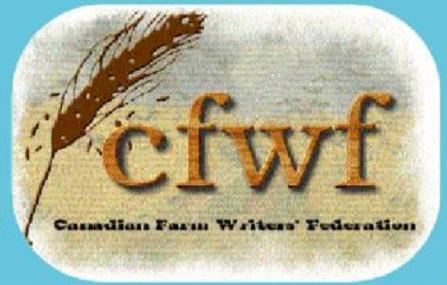


# The Farm Journalist

NEWSLETTER OF THE CANADIAN FARM WRITERS' FEDERATION

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



Editor: Connie Duivenvoorden, 12330 24 Avenue, Surrey, BC V4A 5P4  
Phone 604-541-3964, Email: [agrofare@telus.net](mailto:agrofare@telus.net)  
Layout: Christina Franc, [office@cfwf.ca](mailto:office@cfwf.ca)

April 2010

## Students branch into broadcast with SPARK\*AIR

By Matt Hawes



University of Guelph (Ridgetown campus) viniculture researcher John Zandstra talks to SPARK\*AIR report Katelyn Peer.

A student-based broadcast initiative underway at the University of Guelph, called SPARK\*AIR, is teaming up with agricultural portal farms.com to reach new audiences.

SPARK\*AIR is the “broadcast arm” of SPARK, an initiative that gives students an opportunity to write and report on research at the university. SPARK has been a source of many new CFWF members. For the past 20 years, SPARK has written and produced the university’s *Research* magazine and provided numerous stories

for commodity publications—with CFWF members at the helm—including *the Milk Producer*, *Ontario Hog Farmer* and *Greenhouse Canada*.

Now, SPARK is teaming up with farms.com to provide videos on a wide array of agricultural research topics. Farms.com offers value-added, technology-enabled information and services to global agriculture and food industry customers.

“SPARK\*AIR has a lot of growth potential,” says farms.com’s interactive media manager Andrew Campbell. “Farmers using online video is

in its infancy and will only become more powerful in the coming years.”

Campbell and SPARK first connected when he was the farm reporter for CKNX radio in Wingham, Ontario. He worked with SPARK director Owen Roberts and SPARK participant Arthur Churchyard to develop three-minute radio news features about University of Guelph agricultural research. When Campbell went on to farms.com, he and Roberts developed the SPARK\*AIR video concept, with support from the partnership between the University and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. It sponsors more than \$70 million worth of agricultural research every year at the University.

The office which administers the partnership, led by Rich Moccia, Associate Vice President (Research) Agri-Food and Partnerships, University of Guelph, got behind the development of a video prototype. With that support, the first SPARK\*AIR video aired on farms.com July 6, 2009. Since then, 17 more videos have been

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

showcased on the site, and “season two” was announced in February. That means SPARK will deliver videos to farms.com through 2010.

Along with producing videos for farms.com, SPARK\*AIR has also created a new partnership with cable network Rogers First Local in

Guelph. Rogers First Local will be airing bi-weekly video news stories that cover new research at the University of Guelph.

As well, CKNX Radio will continue to air SPARK stories through live and online radio.

SPARK and SPARK\*AIR will expand on their recent success with the release of a new *Research* magazine. Articles

that will be complemented with short videos provided by SPARK\*AIR. Check the University of Guelph research website

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/research/> for more details.



## Nuffield Scholarship accepting applications

If you're enthusiastic and want to focus your energy on a specific topic in agriculture, land management, horticulture or the food chain, then you should apply for the Nuffield Farming Scholarship Trust.

Three scholarships of \$15,000 will be awarded for 2011.

Applicants are judged based on the greatest potential of the individual to create value for themselves, their industries and their communities. The scholarships are awarded to those with a strong vision, enthusiasm and determination.

Scholars are given the opportunity to travel the world studying their topic of interest, offering them a global perspective on the topic.

Karen Daynard, ECFWA, was one of the 2008 recipients.

For more information, qualification requirements and the application form, go to [www.nuffield.ca](http://www.nuffield.ca). Deadline for submissions is April 30, 2010.



