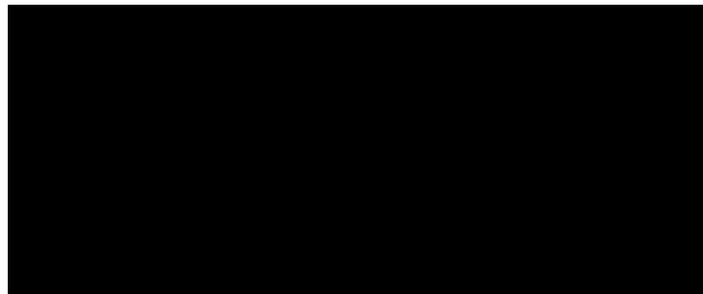


Canadian Farm Writers' Federation



2006 Annual Report

Presented to the CFWF 2007 Annual Meeting
Ramada Inn, Belleville, ON
Saturday, September 29th, 2007



Canadian Farm Writers' Federation

Annual Meeting

7:45 am
Saturday, September 29th, 2007
Ramada Inn, Belleville, ON

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Adoption of the minutes of the 2006 annual meeting
4. Business arising from the minutes
5. President's Report
6. Secretary-Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement
7. Conference Reports
 - 2007
 - 2008
 - Conference rotation
8. Awards Program Report
 - Radio category
9. IFAJ Report
 - IFAJ Bursary
 - IFAJ Congress in 2011
10. Regional Reports
11. Senate Report
12. Executive Elections
13. New Business
 - Student Memberships
14. Adjournment

Canadian Farm Writers' Federation

Minutes of the Annual Meeting

Saturday, September 23rd, 2006
Fort Garry Hotel, Winnipeg, MB

1. Welcome:

Hugh Maynard called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

2. Adoption of the Agenda:

Wendy Holm moved adoption of the agenda. Seconded by Janet Kanters.

Carried

3. Adoption of the minutes of the 2005 annual meeting:

Change: page 5, Hugh Maynard was nominated *Eastern Rep*, and Janet Kanters was nominated *Western Rep*.

Change: page 5, typo in David Schmidt, and Connie Duivenvoorden

Rosalie Tennison moved the minutes of the 2005 annual meeting be adopted with the changes above. Seconded by Allison Finnermore.

Carried

4. Business arising from the minutes:

CFWF Constitution

Copies of the Constitution and By-laws, including proposed amendments, were circulated. The constitution had not been reviewed for 20 years, prior to David Schmidt undertaking the project this year. He reviewed the rules which are no longer practiced by the federation. John Morris and John Greig, reviewed the amendments on behalf of the executive.

David Schmidt moved adoption of the proposed amendments. Seconded by Tracey Feist.

Carried

5. President's Report:

Janet Kanters presented the business for the year. Among the highlights were the review of the constitution and the new CFWF IFAJ bursary sponsored by Monsanto. There were 3 applicants for the bursary to attend the IFAJ conference in Norway, and she was the lucky recipient. She strongly urges members to attend future conferences (especially the 2009 conference in Texas) as it was a valuable experience. She thanked the executive and the volunteers for their contribution to the Federation and the conference this year.

6. Secretary-Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement:

Hugh Maynard presented the summary of items from the secretariat. The part-time administrative assistance has continued to be an asset to the board. The membership has been maintained, however organizations need to get paid up. The increase in awards entry fees and sponsorship has kept the finances on track.

The books were reviewed by Flo Johnson. The conference rotation, including the IFAJ conference in 2011, needs to be analysed and set for the next 10 years. The constitution was reviewed for the first time since 1978.

Hugh Maynard moved adoption of the 2005 CFWF financial statement, seconded by Owen Roberts.

Carried

Hugh Maynard moved that Flo Johnson review the books next year, seconded by Janet Kanters.

Carried

Hugh Maynard briefly reviewed the 2006 financial statement and budget for information purposes.

7. 2006 Conference Report:

John Morris reported on the 2006 conference. He thanked everyone for attending. It was a lot of work, but it came together well. The volunteers did a great job. He hoped that everyone enjoyed the tours.

