest, which makes money grow faster and faster as it grows over time. The other is the magic of compound knowledge, which says the more a person learns the easier it is to learn more,” he says.

He also developed the concept of “needs and wants” in life. “If a person or family firmly grasps and merges these simple concepts, they can have a nice life, manage their finances so their mind is free to be creative with their family and career, and build wealth so they don’t have to rely on the government,” he says.

Sirski became editor of *Grainews* in 1996, at the same time he became editorial director of Farm Business Communications. He retired in 2006.

He says the most rewarding part of his career was working closely with and for farmers. “I admire their courage and managerial ability, and I feel honored to work for them,” he says. “I’m also extremely proud of the people I hired over the years. I believe all of them are still in the agricultural industry and working in communications.

Sirski continues to write a column on Off-Farm Investing for *Grainews*, and has his own investing newsletter called “StocksTalk”. He lives in Winnipeg.



Andy’s five tips to good writing

Andy shared these five tips with all new writers at FBC during his 10 years as editorial director and editor of *Grainews*. The first three came from John Clark, previous *Grainews* editor. Andy added the last two.

1. Use active verbs
2. Vary the length of sentences from 10 to 28 words, aiming for an average of 20.
3. Use shorter words that everyone can understand.
4. Read an article out loud to see how readers will respond.
5. Make it interesting.

Join IFAJ/Agriterra 2012 Exposure-4-development Kenya media tour!

IFAJ and Agriterra are proud to offer 15 IFAJ journalists the opportunity to have a first-hand look at farm issues in the developing world. By organizing a 6-day tour for a group of select journalists to Kenya, our aim is to enable you to take a look beyond the images of hunger and poverty in Africa to explore a vibrant continent full of initiatives and business opportunities to boost agricultural production and economic development.

The theme of the tour is inspired by the UN International Year of Cooperatives (IYC). The IYC will give the tour a specific focus by concentrating on the difference that agricultural cooperatives can make in developing countries.

What will the program look like?

You will travel to Nairobi, Kenya, to meet up with colleagues and with local experts who will take you to hotspots where fighting poverty is real and ongoing, where farmer-led initiatives are developed to improve the economic position of farmers. In the provisional program, excursions and stops will include:

- dairy cooperatives and dairy farmers, milk processing companies and a semen/AI station
- rose growers serving the export market
- vegetables and fruit, both small holders and cooperative processors
- tobacco - visits to plants and processors
- local markets
- coffee or tea cooperatives
- interview with minister of cooperatives or other government representatives
- meeting with Kenyan agricultural journalists
- savings and credit cooperatives and other financial institutions for small holders
- several wonderful and unforgettable spots in the Kenyan countryside

And what's more: thanks to our sponsors **it's free!** IFAJ can offer 15 members a seat on the Exposure-4-Development tour, you only have to take care of your own travel expenses to Nairobi. All excursions, hotels, meals, and transport costs will be covered.

The tour is organized/coordinated by Agriterra on behalf of IFAJ, drawing on Agriterra's extensive network of contacts in Africa.

Arrival: Sunday 4 November - Arrive at hotel in Nairobi

Departure: Saturday 10 November - End of program

Professional obligations

Those journalists who take part in the tour will share their experiences in oral, written, powerpoint or other media, with their own agricultural journalists guild and the IFAJ and Agriterra through newsletter or web articles. This is a separate commitment from your professional role in writing/broadcasting stories with your audience.

Selection of the journalists

There is room for 15 journalists on the media tour. This means that there are tight selection criteria. The IFAJ has installed a committee to do the selection, consisting of:

- Agriterra, the organizing organization, represented by the manager on farmer-led businesses Cees van Rij
- Wageningen University, sub-department communication science (representative to be confirmed)
- IFAJ, represented by an observer/auditor who will not apply for the tour himself

In order to be transparent, a point system will be used for the selection criteria. These criteria are agreed upon by the IFAJ Executive committee and will be followed by the selection committee. Both the application form and the selection criteria are attached to this invitation.

Journalists who wish to apply for a seat on the tour must send their application to their guild. Each guild can select as many as three applications to forward to the global selection process. If applications are received from more than 15 countries, the committee will try to ensure that there is no more than one journalist from each country on the tour.

How to enter

As a CFWF member, to enter, please submit:

- A completed [application form](#)
- Three samples of your work
- A letter from your editor or supervisor stating you'll be allowed to attend if chosen and send to Canada's IFAJ representative Allison Finnamore at allison@finnamore.ca by **June 1**.