Experience New World Agriculture

Check out the new IFAJ group page on Facebook

Become a member to receive news, updates and information on IFAJ 2011

<http://www.facebook.com/search/?q=IFAJ&init=quick#!/group.php?gid=314548281281&ref=ts>

## Ag writer earns two awards in North American competition

A London, Ontario writer placed in two categories of this year's North American Agricultural Journalists writing competition. Mary Baxter earned second in the competition's special projects category and third in the competition's feature category. She was the sole Canadian to place in either category.

The articles recognized were "Women's changing role on the farm" (special projects) and "Road salt: The silent enemy" (feature). Both articles appeared in *Better Farming* magazine.

Baxter is a field editor with *Better Farming*, the largest circulation farm publication in Ontario. Her article, "Women's changing role on the farm" also received the Dick Beamish silver award for press feature at the 2009 Canadian Farm Writers' Federation awards competition.

North American Agricultural Journalists is a professional, international group of agricultural editors and writers with a membership spanning the United States and Canada. Formerly the Newspaper Farm Editors of America, and then the National Association of Agricultural Journalists, it was organized in 1952 to promote the highest ideals of journalism and agricultural coverage.

Contest winners will be recognized at the organization's annual meeting in Washington in April.

Results will be posted on the organization's website at <http://www.naaj.net/>

*"She was the sole Canadian to place in either category"*



*Mary Baxter places in two categories at the NAAJ writing competition*

# ECFWA Update – March 2010

By Kelly Daynard, ECFWA President

## Twitter Techniques Webinar

**D**ue to the wonders of the internet, ECFWA members in several provinces – led by a facilitator in Indiana - participated in a Twitter Techniques webinar on February 23.

For many years, the ECFWA Board of Directors has worked at finding ways of providing programming for all of its members – a challenge given that its membership spans five different provinces.

The webinar was led by Michele Payn-Knoper who created #AgChat in April 2009. AgChat is a weekly streaming conversation that now draws 1,000 to 1,500 international tweets over two hours about the business of raising food, fuel, feed and fibre. Michele shared her experiences, insight from her work in the social media world and what she’s learned, first hand, in building a network that garnered her a nomination as one of Mashable’s Top Five Twitter users of the year.

More than 20 ECFWA members – and several non-members— participated in the webinar as a group from a central location in Guelph. Other participants in eastern Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick joined from their home or office computers. In total, about half of the 40 participants were new to Twitter while the others had varying levels of experience.

(Continued on page 5)



Guelph participants in a February Twitter Techniques workshop are shown / following the webinar. Photo by Jim Romahn

***“Activists use Twitter and on how ECFWA members can attract clients or drive traffic to their websites through the newest social media site.”***

## IFAJ Alltech Young Leader Award

The International Federation of Agricultural Journalists announced the winners of this year's Alltech young leader awards. Ten journalists from around the world have received an award to attend the 2010 IFAJ Congress in Belgium.

Lilian Schaer, member of the Canadian Farm Writers' Federation was one of the ten selected to attend.

Schaer will receive 1,000 Euros to go towards her participation in the congress. The award is meant to recognize the leadership potential of young members of IFAJ.



(Continued from page 4)

Discussion throughout the 90-minute workshop focused on understanding Twitter terminology, how to build a Twitter community of followers and how to eliminate clutter by finding effective Twitter management tools.

In response to a question from the audience, Michele recommended spending about 15 minutes per day managing one's Twitter account and she answered numerous questions on how activists use Twitter and on how ECFWA members can attract clients or drive traffic to their websites through the newest social media site.

This is the second social media session that the ECFWA has organized. A new-media session in February of 2008 attracted a record number of participants to one of the organization's annual professional development workshops.

The ECFWA has launched its own Twitter account at @ecfwa

## 2010 ECFWA Annual Meeting

The 2010 ECFWA annual meeting, planned for Thursday, April 29, will highlight the unique farming operations found in the Holland Marsh. To quote directly from the Holland Marsh Gold website, it is "Canada's very own 'salad bowl'." The community of some 125 farms, farmers and farm families - located just 40 kilometres north of Toronto - has for decades been considered a crown jewel of agricultural production.

Members will congregate for the association's annual business meeting from 10 to 11:30 a.m. in Bradford, followed by an overview of the farming in the area by Jamie Reaume, Executive Director of

the Holland Marsh Growers' Association and an ECFWA member.