Lilian Schaer gave a brief proposal for the 2007 conference to be held in Belleville, Ontario. Lilian moved that the conference be held in Belleville, ON, seconded by Claire Illingworth.

Carried

8. Awards Program Report:

Jeannie Bryson presented the 2006 Awards Program update. The increase in sponsorship and entry fees was accepted well. A new sponsor is needed for the Feature photography category. This year a conference call was held with the new judges before they got to their task at hand. They did an excellent job. A few small changes were made to the rules and regulations.

9. Senate Report:

Tabled to the evening banquet. To be presented by John Morriss.

10. IFAJ Report:

Janet Kanters gave a report on the 2011 IFAJ conference to be held in Canada by CFWF. She also reported that she has a presentation to give at the banquet about her trip to the IFAJ conference in Norway.

A discussion of the conference rotation ensued. The members gave the following comments:

- The federation must keep in mind the possibility of sponsorship fatigue, and the burden on the smaller associations in CFWF when deciding the proper rotation.
- Owen Roberts mentioned that the IFAJ does help out when there isn't enough sponsorship available.
- IFAJ has a committee to help the host country organize the conference
- How would conference rotation affect the cash flow of the associations, (i.e. surplus generated by the conferences)?

- It was noted that it would be a shame to adopt a schedule that skips a CFWF conference for a year.
- How would the CFWF awards program be handled at the 2011 conference if the CFWF conference is held in conjunction to the IFAJ conference?
- The entire CFWF membership is invited to attend, however the conference registration fee is considerably higher.
- The issue was raised regarding bringing the conference to western Canada. Is it possible that some pre-conference tours could be organized? Calgary has an international airport.
- IFAJ conference structure is adaptable, can be up to 6 days. Tours are fairly new to the congress schedule.

11. Regional Reports:

Written reports contained in the handout.

12. Executive Elections:

Owen Roberts chaired elections process. Davis Schmidt provided information on the process according to the newly adopted constitution.

BCFWA appointed David Schmidt as their representative on the CFWF board
 AFWA appointed Tracey Feist as their representative on the CFWF board. A second representative will be announced at a later date.

SFWA appointed Lorne McClinton as their representative on the CFWF board
 MFWBA appointed John Morris as their representative on the CFWF board
 ECFWA appointed John Greig and Allison Finnamore as their representatives on the CFWF board

Members at Large -

David Schmidt nominated Janet Kanters for the western representative, Clare Stanfeld seconded.

Claire Illingworth nominated Hugh Maynard as eastern representative, seconded by Kristy Nudds.

FJ - Dave Schmidt nominated Connie Duivenvoorden continue as newsletter editor.

Carried

13. New Business:

New Postal address

The CFWF Secretariat has a new address: CFWF, PO Box 250, Ormstown QC, J0S 1K0.

14. Adjournment:

David Scmidt moved adjournment at 9:54 am.

Annual Reports

President's Report

By Janet Kanters, CFWF President

On the whole, CFWF business has been relatively quiet this past year, with the organization running like a well-oiled machine. This is due mainly to our highly organized Secretary/Treasurer, Hugh Maynard, and our efficient Coordinator, Jeannie Bryson.

Speaking of Hugh and Jeannie, they are currently working with a new web designer to do an overhaul of our Web site. Stay tuned for more information and launch.

Vice president John Greig and a committee of CFWF members reviewed numerous applications for the CFWF International Bursary. Open to any member of the federation, the goal of the Bursary is to encourage international exposure for Canadian agriculture writers and broadcasters by supplying them with financial means to attend the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ) Annual Congress. Bursary applicants must complete an application form and write a 200-word essay, which is then evaluated by a three-judge panel of two CFWF former presidents and one member at large. This year, John and his committee reviewed the high-calibre applications, and chose Kim Waalderbos to attend the IFAJ Congress in Japan, which took place just last week, from Sept 17-22.

The CFWF executive also reviewed a few applications for the IFAJ-Alltech Young Leaders in Agricultural Journalism Award, and after careful consideration, chose Karli Flinta-Murphy as the Canadian nominee to this newly-created international award. As it turns out, the international award committee chose Karli as one of four young ag journalists from around the world to attend the IFAJ Congress in Japan.

