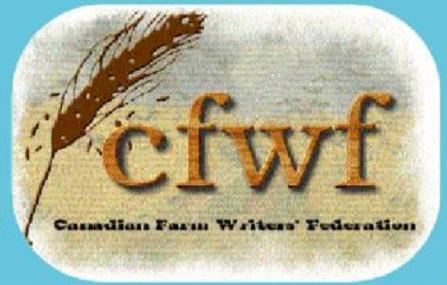


# The Farm Journalist

NEWSLETTER OF THE CANADIAN FARM WRITERS' FEDERATION

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



Editor: Christina Franc, P.O. Box 250, Ormstown, Qc, J0S 1K0  
Phone: 877-782-6456 Ext.706, Email: [office@cfwf.ca](mailto:office@cfwf.ca)

June 2010

## It's Canada's turn next! IFAJ 2011, here we come!

By Lilian Schaer, IFAJ 2011 Co-Chair

**T**he IFAJ torch – or should I say flag – has officially been passed to Canada as we formally assumed the role of host nation at the farewell banquet of this year's congress in Belgium.

The International Federation of Agriculture Journalists (IFAJ) hosts its annual conference, called a congress, in a different member country every year. In 2011, Canada will be welcoming farm writers and agricultural communicators to our country for the first time in over forty years.

The Canadian contingent in Belgium entertained the crowds with a very popular whisky-tasting reception and made a formal presentation to the IFAJ delegate meeting to promote the congress.

Although our congress planning committee has been working on this event since early in 2007, preparations are now beginning in earnest – our event kicks off in southern Ontario only a short 16 months away!

The IFAJ 2011 congress will start in Guelph, Ontario then take delegates on tours to



*Team Canada hosts a whisky-tasting reception; from left: Janet Kanters, Joan Morriss, John, Morriss, Lilian Schaer, Owen Roberts, Kelly Daynard and Allison Fimmamore.*

different parts of the province before wrapping up with a two day stay in Niagara Falls. Optional add-on tours to Western Canada in advance of the congress and to the Atlantic region after the congress wraps up are also being planned.

This international event will also replace the CFWF conference for 2011 – so mark your calendars and get ready to spend September 14 to 18,

2011 with us in Southern Ontario as we showcase Canadian food and farming to our farm writer colleagues from around the world.

**Questions? Comments? Want to know more?**

Visit IFAJ 2011 on the web: [www.ifaj2011.com](http://www.ifaj2011.com), follow us on Twitter @ifaj2011 or email [info@ifaj2011.com](mailto:info@ifaj2011.com)

## Atlantic Canada Farm Writers—We're finally here!

By Allison Finnamore

**A**fter several years of thinking and talking about the possibility of Atlantic Canada forming our own regional farm writers' group, we're finally doing it!

Our first meeting was June 4 in Charlottetown, P.E.I. at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Research Centre.

Over the last several weeks, Heather Jones of Farm Focus, Andy Walker of *Island Farmer*, Wayne Riley of AAFC Communications and Freelancer Allison Finnamore have met to plan the day and strategize on how to invite as many potential members as possible. We're excited to finally be moving ahead with this.

In the spirit of every good farm writers' meeting, we included a small tour in our inaugural meeting. After a meet and greet and a brief meeting at 10:30 a.m., we headed to the Institute for Nutrisciences and Health before wrapping up the day at the Atlantic Vet College. At the Institute for Nutrisciences and Health, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Dr. Chris Kirby

and his research team showed us how a state-of-the-art piece of equipment called a Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Spectrometer is changing the way scientists look at agriculture and its potential for human and animal health. At the vet college, we toured a portion of one of Canada's five vet colleges—a facility that has 14 centres of expertise, including animal welfare, epidemiological research, swine research, biomedical research and milk quality.

During the meeting, an executive will be elected and we'll talk about the future direction of the group, gauging what new members want for services and benefits and who's willing to take on key roles within the newest branch of CFWF.

Registration for the event is \$40, which includes a one year membership to ACFWA.

Please help us spread the word by passing this information on to your network of farm communicators and writers in Atlantic Canada. Information is posted on our Facebook Page, Atlantic Canada Farm Writers' Association, or contact Allison Finnamore at (506)860-7761 or [allison@finnamore.ca](mailto:allison@finnamore.ca)

## When you don't quite get there

By John Greig

**I** expected this report to be filled with lessons about European agriculture, especially in Belgium, the shifting nature of European agriculture policy funding and how farm journalists are doing around the world.