Following lunch, members are invited to tour Carron Farms with farm owner Jason Verkaik. The Verkaik family has been farming in the Holland Marsh since 1934. They grow a wide variety of produce and also have a state of the art onion curing and storing facility as well as a carrot storing and packaging facility.

There is no cost for members to attend the AGM. Non members pay \$50 to attend - and receive a year's membership in the ECFWA.

More details on the event can be found on the ECFWA website at [www.ecfwa.ca](http://www.ecfwa.ca)

**ecfwa**  
Eastern Canada Farm Writers' Association

## Twitter from the participants perspective

By Jim Romahn

**F**armers will lose to the critics, such as animal rights activists, if they fail to defend themselves on Twitter and other internet social media, says Michele Payn-Knoper.

Realizing the burgeoning popularity of Twitter, the Eastern Canadian Farm Writers Federation organized a seminar here recently that was also joined by more than a dozen members via the internet.

That meant that some farm writers from Western Canada, the Maritimes Ottawa and London were able to learn from Payn-Knoper and ask her questions.

If farmers don't get with it, "activists will define our future for us," she said.

In addition to developing thousands of internet followers, she hosts a Tuesday evening internet gathering of 100 to 150 participants from across the United States to talk about

farming.

Some join from other continents and a few are Canadians. She estimates that more than 1,000 others watch what the participants are saying.

Twitter is more about sharing information than Facebook which is about sharing personal information, she said.

Judging by the interest of farm writers, a number of leading farm organizations will soon have their staff Twittering on their behalf, getting messages out, countering false information and inviting thousands to check out their websites for more information.

Twitter messages must be no more than 140 characters, so they're really short. That's why Payn-Knoper suggested that farm organizations and companies might want to direct people to their websites for more information and longer messages.

She said the Humane

Society of the United States has 21,500 followers on Twitter, PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) has 386,800 of which 51,500 are also on Facebook, and Greenpeace has 28,000.

She said the increases have been phenomenal – as much as 2,000 per cent in the last year.

When she first went on Twitter in September, 2008, "I thought it was dumb," she said.

She changed her mind by Christmas when she learned that the Los Angeles Times was keenly interested in some of the messages she was sending.

She invites farmers to check out Twitter.com to see what it's about. And she also invites Canadian farmers to check out a chatroom she hosts Tuesday evenings from 8 to 10 p.m., Eastern Standard Time.

That site is at #agchat.

### ECFWA member top 100 lobbyist

ECFWA member Richard Phillips was recently recognized by the Hill Times as one of the top 100 lobbyists in Canada. This is his third straight year making the list and was once again the only person from a farm organization. Richard is the executive director of the Grain Growers of Canada.



# BCFWA 2010 AGM report

By David Schmidt, BCFWA President

## First Honourary Member

**T**he BC Farm writers Association now has its first honorary member. At our 2010 annual meeting, held in conjunction with the Pacific Agriculture Show, Jan 29, we unanimously named former BC Minister of Agriculture John van Dongen as an honorary member of the BCFWA.

John is a highly deserving first recipient of the award. He has attended numerous BCFWA meetings both during and after his tenure as Agriculture Minister. Not only was he a guest speaker at our 2003 CFWF conference banquet in Kelowna, but he arrived early to take in all the afternoon seminar sessions, then joined us in the hospitality room for most of the night. He also ensured both the 2003 and 2008 CFWF conferences received significant funding from the provincial government which resulted in both being financial successes.

John was actually at the AGM when we made the award. At the BC Agriculture Gala held two evenings earlier,

I deliberately “bumped” into John, casually inviting him to our meeting on the pretext that he could represent his son, Peter (BCFWA vice-president and chair of the 2008 CFWF conference) who would not be able to make the meeting. Despite his busy schedule as the local MLA, to my amazement and delight, he said he would try to join us for dinner.

Which he did, warning us he could not stay long. What made the award even more special is that this was our best-attended meeting ever. Everyone of the over 20 people in attendance enthusiastically applauded the selection.

John responded with an impromptu heartfelt thank you speech praising the efforts of BC farm writers, telling us how important we were to the agricultural community and how he had relied more heavily on farm papers and farm reporters for agricultural information than he had on his staff during his years as ag minister.

