

Canadian Farm Writers' Federation



2014 Annual Report

Presented to the CFWF 2015 Annual Meeting
By conference call

Tuesday, March 10th, 2015

Canadian Farm Writers' Federation

2015 Annual Meeting

3:00pm

Tuesday, March 10th, 2015

By conference call

1-866-613-5223

Access code 6946352#

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Adoption of the minutes of the 2014 annual meeting
4. Business arising from the minutes
5. President's Report
6. Secretary-Treasurer's Report & Financial Statement
7. Conference Reports
8. Awards Program Report
9. IFAJ Report
10. Regional Reports
11. Board Elections
12. New Business
13. Adjournment

Canadian Farm Writers' Federation

Minutes of the 2014 Annual Meeting

Tuesday, March 11th, 2014 at 3:00pm EDT
By teleconference

Present: Kelvin Heppner, Maureen Fitzhenry, John Greig, Owen Roberts, Elaine Vininsky, Kelly Green, Andy Walker, Allison Finnamore, Tamara Leigh, Janet Kanters, Alexandra Markes, Debra Murphy, Lysndey Smith, Karen Dallimore, John Morriss, Melanie Epp, Clare Wooding, Clare Stanfield, Myrna Stark Leader, Lisa Guenther, Reg Norby, Glenn Powell, Crystal Jorgenson, Karen Davidson, Terry Stevenson, Christina Franc, Hugh Maynard

1. Welcome
Lisa called the meeting to order.
2. Adoption of the agenda
Moved by Tamara Leigh, seconded by Glenn Powell. CARRIED
3. Adoption of the minutes of the 2013 annual meeting
Typo in B.C. report, "Tim Armstrong" instead of "Tom"
Moved by Reg Norby, seconded by Myrna Stark-Leader. CARRIED
4. Business arising from the minutes
None
5. President's Report
Provided with agenda. Working on webinar and communications as well as improving awards program and cross promotion. A big focus has been the legacy fund as well.
Moved to approve by Crystal Jorgenson, seconded by Clare Stanfield.
CARRIED
6. Secretary-Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement
Hugh provided an update (available in the CFWF AGM report provided earlier). IFAJ books have been closed, cheques have been disseminated and legacy fund terms are being decided. The other big source of income was awards program. Conference AGM has been switched to be within 90 days of the end of the fiscal year. Conference planning schedule available in report as well. We will not see any IFAJ surplus in the books next year. As well to note in the financials is liability insurance came in fairly late. Surplus overall of approximately \$87,000. Secretariat and

administration cost differences are direct expenses for postage, website, etc. whereas administration is as per the contract with CFWF.

Moved to accept report by Owen Roberts, seconded by Karen Davidson to accept secretary treasurer's report. CARRIED

Moved by Hugh Maynard and seconded by Clare Stanfield to accept financial statement. CARRIED

Moved by Hugh Maynard and seconded by Lisa Guenther to hire Comptabilite Flo Johnson to review the books for the 2014 year. CARRIED

7. Awards Program Report

Christina provided the awards program update on behalf of Alexandra. The subject of online media was brought up, blogs fit under press column category but it was suggested that category suggestions be brought up and submitted for further discussion to the board. Reg recommended an online category be created, to be current and up to date. Duly noted and will follow up.

8. IFAJ Report

Allison provided a report in the AGM package. To add to that, the deadline for submitting names for Alltech Young Leaders awards was two weeks ago. Debra Murphy's name has been put forward to the second round of judging. Joe Watson, a member of IFAJ from the UK passed away suddenly last week, a hurt being felt across the IFAJ community, the next congress is to be held in his hometown, so registration may be on hold right now but will be posted soon. Scotland conference will be in early September. Info available at ifaj2014.com. IFAJ will be signing a memo of understanding, exploratory opportunity to with the FAO. The IFAJ webpage will have FAO news and commentary, hopefully starting in May 1. Owen offered to connect people if they are planning to do anything for the "year of family farms"

Crystal provided an update on the Monsanto CFWF bursary, Tamara Leigh was selected to go to IFAJ 2014. It was exciting to see applications from each regional association.

9. Conference reports

BC was very successful and things came together really well. (As per Tamara's report). Allison said PEI would be Oct 2-5, based in Charlottetown. Sponsorship has been going very well so far. It will follow the regular conference schedule. There will be a taste of the island reception. There will be two tours to choose from. Issues based PD on Saturday morning, and afternoon PD will be on skills, there will be a kind of 'RFP' put out for this element. Registration to open in April. There will be a pre-tour on the Thursday, either full or half day option.