I thought I'd finally understand why Belgian Blue cattle have such huge...musculature.

You see, I was the lucky winner of the 2010 CFWF International Bursary, which was supposed to get me to the 2010 International Federation of Agriculture Journalists Congress in Belgium.

Who knew what devasta-

tion a volcano in Iceland with an impossibly unpronounceable name could wreak?

My plane never got off the ground, as European airspace was closed.

About 30 of 170 people who registered didn't make the conference, mostly from North America. Europeans found some creative ways to get there, which involved very long car and train rides.

Most Canadians who planned to be there did make it to the congress, having smartly popped into Europe early for pre-tours or other travel. Me, of course, I'd picked the post tour,

which included a visit from the European president, a letdown to miss for a political junkie like myself.

Reports from those who attended IFAJ 2010 included

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glowing appraisals of the organization of the congress and that we have a lot to live up to when Canada hosts the 2011 IFAJ Congress.

In the end, one can't get too excited when sideswiped by a natural occurrence which affected more than a million people. Those who had to deliver a baby in a foreign country or missed their own weddings were much worse off than I.

Thanks to the CFWF and Monsanto, the funder of the bursary, for being understanding about the situation.

The International Bursary is an excellent program of CFWF, and I encourage members to take advantage of it.

## CFWF Awards

*Celebrating excellence in agricultural communications*

Don't forget to submit your entries to the 2010 Awards before the **June 28, 2010** deadline.

There are 14 comprehensive categories to choose from, varying from broadcast journalism to news releases and websites.

More information is available online at [www.cfwf.ca](http://www.cfwf.ca) or you can contact Christina Franc at [office@cfwf.ca](mailto:office@cfwf.ca) or 1-877-782-6456 Ext. 706

## Big land. Big sky. Big business.

A perfect theme for the 2010 Canadian Farm Writers Federation Conference taking place in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan from September 30 to October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Saskatchewan is known far and wide for its big land, its "Land of Living Skies", and more recently, as a place to do big business.

The conference opens with a variety of pre-conference tours, with something for everyone. If you have traveled a great distance and need to relax and unwind, spending the afternoon at the Temple Gardens Mineral Spa will be just the ticket. If you are full of energy, a walking tour of the great sites of Moose Jaw is on the agenda. The third tour is all about agriculture and includes a pasture tour for those delegates ready to jump into the business of the conference with both feet. Get acquainted with everyone at the Thursday night mixer and hospitality night.

The Friday Conference Tours will bring you to the forefront of big business in Saskatchewan agriculture. One tour will head east, with stops at

a processing plant, a feedlot and a behind-the-scenes experience at a Hutterite Colony. The West tour features a visits to a working ranch, a dairy farm and a shopping excursion in small-town Saskatchewan. Our famous hospitality will be on display Friday night at the big ole barn dance, complete with checkered table cloths and square dance callers.

Saturday is the business portion of the conference, with major keynote speakers who will discuss some of the biggest ideas in agriculture today, including climate change, export trends, research innovations and the economic landscape of tomorrow. The conference ends with the awards gala recognizing Canada's top Farm Writers' for the contributions they have made over the past year through their exceptional efforts.

This will be a conference not to be missed. Full details are available at [www.saskfarmwriters.ca](http://www.saskfarmwriters.ca) or call Avram Events Inc at (306)525-1878.



## AFWA tour despite rain

By Alexis Keinlen

The rainy weather didn't deter the Alberta Farm Writers Association members from participating in a spring tour June 3 and 4. About 40 participants met in Calgary to take a tour of agricultural facilities in the city and surrounding area. The first stop was Cattleland Feedyards, a 25,000 head full service feedlot located just outside Strathmore. Participants took a tour of the feedlot by bus, and spoke with manager Greg Appleyard and research manager William Torres. Cattleland is a unique feedlot that participates in research projects in a number of areas. One of these projects involves measuring net feed efficiency using RFID tags. Cattleland also runs a diverse 15,000 acre farm that produces feed and cash crops.

Next up was Field Stone Fruit Wines, a cottage winery located in Strathmore, Alberta. Field Stone Fruit Winery opened in 2005 after the Government of Alberta passed a law which enabled fruit growers to make and sell wines made from their products. The Gill family own and operate Field Stone Fruit Wines and make their products from berries and fruits grown on their farm. Wines include Saskatoon berry, rhubarb, black currant, cherry and fortified dessert wines, which are sweet and made with vodka. Participants on the tour were able to taste and then buy a variety of Alberta made fruit wines.