Peter later told me John phoned him after the meeting to say how “surprised and honoured” he was to receive the award “even more so than you might think.”

## New Constitution and Website

**I**n giving John his award, we actually put the cart before the horse. At that point, we really didn’t have a designation of honorary member. In fact, we didn’t have anything. Despite operating for years, no one could find a constitution or bylaws. So our executive had ordered me to write some using the ECFWA constitution as a template, which included a provision for honorary members. After my draft had been massaged by Peter, the constitution and bylaws were presented to the membership for approval (after John had already departed the meeting). Fortunately, they were approved unanimously, thus formalizing John’s honorary membership.

While I was working on the constitution, our secretary, Tamara Leigh, with help from Peter and treasurer Sandra Tretick, had been busy creating a BCFWA website, which she presented to the members at the AGM.

It received the accolades it deserves and I encourage you to drop by and see what we’re so proud of: [www.bcfwa.ca](http://www.bcfwa.ca)

(Continued on page 8)



(Continued from page 7)

## New Life Members

**T**he meeting also approved the appointment of two new Life Members: Tony Greaves and Bob Mitchell.

The former editor/publisher of Canadian Poultry magazine, Tony served as the BCFWA treasurer for close to 20 years until reitring at the 2009 AGM. During that time he was almost singlehandedly responsible for keeping our tiny organization afloat and active. Tony also served as a capable treasurer for the 1993, 2003 and 2008 CFWF conferences.

A semi-retired banker with the Bank of Montreal, Bob is our longest active member. Throughout that time, he has faithfully managed the Tim Armstrong Memorial Scholarship, looking after and disbursing the money and recruiting scholarship recipients. Both are well-deserving of their new status as Life Members.

The CFWF is invited to join the MFWBA's fan page on Facebook

Find it at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/MFWBA/314031253586>

Members can post news and comments for all to read and share

# Changing of the guard at Grainews

By John Morriss, SFWA

**L**yndsey Smith is the new editor of *Grainews*, taking over from Jay Whetter, who is moving to the Canola Council of Canada to take on a new position delivering timely online information to growers.

Lyndsey is a farm girl from Lorette, Manitoba, and after receiving her diploma in agriculture and working at Issues Ink and MRAC, joined Farm Business Communications in 2005. She has since worked on *Country Guide*, *Canola*, *Pulse and Special Crops Guide*, *Grainews*, and *Wheat, Oats and Barley*.

Lyndsey will be working from her home office in Lumsden, Saskatchewan.

FBC has also added another Saskatchewan writer to its stable. Scott Garvey, who has been a regular freelance contributor for the last two years, will focus on machinery coverage, mainly for *Grainews*, but also online and for other publications. He and his wife, Caron own and operate the farm where Scott grew up near Moosomin. Scott also has an interest in restoring old trucks and tractors, which was the subject of his book *The Tractor in the Haystack*, which became Voyageur Press' best-selling machinery book in 2008.



Lyndsey Smith new editor of *Grainews*



Scott Garvey has also joined the *Grainews* team

## Dawson wins NAAJ award

By John Morriss

Allan Dawson of the Manitoba Co-operator took second place in the Spot News category of the North American Agricultural Journalists (NAAJ) 2010 awards competition for his story "Crops hit by June 6 frost." In his comments, judge Bill Felber of the *Manhattan (Kan.) Mercury* said the story was a "Wide-ranging and well-written look at the problems created by a weather event. Even for the pros, seeding schedules can be tricky, yet I felt that the reporter made sense of the complicated."

## Parrot refuge

A captive parrot will endure living in up to 7 captive homes in its lifetime. The World Parrot Refuge at Coombs, BC is a forever home for close to 800 parrots. In early March, volunteers drove over 10 parrots to the refuge from Calgary area. Alberta Farm Writer, Gloria Fantin and another volunteer flew to the refuge with two parrots via West Jet, in cabin. More information can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2ThblvlzEA>