10. Regional Reports
 Each region provided regional reports available in the CFWF AGM package. ACFWA and AFWA provided oral reports:
 ACFWA: Andy Walker has taken over for Allison on the board. Their next event is the end of next month when they'll be partnering with several writers organizations to have a session on copyright and contract negotiations. Aside from that, ACFWA is busy planning the conference and things are coming along well.
 AFWA: Janet Kanters provided a quick update. After 15 years, Janet Kanters has stepped down, to be replaced by two people. Alberta members are incredibly thankful for all Janet has done. Meghan Madden is the current president. AFWA met in Farmtech to plan the Alberta tour. Either Edmonton or Calgary. Currently at about 75 members.

11. Board Elections. Owen Roberts chaired the elections.

Position	Name	Nominated by
ACFWA	Allison Finnamore	Andy Walker
ECFWA	Clare Wooding, Karen Dallimore	Melanie Epp
MFWBA	Crystal Jorgenson	Lyndsey Smith
SFWA	Myrna Stark Leader	Lisa Guenther
AFWA	Meghan Madden	Reg Norby
BCFWA	Tamara Leigh	Proxy by David Schmidt
Eastern Member at large	Hugh Maynard	Clare Wooding
Western Member at large	Lisa Guenther	Crystal Jorgenson

Moved to accept slate as put together by the chair. Moved by Glenn Powell, seconded by Maureen Fitzhenry. CARRIED

12. New Business
 Manitoba had AGM on March 5, Crystal Jorgenson is current MFWBA president and Kelvin Heppner has joined the board.
 Hugh to email Maureen for new awards category criteria.
 Reg Norby asked about promotion for award winners, it was noted that a press release does go out, it is available also online and in the Farm Journalist.
13. Adjournment at 3:58 moved by Janet Kanters

Annual Reports

President's report

Prepared by Lisa Guenther

We've closed the books on another year with the Canadian Farm Writers, and once again it's amazing what we've accomplished.

After several years of consultation and planning, we unveiled the Professional Development Fund late in 2014. Congratulations to the members who applied and obtained funding for their projects. And a huge thank you to the Legacy Fund committee, who did the leg work on the PD Fund, as well as the members who stepped forward to serve as judges and trustees for the fund. If you're regretting not applying for the PD Fund last December, you'll be happy to know you'll have a second chance shortly. While we had three successful applicants, we'd like to have more, so we'll be re-opening it for a second round of applications. Stay tuned for more details.

The PD Fund is only the latest professional development opportunity available to Canadian Farm Writers. There are bursaries to help members get to the IFAJ conference, which is being held in New Zealand this year. Many regional associations have travel bursaries to send members to the national conference, slated for Calgary this fall. There are annual opportunities to see agricultural development in Africa. And there are webinars that you can take in from the comfort of your office or couch. Even if you've missed a webinar, most of them are archived online.

All these things require resources. We're lucky to have sponsors willing to support many of these activities. And we're also fortunate that our members step up to organize these programs and sit on judging panels for the bursaries. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Some regional associations have a lifetime membership award to honour their long-serving members. The CFWF board decided it was time to do the same for members who have made significant contributions at the national level. We're still finalizing a few details for the Lifetime Achievement Award, but I think we'll be accepting applications in the next few months. This award will allow us to say thanks to long-time members who've gone above and beyond the usual efforts to serve the organization.

I've been on the national board for over five years now (and perhaps some of you are thinking it's time to retire me). While it's certainly a fair bit of work at times, it's been enjoyable work. A big part of that is because of the people involved. Thank you to the other board members, who pitch in on committee work and are frankly fun to work with. And as always, a huge thanks to the Christina Franc and Hugh Maynard, who form our secretariat. See you in Calgary . . .

Lisa Guenther
CFWF President

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Prepared by Hugh Maynard

Administration

The 2014 year was fortunately less exciting from an administrative perspective as the last few years, this being due to the follow up required from the IFAJ Congress finally winding its way through the system, but the effort was certainly worth it! The big event for the year was to get the Professional Development Fund up and running. After several years of consultation and planning, the "PD Fund" was launched in late fall with the establishment of a board of trustees, the deposit of \$40,000 in an investment account to 'feed the fund' for future years, and a call for applications. While the initial number of applications was less than anticipated (3), all were approved by the judges and a second call will be going out in the spring of 2015.