Lunch and networking took place at Strathmore Station Restaurant and Pub, a restaurant featuring a historical railway theme.

Participants then toured SemBioSys Genetics Incorporated, a plant biotech facility where scientists grow insulin from genetically modified safflower plants. Alberta Farm Writers got to see every step of this process, and tour the Calgary based company and its sister company Botaneco, which manufactures natural safflower oil for the cosmetics industry.

The evening finished with a banquet sponsored by the Alberta Beef Producers, and an informative speech and question and answer session with the Honourable Jack Hayden, Minister of Agriculture for the Province of Alberta.

The second day of the tour involved a visit to the University of Calgary's School of Veterinary medicine. The Alberta Farm Writers got to tour the campus, and speak with members of the student body, faculty and staff. Following this, participants travelled to Balzac, where they learned about Business Fusions technology, which developed software for use by equine veterinarians. The group also toured Moore and Company Vet Clinic.

Alberta Farm Writers Association members Lee Hart, Janet Kanters and Will Verboven deserve recognition for their efforts in organizing a successful event, and an informative and enjoyable tour that remained unaffected by a spring rainstorm.



*Helen McMenamain tries her hand in a model of a cow's rear end at the University of Calgary Veterinary School during the Alberta Farm Writers Association spring tour.*

## ECFWA tours Canada's salad bowl

By Clare Illingworth, ECFWA President

The 2010 ECFWA annual meeting gave members an up close look at the Holland Marsh – one of Ontario's most productive agricultural regions located just north of Toronto.

Known as 'Canada's Salad Bowl,' the Marsh is approximately 12,000 acres of peat bog that is ideal for growing carrots, onions and celery. The expanding ethnic diversity of the Toronto population has brought significant changes to consumer preferences, opening the market to diversified crop production in the Marsh that now includes vegetables such as bok choy, Chinese broccoli and Asian radish.

Jamie Reaume, Executive Director of the Holland Marsh Growers' Association

and an ECFWA member walked the group through Carron Farms' onion packing facility and field as it was being planted. Farm operator, Jason Verkaik was on hand to answer questions, while he supervised the onion planting.

ECFWA members got to feel the peat under their feet with a field walk. The light winds brought up enough dust to cover the group of writers, showing us just how important soil erosion mitigation practices are to the area.

Jamie and Jason spoke about the challenges facing the Holland Marsh growers, including differing township by-laws, growing in an environmentally sensitive area and in a Greenbelt, how the growers work as a community and the changes with minimum wage and hiring farm workers.

The challenge of growing in a bog also brought forward some light-hearted anecdotes of why equipment must be placed very carefully in the area. Being a bog, there is no 'bottom' and wetlands quickly absorb items such as telephone poles and machinery left on the field.

The Holland Marsh Growers' Association began in 2008 with the help of the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation and works to identify markets for its produce and build its distinct brand, "Holland Marsh Gold" through Local Food Plus. With their produce grown, stored, processed and packaged in the Marsh, these growers have a strong hand in the strength of their local economy. For more information on the Holland Marsh, visit <http://www.hollandmarshgold.com/>



*ECFWA Members tour the Holland Marsh at the AGM in April, pictured here with newly planted onion plugs*

## 2010 ECFWA Annual Meeting

By Clare Illingworth, ECFWA President

The Eastern Canadian Farm Writers elected a new board at the 2010 annual meeting. The meeting was held on April 29 at the Springdale Christian Reformed Church in the heart of the Holland Marsh near Bradford, Ontario. Lunch was catered by Whitfield Farms featuring locally-grown foods, followed by a fields and facilities tour of Carron Farms.

Newly appointed president, Clare Illingworth, who works at Syngenta, has been on the ECFWA Board for five years and now moves to the helm from her previous position as 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President. We look forward to her ideas and enthusiasm.

She took over from outgoing President Kelly Daynard, Program Manager with the Ontario Farm Animal Council, who led the organization for the past two years. Kelly will continue her active involvement with ECFWA as Past President and IFAJ 2011 Registration Chair. Her outstanding leadership to ECFWA is well marked with professional development workshops that were timely and attractive to members and social events that have kept ECFWA as a place where we can network with our peers. Kelly also saw many opportunities to bring new members to the group, boasting 16 new farm writers who would all agree that ECFWA is the best value for its professional membership fee!