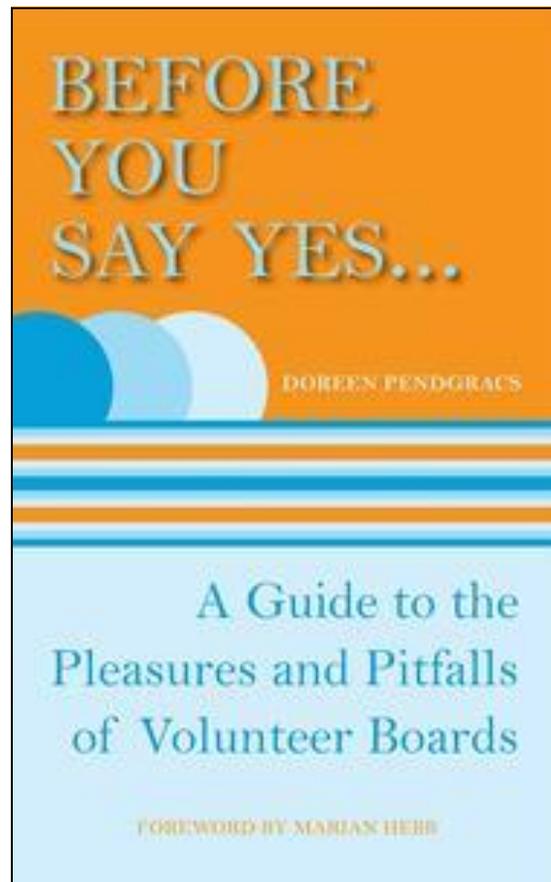
## Being an effective volunteer

Manitoba member, Doreen Pendgracs, has written a new book intended to help non-profit directors and volunteers be more effective in their roles. Pendgracs shares more than 25 years of her own experiences on a wide variety of non-profit boards in addition to views and knowledge gleaned from 20 individuals across Canada who have extensive board experience and happily shared their collective wealth of knowledge in the book.

The book will be a useful tool to any non-profit or volunteer board and can be ordered via the publisher's website at:

[http://www.dundurn.com/books/you\\_say\\_yes](http://www.dundurn.com/books/you_say_yes).

Ongoing discussions about the contents of the book and the need for better training for non-profit boards will take place on the Facebook fan page at: <http://www.facebook.com/beforeyousayyes>



## Book Review - Restoring the Flow: Confronting the World's Water Woes

By Claudette Lacombe

**R**obert Sandford's most recent book clearly shows how his role as Canada's water ambassador has led him to take a cold, hard look at Canada's water situation in a global context.

He brings what he sees through the lens of international experiences and conversations to his readers and, I'll warn you, Canada is not pretty on the world stage.

If you rely in any way for your livelihood on water, you will want to read this book and attempt to remain objective until you get through to the end.

The book skillfully shatters any illusions you may have about water abundance, progressive water policy or water safety in Canada.

It is not that Sandford gets vicious; he simply shares the lessons he's gleaned from other country's experiences and honestly explores Canada's ability to meet similar challenges if no changes take place to our habits, laws, beliefs or narratives.

While I found myself defending irrigation in Alberta – sometimes out loud while alone – I had to concede in the end that Sandford does not say anything an intelligent and studied person wouldn't concede in the privacy of their own home regarding Canada's water situation. He makes some very valid points about what we don't say in public about agriculture or

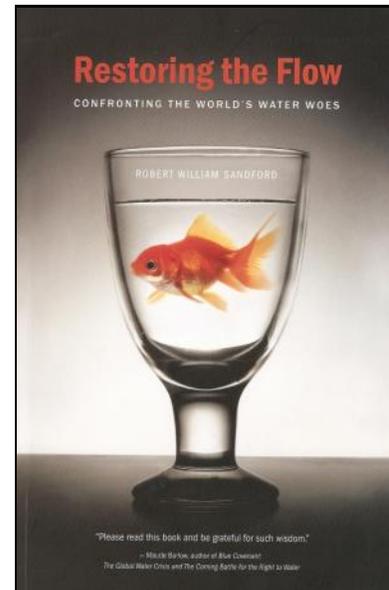
irrigated agriculture today.

He uses Australia and Spain to explain why we might want to start really talking about sustainability in Canada. He also illustrates how very little we learned in North America by surviving the Dirty Thirties and how dangerous a situation this creates in modern times.

Sandford also draws a rather frightening parallel between Calgary and Los Angeles. For people paying attention, Calgary has used its water abundance in a rather dictatorial way in recent years and Sandford's discussion in this book sheds some light on what that might look like in the future.