Professional Development Fund – Board of Trustees 2014-2015

John Greig, chair

Jane Robinson

Anne Côté

Leeann Minogue

David Schmidt

CFWF's administrative coordinator, Christina Franc, continued to work on the conversion of the awards program to electronic entries, which had been a major success since its initial year in 2012 and has helped reduce costs by several thousand dollars each year. Christina also coordinated the professional development webinars, now in their third year, and continued to edit and publish the FJ and its junior sibling, the e-newsletter version of the venerable farm writer's publication. She also battered her way through the bureaucracy of Industry Canada to ensure that we were in compliance with new regulations for federally incorporated non-profits; technical amendments to the by-laws will be processed at a special general meeting to be held in conjunction with Calgary conference in September 2015.

Christina was ably supported by Alexandra Markes, CFWF's third summer student employed through a Young Canada Works grant. "Al on the Go", who is studying French and Math at the University of Windsor, contributed to the awards program and membership activities. Many thanks to both of them for all the work they did in the past year ensuring that we had well functioning organization and a quality newsletter.

The CFWF Board met three times during the year via conference call, and in person on the Thursday evening prior to the 2014 Conference in PEI. Membership numbers declined a little from the previous year, to 331, but this was on par with the variations of past few years.

Finances

The bank balance remains healthy due to the generous contribution of sponsors and excellent fiscal management of the organizing crew for the 2014 conference and support for Secretariat activities through the YCW summer student grant. CFWF currently has a

surplus of approximately \$86,700 of which approximately \$26,700 has been retained for cash flow and operations, \$20,000 for the 2015 and 2016 disbursements for the PD Fund, and \$40,000 in long-term investments to 'feed the fund'.

Conference Planning

As per the conference schedule adopted in 2004, the rotation has been adapted to accommodate ECFWA hosting every third year (instead of every second one); Atlantic Canada has indicated that it will host in place of EC . . . once in a while.

2015	AB	2020	EC	2025	BC
2016	SK	2021	AB	2026	EC
2017	QC	2022	SK	2027	AB
2018	MB	2023	EC	2028	SK
2019	BC	2024	MB	2029	EC

CFWF Financial Review 2014

Compabilité Florence Johnson Book-keeping
99 Françoise Cuillerier
Notre Dame de L'Ile Perrot, QC J7V 9E3

February 17, 2015

To: CFWF Board of Directors

I have been requested by Hugh Maynard, CFWF Secretary-Treasurer, to review the financial records of the Federation for the 2014 financial year.

I have verified the figures listed on the CFWF Financial Statements by comparing:

1. Accounts Receivable and Accounts Payable against figures listed.
2. Bank statement debit and credit entries against the invoices paid and deposits made and also to the General Ledger.
3. Proved the bank reconciliation.
4. Made a spot check of several of the larger invoices as verification of the amounts paid.

When comparing the bank statements to the Financial Statement, I found both the income and expenses on the Financial Statement matched the figures listed. When comparing the overall amounts listed with previous year, they are in line with the normal level of variance.

Generally, the financial record were in good order and sufficient to complete the review.

Sincerely,



Florence Timms-Johnson
Book-keeper

CFWF Financial Statement 2014

		2013	2014
<u>INCOME</u>			
Awards	Fees	\$ 4,450	\$ 4,362
	Sponsors	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
	IFAJ Bursary	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500
Conference	Registrations	\$ 15,690	\$ 9,528
	Sponsors	\$ 39,700	\$ 800
	Other	\$ 0	\$ 0
Memberships		\$ 10,012	\$ 9,181
Interest		\$ 23	\$ 63
Other		\$ 6,604	\$ 4,235
TOTAL INCOME		\$ 88,979	\$ 40,669
<u>EXPENSES</u>			
Administration	Admin-Coordinate	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
	Secretariat	\$ 2,175	\$ 1,897
	Insurance	\$ 0	\$ 2,874
	Other	\$ 0	\$ 0
Prof. Development	Webinars	\$ 1,200	\$ 2,000
Awards	Administration	\$ 1,138	\$ 548
	Certificates	\$ 600	\$ 400
	Judging	\$ 1,250	\$ 2,125
	Prizes	\$ 7,975	\$ 8,500
	IFAJ Bursary	\$ 2,583	\$ 2,303
Conference	Expenses	\$ 74,635	\$ 800
Farm Journalist	Honorarium	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
	Travel	\$ 1,186	\$ 1,000
IFAJ	Fees	\$ 3,396	\$ 3,906
	Congress rep.	\$ 2,545	\$ 3,897
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$ 109,684	\$ 41,350
<hr/>			
TOTAL INCOME/EXPENSE		\$ (20,705)	\$ (681)