Over the past several years, the CFWF has regularly contributed to the IFAJ newsletter - *IFAJ News* - and this year was no exception. This web-based e-newsletter is designed to promote communication and understanding among IFAJ's 5,000 members in 29 member countries. This year, newsletter editor Liz Kellaway of Australia developed two special reports to which we contributed: the first report dealt with climate change, the second with the "new energy crisis: food, feed or fuel?" To subscribe to *IFAJ News*, visit the IFAJ Web site at www.ifaj.org.

Speaking of the IFAJ, Canada is hosting the annual IFAJ Congress in 2011. A committee has been struck, with co-chairs Owen Roberts and Lilian Schaer at the helm.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the CFWF executive for their input and ideas this past year, via conference calls and e-mails. All your executive are volunteers; therefore, we must find time out of their busy schedules to attend to CFWF matters when the need arises.

I'd also like to thank the organizing committee of CFWF 2007 for putting on a great program this year. They, too, work hard – on their own time – to ensure delegates to this conference get the most out of it as they can.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Prepared by Hugh Maynard

Administration

The 2006 year was pretty much steady from an administrative perspective – a little bit of paperwork here, a little there, a few cheques to write and so on. CFWF's administrative coordinator, Jeannie Bryson, made things flow along nicely as well as organizing all the awards program. Connie Duivenvoorden, as editor of the Farm Journalist, harangued people for material and made sure that the electronic newsletter came out on a regular basis. The executive committee met three times by conference call – a good time was had by all.

Membership

Membership numbers continue to maintain themselves at around 300, although it is a little difficult to be certain as there are still 3 associations that have not yet . . . paid up. They should be sure to read the revised constitution and the consequences that await them in the case of continued default.

Finances

After investing in previous years in administrative re-organization, the Federation's finances are back on track due to the increase in fees and sponsorships for the awards program. The bank balance is once again healthy due to the generous contribution of sponsors to the 2006 conference in Manitoba which provided a higher than usual surplus. It must also be noted, however, that the continued surplus for CFWF is also due to keeping expenses in check, in particular the generosity of the Farm Journalist editor who has declined to take any honorarium. At this time it is not necessary to contemplate an increase in membership fees in order to maintain a break-even budget and reasonable level of program activity; the last membership fee increase was decades ago.

Conference Planning

As per the conference schedule adopted in 2004, there has to be a change to accommodate the IFAJ congress in 2011 (otherwise ECFWA will be hosting 3 conferences in four years.) The Executive has analysed options for changes to the rotation and proposes the following schedule:

2007	EC	2012	MB	2017	EC
2008	BC	2013	BC	2018	MB
2009	AB	2014	EC	2019	BC
2010	SK	2015	AB	2020	EC
2011	EC (IFAJ)	2016	SK	2021	AB

CFWF Financial Statement - 2006

		2005	2006 <i>Budget</i>	2006 <i>Final</i>
<u>INCOME</u>				
Awards	Fees	\$ 2,695	\$ 5,000	\$ 4,940
	Sponsors	\$ 8,800	\$11,600	\$ 10,800
	IFAJ Bursary	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 2,500
Conference	Registrations	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
	Sponsors	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
	Other	\$ 3,817	\$3,000	\$ 11,952
Memberships		\$ 6,760	\$6,000	\$ 5,980
Interest		\$ 3	\$ 5	\$ 2
Other		\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 1,046
TOTAL INCOME		\$22,075	\$25,605	\$37,220
<u>EXPENSES</u>				
Administration	Sec.-Tres.	\$ 366	\$ 500	\$ 0
	Admin-Coordinate	\$ 7,590	\$ 7,000	\$ 8,122
	Conf. calls	\$ 532	\$ 750	\$ 455
	Other	\$ 2,651	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,470
Awards	Administration	\$ 1,949	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,376
	Certificates	\$ 775	\$ 1,000	\$ 700
	Judging	\$ 1,525	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,700
	Prizes	\$ 7,900	\$ 8,400	\$ 7,900
	Refunds	\$ 150	\$ 100	\$ 40
	IFAJ Bursary	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 2,500
Conference	Expenses	\$ 254	\$ 0	\$ 3,007
	Refunds	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Farm Journalist	Honorarium	\$ 0	\$ 1,000	\$ 0
	Newsletter	\$ 386	\$ 500	\$ 0
	Travel	\$ 0	\$ 1,000	\$ 0
IFAJ	Fees	\$ 2,505	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,300
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$26,583	\$27,750	\$31,570
<hr/>				
TOTAL INCOME/EXPENSE		\$ (4,508)	\$ (2,145)	\$ 5,650
Surplus/Deficit		\$16,128	\$ 11,620	\$ 11,620
Retained earnings		\$11,620	\$ 9,475	\$ 17,270