When you get to the chapter where Sandford visited Austin, Texas, try to be amused by the desire of gamers wishing to simply remove the possibility of drought from the program. Who on the Canadian prairie wouldn't want to remove drought from the program if they could? The story in this section is a cautionary tale if ever there was one. Dr. Sauchyn will tell you that we cannot remove drought from our program in the middle of this continent by any means currently known to man.

Sandford's chapter on our Mighty McKenzie River brings home the fact that human impact can travel far and wide. In a place where the majority of Canadians would expect pris-



tine, undisturbed wilderness, human impacts on our watersheds and landscapes flow north. This chapter is a real eye-opener for any Canadian that still believes we have places where we haven't hurt the ecology yet.

Our eastern Canadians have troubles too and in this chapter I couldn't help but wonder just how foolish Canada and the United States will look if we manage to drain the Great Lakes. Collaboration to preserve the world's largest lake system will take immense commitment from large populations and levels of government on both sides of the border. It is not that this likelihood is imminent that concerns Sandford and, one would hope, many others. It is the fact that it is even conceivable. Will humans really stumble forward until we

(Continued on page 12)

## AdFarm thanks farmers

**A**t AdFarm, Food Freedom Day is an opportunity to celebrate Canadian farmers and the success of agriculture in supplying one of the safest, most abundant and affordable food supplies in the world. Food Freedom Day, which was on February 12 in Canada, is the day the average Canadian has earned enough money to pay their individual grocery bill for the entire year, as determined by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture.

The Calgary AdFarm office hosted breakfast on Feb. 10 with food supplied by a successful local agricultural business – Sunterra Market. We took time to recognize our clients, our partners, our farmers, producers and industry peers who all play a critical role in putting food on the table. We also extended our celebration by supporting the local food

bank which helps out those who have to work a little longer or harder to achieve their own food freedom.

As we heard from Brooke Hunter, of the Calgary Food Bank, they supported more than 124,000 people in Calgary last year. Since Calgary's last Food Freedom Day event (one year ago), this number has grown by 35,000 people. The

need for food donations increases every day, as more than 1% of every neighbourhood in Calgary uses the food bank.

In Guelph, AdFarmers piled into a van and headed north to Maple Crisp Farm to purchase farm-fresh potatoes, apples and maple syrup. And we worked our networks to add in 12 huge fresh frozen turkeys and 12 dozen eggs to deliver about 1,500 lb. of food to the Guelph Food Bank.

We learned that in Guelph – a community of about 100,000 – 40 to 60 families a day visit the food bank for a hamper that's intended to last 10-14 days. And with visits limited to one per month, that's a lot of people benefiting from this service.

As we drove home after unloading the 50-lb. bags of potatoes and bushel basket size bags of apples, there was a collective "wow – I had no idea."

In Kansas City they celebrated Food Freedom Week on February 22. AdFarmers hosted

*(Continued on page 12)*



*Food Freedom Day with Guelph AdFarmers*



*Guelph AdFarmers and food bank staff pile around some of the fresh produce delivered as part of Food Freedom Day*

*(Book Review Continued from page 10)*

reach this eventuality?

In the final chapter, Sandford explains how Canada does not have the mechanisms in place today to care for our water resources in the future. Indeed, he explains why it is such a daunting task and how our very nature gets in our way.

We do have some success in some areas, but we do not have a comprehensive and achievable plan, goal, policy, legislative framework or any other mechanism to reach a sustainable society. He points out in fact that we don't even have a definition for sustainability we all agree upon.

This book is a must read because the change will not come from on high; it will come from informed grassroots directing political leaders and cooperating with changes that have to come before we further embarrass ourselves.

I'm sure Sandford would love to report positive progress in Canada the next time he attends an international forum. Let's give him that.

*(AdFarm Continued from page 11)*

a canned food drive and thanked five farmers for their contribution to America's great food supply. This was done by AdFarm contributing \$200 to each producer's local food bank.

As part of AdFarm's Corporate Social Responsibility initiative, we set out to thank a farmer (by purchasing their bounty), engage staff in the day, and support the local food bank with some great fresh food that they don't often receive.

We were all extremely proud to be part of this event, and humbled by the overwhelming need of our neighbours.