Stepping down from the board was Past President Lilian Schaer who will now be focusing her time on the upcoming IFAJ 2011 conference as Co-Chair with Owen Roberts as well as on her own business, Agri Food Project Services Ltd. Lilian has been an ECFWA member for more than a decade and has brought strong leadership to the board.

Kim Waalderbos will be handing over *The Nib* and website to incoming editor Claire Cowan, Grain Farmers of Ontario. Kim has returned to her farming roots in Nova Scotia where she is working at the family dairy operation and

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ECFWA's 2010-11 board, from left: Clare Illingworth, Karen Dallimore, Kathie MacDonald, Andrew Campbell, Claire Cowan, Terry Stevenson, Sarah Andrewes, Kelly Daynard. Absent: Jane Robinson and Christina Franc.

### ECFWA 2010-11 Board of Directors:

President: Clare Illingworth, Syngenta  
 1st Vice President: Sarah Andrewes, Hill & Knowlton  
 2nd Vice President: Karen Dallimore, Words for Hire  
 Secretary-Treasurer: Andrew Campbell, Farms.com  
 Newsletter Editor: Claire Cowan, Grain Farmers of Ontario  
 Past President: Kelly Daynard, Ontario Farm Animal Council  
 Directors: Jane Robinson, AdFarm; Kathie MacDonald, Rural Ontario Institute; Terry Stevenson, Southern Co-operative Services; Christina Franc, Qu'anglo Communications

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putting the finishing touches on her Masters degree from the University of Guelph. Kim has done the lion's share of the work to get the ECFWA website off the ground and keep it current as well as streamlining our newsletter, *The Nib*.

Director, Scott Allison is stepping down from the board and joining Kim on the east coast as he begins a degree in Law.

Thank you to Lilian, John, Kim and Scott for all your work with ECFWA.

Sarah Andrewes will continue in her position as 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, and Karen Dallimore will become 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President as she moves up from her role as a Director. The tireless Andrew Campbell will retain his role Secretary-Treasurer. Welcome to three new directors: Kathie MacDonald, Terry Stevenson, and Christina Franc who join the board for 2010.

2009 CFWF bursary winner Anne Howden Thompson took the AGM participants for a tour of the west, with a slide show of the Edmonton CFWF 2009 conference. It can be viewed at the link below by clicking on "Conference Highlights"

[http://web.m.e.c.o.m/anne\\_thompson1/CFWF\\_2009/Welcome.html](http://web.m.e.c.o.m/anne_thompson1/CFWF_2009/Welcome.html)

Lilian Schaer and John Greig will both be stepping down from the CFWF board as ECFWA representatives at the annual meeting in Moose Jaw, SK. We'd like to thank them both for their time and involvement as our national representatives. They will be replaced by Kelly Daynard and Clare Illingworth.

## ECFWA welcomes two life members

**T**he Eastern Canada Farmer Writers Association introduced two new life members in April, Glenn Powell and Jim Romahn. Both have been highly active members for decades, former presidents of the Canadian Farm Writers Federation and mentors for many young writers and communicators.

Jim Romahn started working for *the Kitchener-Waterloo Record* in 1963, after graduating from the University of Western Ontario's journalism program. He moved to government in

1968, working for Agriculture Canada and eventually Agriculture

Minister Eugene Whalen. It was during that time that he became involved in ECFWA and CFWF, including a stint as newsletter editor. He later served as CFWF president.

He moved back to *the Record* in 1974 as its farm reporter and columnist. He continued working there until leaving to write freelance in 1994. He later joined the staff of *Ontario Farmer*. He retired from there in 2008, but continues to do freelance writing. Jim has won more than 100 national, regional and farm writing awards and was the recipient of a Roland Michener fellowship in 1988 to study and freelance report about biotechnology.

Glenn Powell graduated from the Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph, studying animal science, but moved into journalism when he joined the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in 1963 as a farm commentator for the Ontario and Quebec region.

As a National Reporter for CBC Radio News, his assignments included Parliament Hill, Ottawa, foreign desks in London and Washington, national elections, political leadership conventions, agriculture, food and environment. He has travelled to and reported from all 10 provinces, many of the states of the United



*Jim Romahn was presented with a Life Member plaque by ECFWA Past President Lilian Schaer and CFWF Past President John Greig*

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Congratulations to Anne Howden Thompson on her appointment as regional communications coordinator at the Golden Horseshoe Regional Soil and Crop Improvement Association!