Awards Program Report

Prepared by Jeannie Bryson

Third time's a charm! The CFWF Secretariat administered the awards for a 3rd consecutive year this summer. Many thanks to Margo McCaffrey, Quanglo's Communications intern, who helped with the administration of the awards this summer. Margo will be flying solo next year as I will be moving on to post-graduate studies elsewhere in Canada (*to be continued . . . !*)

This year's awards program had 236 entries. In the last few year's we've had a slight downward trend in the amount of entries, from 245 in 2005 and 239 in 2006. The Press Feature category remained the largest category having 45 submissions and Radio News Reporting remained the smallest category with 3 entries.

We had many new judges on board this year and they really enjoyed their task. It has become increasingly hard to find judges, your suggestions for next year would be gladly accepted.

The radio category suffered once again from a dearth of entries and none were scored sufficiently high for the judges to award prizes. Both radio and TV have not been attracting many entries in the last decade despite efforts to attract submissions. Given the situation, the time has come to 'do something' about these categories, options being:

- ♦ Re-write the criteria to make them better adapted to today's radio and TV material
- ♦ Change the categories for other types of communication activity (new media, other print media not covered by existing categories)

Input at the annual meeting is welcome and the membership will be sampled via a survey.

Other areas of the awards program that have been brought to our attention and need to be addressed in some fashion:

- ♦ Create a website category for educational and/or informational purposes
- ♦ Definition shouldn't only include 'ag medium' but also agriculture related article, for example an article about agriculture that appears in a non-ag publication currently is not admissible in some categories
- ♦ The publication date needs to be clarified... are May/June 200X entries valid for program in year X?

The George Morris Centre graciously agreed to sponsor our Feature Photography award this year. We still need names to honor for the two photography awards. And we are happy to have Farm Business Communications as a new sponsor for the Alice Switzer, News Release Award. The gold award recipients will receive *The Canadian Dairy Commission, a 40-year retrospective* book, donated by the CDC. Monsanto continues to support the awards as founding patron.

At the request of this year's conference organizers we have put together some of the history behind the awards. Stay tuned at the banquet for a short blurb about the Farm Writers who have been honored with an award in their name. We are happy to let you

know that having an extra hand around this year has given us the opportunity to bring your entries with us for return at this year's banquet.

See you at the banquet!

International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ)

By Janet Kanters

IFAJ 2011 in Canada

For the first time in 40 years, Canada has been selected to host the annual congress of the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists. The Canadian Farm Writers' Federation (CFWF), the official hosting organization, has chosen Guelph, Ontario, as the congress location.

The congress will be held September 14-18, 2011. An update on planning activities to date will be provided by congress co-chairs Lilian Schaer and Owen Roberts during the CFWF Annual General Meeting, along with a chance to ask questions.

Please contact any of the following committee chairs if you're interested in volunteering.