---

## Conference adventure stories from the ECFWA bursary winner

*Anne Howden Thompson was the recipient of the 2009 ECFWA Bursary to attend the CFWF Conference in Edmonton, Alberta. The following is an account of her experiences at the conference.*

Owen Roberts was right. The CFWF conference is the best opportunity for Canadian farm writers to get a sense of what the national organization can offer.

It was during the ECFWA summer bus tour in 2003 that Owen first suggested I might want to consider attending a CFWF conference. That fall the conference was to be held in Kelowna, British Columbia and the promise of my first visit to our beautiful west-coast province was an opportunity that sounded too good to be missed.

So I opened the chequebook, packed my bags and attended my first ever CFWF conference that fall.

Owen was right. And I was not disappointed.

Camaraderie. Excitement. Regional pride. Agriculture excellence. Phenomenal speakers. Together the conference put together a powerful package well worth the time and expense to attend.

*(Continued on page 13)*

---

(Continued from page 12)

Six years later I was proud to be awarded the ECFWA Bursary to attend the 2009 CFWF conference in Edmonton, Alberta. And I share here some of the opportunities that I and the rest of the delegates had the privilege to experience.

Delegates who arrived early to the conference had the opportunity to tour the Alberta Research Council (ARC). ARC has assembled an interesting and highly enthused team assembled.

The job of Axel Meisen, ARC Chair of Foresight is to answer the question what is it we should be working on as opposed to what we are working on. An interesting premise. His mandate is to identify and assess the future research and development needs and opportunities that will benefit Alberta in the long term. This isn't five or ten years out, but looking 20 to 30 years down the road. In my opinion far too many visioning exercises focus too much on the short term and it is refreshing to see that someone is committed to examining needs from a longer-term perspective.

Afternoon speakers focused on some of the initiatives ongoing in biomass resource development, including water-efficient crops, carbonization, high value chemicals from plants and microbes and exciting work in plant pathology, specifically Fusarium wilt and clubroot.

Natural fibre composites made from industrial hemp is another example of ARC's success in the area of industrial bioproducts development. Fibreboard, pulp and paper, textiles and advanced bio-



*Footloose Caboose*

composites are some product examples derived from ARC-processed fibres.

Tours of the exceptional agricultural operations within the host jurisdiction are always a highly anticipated and exciting part of the CFWF conference experience. The organizing committee assembled three fabulous tour opportunities, all designed to give us a sense of the excitement, diversity and flavour of the area we were visiting.

The first stop of the tour I was on was to Sunworks Organic Farm. When I think of organic I think small scale, somewhat back-to-nature agriculture. But by admitting that I am guilty of what I accuse many others--having preconceived notions about agriculture. Farming today isn't like the farming in the children's storybooks and Sunworks certainly doesn't fall into the category of small scale. The Hamilton family started with the acreage they purchased and have built their impressive and progressive operation from scratch.

Our next stop was the Footloose Caboose Lodge where we were treated to a home-style beef stew with a fabulous flavour in a refurbished caboose. The operation is small but manageable (and profitable for the owners) and was a very pleasant and relaxing stop in our otherwise busy day.

Our final tour stop of the day was to the Viking Hutterite Colony. This was an unmatched opportunity to experience and see first-hand a way of life that is quite unfamiliar to us (particularly for those of us from Ontario). I'm not sure what I expected at a Hutterite colony, but I can

(Continued on page 14)

*(Continued from page 13)*

say that what I saw was nothing that I did expect (if that makes any sense). The colony has a very diversified operation and the entrepreneurial spirit thrives and drives the colony. Paul, the colony's farm manager was our tour guide and he is a well-spoken gentleman, well suited to the role he has assumed as spokesman and advocate for the Hutterite way of life. He is a wise gentleman with a delightful (and unexpected) sense of humour and this was a rare and unique opportunity for our CFWF delegates.

I close with a special thanks to our ECFWA board for recognizing the value of providing bursary opportunities to help members within the organization access the opportunities of our national organization. I was privileged to have been chosen to attend as a representative of our chapter and encourage our members to consider making application for the bursary next year.