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States, Mexico and much of western Europe. His stories varied from the Pope's tour to Hurricane Andrew; from the stand-off at Oka to the tire fire at Hagersville; from acid rain to the 'fall of the Crow,' from the Free Trade Agreement to the Canada-USSR hockey tournament.

For the past number of years he has been a regular freelance contributor to *Ontario Farmer*, along with carving out a niche as a communications consultant. He is a past president of the ECFWA and the CFWF.

Glenn and Jim have had distinguished professional careers as farm writers and have made significant contributions to the Eastern Canada Farm Writers Association and beyond at the Canadian Farm Writers Association. They are both active community members worthy recipients of the ECFWA lifetime members designation.

## MFWBA Update

*By Crystal Jorgenson*

The Manitoba Farm Writers and Broadcasters Association held its 2010 Annual General Meeting on February 18 at the King's Head Pub in Winnipeg. Guest speaker Eugene Warwaruk with the Value Chain Manitoba Initiative shared the organization's goals of encouraging and assisting Manitoba's agri-food industry to become more competitive through value chain development. Value chains link production, processing and marketing activities to market demands, providing a unique way to manage risk. Eugene illustrated the process with the example of a recently formed local value chain involving organic produce.

At the AGM, the MFWBA also presented its inaugural Agricultural Awareness Award which recognizes an individual's or an organization's outstanding contributions to public awareness of agricultural issues in Manitoba. The prize includes \$300 and a commemorative keepsake. Journalists, communications professionals, entrepreneurs, producers and anyone else working to make a difference in agriculture are eligible to receive the award. The 2009 award was presented to Agriculture in the Classroom, Inc. – Manitoba for its effective hands-on approach to educating children about farming and food.

The MFWBA also held a spring luncheon on



*Photo - Crystal Jorgenson, president of MFWBA, presents the new Agricultural Awareness Award to Johanne Ross, executive director for Agriculture in the Classroom, Inc. - Manitoba.*

April 28 with guest speaker Harold Froese, director with Manitoba Egg Farmers. Harold discussed how MEF is coming to terms with the realities of consumer expectations - and explained why "cage versus no-cage" is not the only choice for the future.

## Garry Fairbairn, 1947-2010

By Barb Glen

**F**ormer *Western Producer* editor Garry Fairbairn died April 27 in Calgary. He was 62.

Born in Arcola, Sask., Fairbairn served as this newspaper's managing editor and then editor from 1983 to 1999.

He was the son of two journalists, one of them being former *Western Producer* managing editor Clarence Fairbairn, and became a journalist after obtaining degrees in political science and history, followed by a masters degree at Carleton University.

Fairbairn worked for Canadian Press throughout the 1970s, and covered both the October crisis of 1970 and the Trudeau era in Canada, among many other news events.

At the *Producer*, he is credited with early recognition of the potential of new technology in the newspaper industry. Fairbairn saw the paper embrace computer pagination before most other newspapers in the world. He also foresaw the potential of websites and was an early adopter of communication technology. The *Producer* had an online presence by August 1995, long before many other newspapers.

"He had a lot of technical skills in addition to his brain power," said former executive editor Keith Dryden. "He took us into the com-

puter age and did a lot of innovation in that area. He was a bright star in the journalist sky at the time."

Former editor Elaine Shein also recalls Fairbairn's interest in technology as applied to journalism and pagination.

"He was among the first to look at where we could go with digital photography, brought in the Mac computers and always made sure we were on top of technological advances for journalism," said Shein.

Ken Zacharias, current publisher of the *Producer*, recalls Garry as a man of few words during labour negotiations, but a deep thinker and an incisive writer and journalist.

During Fairbairn's tenure, he developed an editorial code of ethics that remains in use today. He also assisted in the newspaper's expansion of the news bureau system and spearheaded its membership in various news and journalism organizations in Canada and the United States.

Fairbairn is survived by his brothers, Clare and Brett, by his children, Jordan, Jamie and Ashley, their mother, and his nieces and nephews.

Memories of Fairbairn and expressions of sympathy can be posted at:

<http://garry-fairbairn.memory-of.com>



**Visit [www.cfwf.ca](http://www.cfwf.ca) for regular updates on awards, conferences and membership**