Committees and Chairs

Co-Chairs: Owen Roberts, University of Guelph, owen@uoguelph.ca; Lilian Schaer, University of Guelph, lilian@uoguelph.ca

Tours: John Greig, Ontario Farmer, jgreig@bowesnet.com

Professional Development: John Morriss, Farm Business Communications, john.morriss@fbcpublishing.com

Sponsorship: Jane Robinson, AdFarm, jane.robinson@adfarmonline.com

Marketing, Media and Promotion: Sarah Andrewes, Fleishman Hillard, sarah.andrews@fleishman.ca

Facilities and Food: Adele Pelland, Quarry Integrated Communications, apelland@quarry.com

Registration and Administration: Kelly Daynard, Ontario Farm Animal Council, kdaynard@ofac.org

Hospitality: Bern Tobin, AdFarm, bernard.tobin@adfarmonline.com

Youth: Kim Waalderbos, University of Guelph, kwaalder@uoguelph.ca

Regional Reports

British Columbia Farm Writer's Association

Prepared by David Schmidt

With only 20 members, BC may be the smallest farmwriters association in the country. With such a small group flung over great distances, organizing a meeting sometimes proves difficult.

This year, the BCFWA held only two meetings but that was quite an accomplishment as it was double the number of meetings we held last year. Our annual meeting was held, as usual, in conjunction with the Pacific Agriculture Show in mid-February. The PAS is the largest agricultural gathering in the province, and generally brings in most BCFWA members anyways, so holding the BCFWA meeting at the show makes a lot of sense.

Almost 15 of our members met at noon Friday for lunch, networking and a short business session. The business session took only a few minutes, quickly rubber-stamping the 2007 executive. David Schmidt of *Country Life* in BC was reelected president and CFWF director, former Canadian Poultry editor, now retired, Tony Greaves was reelected treasurer and Bank of Montreal BC agriculture manager Bob Mitchell was reelected as director of the Tim Armstrong Foundation (which annually awards a \$1,000 scholarship to a BC ag student). As Fran Bach has gone into semi-retirement and now spends as much time in Washington as she does in BC, we decided to make Peter van Dongen our new vice-president and also approved him as chair of the 2008 CFWF convention, which will be held in his backyard in Courtenay-Comox. Our secretary's position is traditionally given to the Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada BC communications officer. Since Kate Glover had announced plans to leave AAFC in the spring, we simply approved giving the secretary's position to her replacement. That has turned out to be Tamara Leigh, formerly of AAFC Edmonton. While Tamara has yet to attend a meeting, she is looking forward to the job and getting actively involved in the planning for next year's convention.

We invited Christine Koch to be our guest speaker and detail her new job. Koch recently left her position with the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands to become the new director of policy and member relations for the BC Agriculture Council, effectively doubling the staff of BC's primary farm organization.

Our summer meeting was actually held in early fall as a select group of farmwriters met at Oldfield Orchards in Saanich (Vancouver Island). Despite just having come off a hectic weekend during which they sold 1,000 home-baked pies at the local fair, owners Derek and Debbie Scott proved excellent hosts, taking us on a long tour of the farm and serving us a most delicious lunch on their deck. They were joined by BCMAL agri-tourism/direct marketing specialist Brent Warner who updated us on a variety of government initiatives linking consumers with agriculture.

The tour and Warner's off the cuff presentation were so interesting, we actually didn't start discussing business until after the meeting was scheduled to end. As a result, pre-planning for the 2008 convention was left to only a handful of members. We do have

promises for greater involvement to help us make next year's CFWF conference "beyond the ordinary."

Alberta Farm Writers' Association

Prepared by Annemarie Pedersen and Tracey Feist

The first meeting of the year for the Alberta Farm Writers' Association was held during the FarmTech convention in Edmonton in January, 2007. Here nearly one-quarter of our members met, discussing pertinent issues to our group, and generally deciding who will be planning the annual June tour. The tour this year was planned for the Medicine Hat region, an area we hadn't toured for quite some time.

On a sad note, we lost one of our honorary members this year. Earl Olsen, PR man for Canadian Pacific Ltd. (CP) passed away May 25th at the U of A Hospital following a brief illness. Earl was born in Kingman, Alberta and raised in Edmonton, where he spent 20 years in the media at CJCA, CKUA and CFRN in Edmonton before moving to Calgary to work at CFAC and CFCN Radio and Television. Earl worked for CP as Regional Manager in Public Relations for 25 years before retiring. Earl is survived by his wife of 54 years, Marguerite. My first introduction to the Alberta Farm Writers' was to join the September 1989 tour, an elaborate trip planned by Earl. Earl had managed to get the farm writers' group to travel by train between Golden and Revelstoke, thanks to CP Rail. Some of us even got to ride on the front of the train – outside!