Saskatchewan is hosting next year's

CFWF annual event -- "Big Sky, Big Farms and Big Business" -- and it will be held at the impressive Temple Gardens Mineral Spa Resort Hotel in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. The city has a rich and interesting history and conference organizers, led by *Western Producer* reporter and long-time CFWF member Karen Briere, are organizing lots for the delegates to see and do.

Conference organizers report that Thursday will be designated a free day and they are encouraging delegates to come early to tour the tunnels made famous by Chicago mobster Al Capone and to spend some relaxing time in the natural hot springs at the spa. Ah, sounds great!

In closing I share here the words Myrna Stark Leader, of Saskatchewan shared with delegates at the banquet on Saturday evening. Open up your daytime calendars and from September 30 to October 3, 2010, put "Gone to Moose Jaw" in your calendar.

*The faces of the future at the Viking Hutterite Colony*



## Remembering George Atkins

**G**eorge Atkins passed away from kidney failure November 30, 2009. He was an honorary life member of the Canadian Farm Writers' Federation for his lifetime dedication to agriculture journalism.

The former CBC farm broadcaster grew up on a family farm outside of Oakville, Ont., then operated his own small farm after graduating from the Ontario Agriculture College. He moved into agriculture broadcasting, first working for CHCH-TV in Hamilton, then CBC Radio.

He quickly became known as the "commentator with the smile in his voice," with the famous signature sign-off of, "serving agriculture, the basic industry. This is George Atkins."

He was the founder of Farm Radio International, an idea he and two other fellow journalists

came up with on a travelling tour of Zambia in 1975.

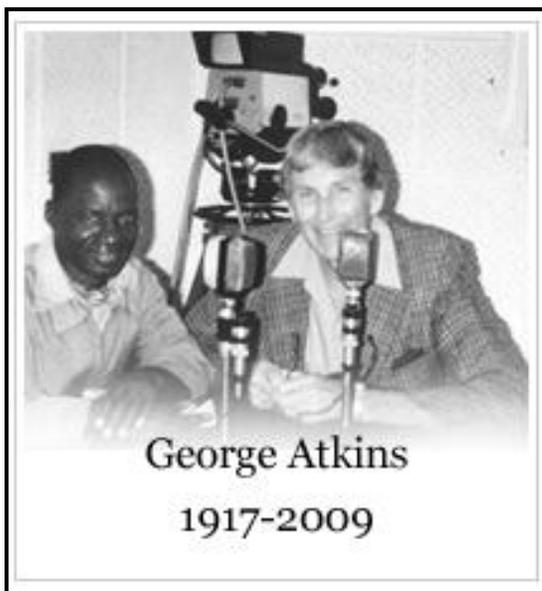
The idea was that there was a wealth of practical farm knowledge to be exchanged between farmers in neighbouring villages, cities and even countries. The information just needed an outlet to be exchanged through.

By 1979, the Developing Countries Farm Radio Network began delivering script packages to 34 broadcasters in 26 countries.

That network has now grown into Farm Radio International, a company which sends out information to more than 250 participants in 35 African countries. The network celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary last year.

Atkins is survived by his wife and four daughters.

Farm Radio International posted a video where Atkins discusses the origins of the organization, it is available on their website at [www.farmradio.org](http://www.farmradio.org)




---

## CFWF International Bursary recipient

**J**ohn Greig is the recipient of the 2010 CFWF International Bursary.

The bursary, sponsored by Monsanto, is offered to a member who shows commitment and leadership in the farm writing community. It will reimburse Greig for up to \$2,500 of the cost of the trip to Belgium for the International Federation of Agriculture Journalists congress.

Greig is a graduate of Carleton University's journalism program, as well as the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program. He is currently an editor for Ontario Farmer Publications in London, Ont., where he is one of the editors in charge of the Ontario Farmer weekly newspaper as well as the Ontario Dairy Farmer, Ontario Hog Farmer, Ontario Beef Farmer, Ontario Poultry Farmer magazines and Western Dairy Farmer.

Greig says he enjoys writing about agriculture for the opportunity to not only report on the latest science, but also the economic trends, global trade, the environment and telling the personal stories of the farmers.

Greig has been an active member on the CFWF board for several years.

With Canada hosting the 2011 IFAJ conference, Greig is excited to promote Canada while in Belgium and act as an ambassador.

---