The Association hosted one of its largest annual tours earlier this summer as 28 AFWA members traveled to the southeast corner of the province for a two-day tour of farming and ranching enterprises in and around the beautiful Cypress Hills.

AFWA members met June 7 and 8th, starting at the Elkwater Lake Lodge and Resort located in the townsite of Elkwater, on the edge of Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park. The group visited the Elkwater Hutterite Colony, enjoying their modern dairy facilities, machine shop, school house and greenhouse. After lunch, West WindEau Inc. discussed their partnership with the colony on an upcoming wind power project. Other stops during the day included a visit to Prairie Memories Museum in Irvine, Perry Deering's Double D Ranch and Deerview Meats, the largest deer farm in Alberta. The day wrapped up with a visit to the Historic Reesor Ranch, which is actually just a few metres east of the Alberta/Saskatchewan border (the latest generation of Reesors running the ranch are cousins of our own Caitlynn Reesor). The following day's tour stops included a visit to Coast to Coast Reforestation, a nursery in Dunmore that grows the saplings for commercial tree planting programs, as well as a visit to Red Hat Co-operative in nearby Redcliff. Thanks and congratulations to the committee involved in this year's tour – we had some interesting insights into how diversified the agricultural industry in Alberta has become and a great time was had by all!

New president Mary MacArthur will be planning next year's tour, for the Camrose region. Our group is also in the planning stages of a new website.

During the annual tour, Jack Howell received an honorary lifetime AFWA/CFWF membership. Jack retired in 2006, from his post after 35 years as the voice of Call of the Land, Alberta Agriculture and Food's daily radio program.

With my family's recent move to the Denver, Colorado area, I resigned from my position as AFWA Director, but would like to thank the other members of the CFWF board for the fun, good discussions and great memories. Annemarie Pedersen with AdFarm in Calgary will be my replacement. And with our current membership holding strong at 93, we're able to add another Alberta farm writer to the board. Janet Kanter will be taking on this role, as she leaves her post as CFWF president.

Saskatchewan Farm Writers' Association

Prepared by Lorne McClinton

This past year has been a year of re-organization and renewal for the Saskatchewan Farm Writers Association. A new membership drive, spear-headed by our new Treasurer, Marlene Hursh, has increased our membership from 20 last year to 29 members this year. The infusion of new members has brought a renewed sense of purpose to the organization.

The year started with minor changes at the executive level at our annual meeting last November. At that meeting, held in conjunction with Agribition in Regina, Lorne McClinton agreed to remain as President for one final year, Bonnie Warnyca stayed on as Vice President and Karen Briere remained past president. Angela Hall is association secretary and new member Marlene Hursh took over as Treasurer.

Throughout the spring and early summer there was a lot of discussion about what the association should be doing. We have a very healthy bank account but seemed to offer very few services and activities for members to partake in.

At our early summer meeting it was decided that we should use some of our funds to hold a professional development workshop in conjunction with a tour. A new committee was formed to organize this year's two day tour and workshop, which will be held in the Regina area on October 19th and 20th. Hopefully it will be a great success and set the trend for an ongoing series of workshops and tours in the future.

During the spring meeting Lorne McClinton announced he would prefer someone else would take over his duties as the SFWA representative on the CFWF board at the completion of the current term. Myrna Stark-Leader, a communications consultant with FCC-FAC was elected and will take over my position on the national board as of this meeting. I've really enjoyed my time on the board and I'm sure Myrna will be an excellent replacement.

Manitoba Farm Writers and Broadcasters Association

Prepared by Crystal Jorgenson

The MFWBA year started with a flurry of activity as we hosted CFWF 2006 in September. The conference drew over 90 farm writers from across Canada to the historic Hotel Fort Garry in downtown Winnipeg. The organizing committee worked hard to

pull together a great program (see Conference Report) and we were very pleased with the results.

We were a bit exhausted after that, so our regular programming didn't get going until mid November, when we held a well-attended luncheon on whether the Canadian Wheat Board would exist without its monopoly. At our annual holiday party in December, held at the King's Head Pub, members were invited to bring items to donate to Siloam Mission, a local shelter that provides services to Winnipeg's less fortunate.

Our annual general meeting in January at trendy InFerno's Bistro featured guest speaker Michael Heasman, author of the online newsletter Food for Good, who spoke about the "local food economy" and Manitoba's new Food Charter. In April, we honoured Dave Wreford with a MFWBA Life Membership, and also heard from speaker Shanyn Silinski of Manitoba Farm Animal Council about animal care issues in Manitoba. Our final programming of the year was a tour around eastern Manitoba - 18 participants visited stops at the old AECL facility in Pinawa (where private industry is studying all sorts of new applications), the home of a woman who won Manitoba's Great Food Fight (where new food product development is recognized) and a hydroponic vegetable operation.

Eastern Canadian Farm Writers' Association

Prepared by Lilian Schaer, President

This past year featured a number of firsts for the Eastern Canada Farm Writers Association as part of the organization's ongoing efforts to make events more accessible to members throughout the entire membership area.

Webinar

ECFWA hosted its first webinar in June 2006 - with science writer Jacob Berkowitz. This new technology allowed a group of farm writers to attend a live session with Jacob in Ottawa, a second group to participate at the MediaCentre in Guelph and everyone else to log in from home and view the session on line. Jacob's presentation focused on the art of writing about scientific topics for the mainstream media. About 30 members participated, and feedback was positive - both on the seminar and on the potential this new technology presents.

Two-part professional development

Last September saw the follow up of our first-ever two-part professional development session. In March 2006, photographers Jeff Carroll and Terry Scott White shared the tricks of their trade with approximately 40 participants at a seminar hosted in Guelph. Members who attended the seminar had the opportunity to sign up to win a chance to participate in a photo shoot with Terry for the Ontario Farm Animal Council's Faces of Farming calendar. This series of shoots took place in September and approximately 10 members were on hand to help out, ask questions and interview the models.

Video conference

In March, our second professional development seminar was another chance at trying out some new technology - and an attempt to make a more direct connection with our Maritime members. Through the patience and perseverance of Jane Robinson, Allison Finnermore and BAM productions, the seminar was hosted in Guelph and presented via

video conference to Maritime farm who were gathered in Moncton for the Farm Mec Show. Questions were funneled to the panel of speakers in Guelph via email, and even though the technology had some hiccups, this offered a great visual connection between members and a chance to be included. The panel focused on interviewing techniques with radio host Simon Crouch from Chatham, market researcher Colin Siren from Ipsos Reid and moderator Owen Roberts (filling in for the last minute cancellation of a speaker from the Ontario Provincial Police).

Connecting with CanACT

The March seminar also marked the first time that members of the University of Guelph student agricultural communications club – Canadian Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow – were invited to join in an ECFWA event. Student turnout was excellent, and since many CanACT members go on to careers in agricultural communications (and become members of ECFWA), plans are to continue to build the linkages between the two organizations.

Mentoring program

A welcome package was developed that is distributed to new members, including the benefits of membership, a membership list and how to become involved in the organization. Existing members are asked if they would like to be a mentor to those new to the organization, if yes, are then matched up with a new member. Response during the program's first year has been excellent.

Hosting the national conference

Throughout the year, but particularly during the summer months, ECFWA members have also been busy working on plans for the Canadian Farm Writers' Federation annual conference, which is being hosted by ECFWA this year. A tremendous amount of work by a very dedicated committee is responsible for the event you are currently enjoying in Belleville.

Board members

President: Lilian Schaer, University of Guelph

Vice Presidents: Kelly Daynard, Ontario Farm Animal Council; Mary Baxter, Voice of the Farmer

Past President: John Greig, Ontario Farmer

Secretary Treasurer: Sarah Brown, Quarry Integrated Communications

Newsletter Editor: Kim Waalderbos, University of Guelph

Directors: Sarah Andrewes, Fleishman – Hillard Canada; Andrew Campbell, CKNX Radio; Clare Illingworth, Syngenta; Kristy Nudds, Canadian Poultry; Jane Robinson, AdFarm