CFWF Balance Sheet - 2014

	2013	2014
<u>ASSETS</u>		
Current assets		
Chequing	\$ 81,912	\$ 84,979
Accounts receivable	\$ 5,553	\$ 1,978
Pre-paid expenses	\$ 0	\$ 0
Undeposited funds	\$ 20	\$ 20
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total current assets	\$ 87,485	\$ 86,977
Total Assets	\$ 87,485	\$ 86,977
 <u>LIABILITIES & EQUITY</u>		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$ 0	\$ 172
Other liabilities	\$ 101	\$ 101
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total current liabilities	\$ 101	\$ 273
Total Liabilities	\$ 101	\$ 273
Equity		
Opening balance	\$ 16,296	\$ 16,296
Retained earnings	\$ 91,793	\$ 71,088
Net income	\$ (20,705)	\$ (680)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Equity	\$ 87,384	\$ 86,704
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$ 87,485	\$ 86,977

Awards Program Report

prepared by Alexandra Markes, Awards Program Coordinator

Another great year for entries! The awards program is now entirely online, so contestants, judges and the CFWF Secretariat communicate in the virtual world. We opened up five categories this year to include online items such as blogs and e-newsletters, depending on the other criteria for that category, as well as restructured the Electronic Media Audio category to include podcasts.

The Dropbox option, which appeared last year for people submitting multiple entries for multiple persons and larger files, was a big success, as was using it to send the entries to the judges again this year. The online awards program is much cheaper and quicker for everyone involved.

As always, there were some challenges, but this year the issues seemed less troublesome than last year's with most of the questions concerning how to black out electronically a reference to the author or publication on their entry in order to avoid the hassle of printing it, colouring it over with a marker, scanning it and sending it. All the entries, except for one, were submitted online and this exception was because the file was too large and the participant could not compress it sufficiently.

Reviewing the numbers, the awards program did quite well overall. The number of entries was up this year from last year to a strong 231. The number of entries submitted from Alberta was almost four times as much this year compared to last year, but there was a drop in the number of entries from Ontario. The number of entries in each category stayed more or less the same this year with some exceptions, of course. There were huge increases in the Daily Press Reporting, Feature Photography, and News Photography categories. The waived entry fee for the Daily Press Reporting category drove the number of entries up 300% from last year's total of three.

There were some big decreases seen as well, unfortunately. In the News Release, General Periodical (both of which allowed blogs, and e-newsletters this year) and World Wide Website categories, the number of entries in each was cut by about 50%, if not more. Overall, the strongest categories were again the Press Feature, which enjoyed a boost in the number of entries, and the Technical Feature, which saw a very slight decrease in its numbers. Our awards competition is still dominated by members (75%), with a good portion of entries belonging to non-members but being submitted by members.

Our judges came from all across North America this year and were all very excited to help out with the awards program. More than half of the judges came from Ontario, with the rest scattered across the country and the United States. It is interesting to note, that Saskatchewan and Alberta account for approximately one third of the entries, but are not represented at all on the judging panel. Next year's competition, our goal will be to achieve a more even dispersion of judges from across the continent. About half of the judges were new to the panel, some of which had prior experience judging this

competition, but they all were extremely grateful for the opportunity to judge, and more than happy to lend a helping hand in the process.

On that note, there has been a constructive comment from one of the Electronic Media Audio (EMA) judges. The EMA judge recommends “for future years that [EMA] judges be provided with information on the production and use of the feature (where, when, broadcast or on-line feature) as broadening the Radio News Reporting category to Electronic Media Audio becomes a bit of an 'apples and oranges' comparison.”

And as always, we could not have done this awards program without the immense support we receive from our sponsors, so a big thank you goes out to both our new and long-time sponsors!

Founding Patron

- ✓ Monsanto Canada

Sponsors

- ✓ ADAMA
- ✓ AdFarm
- ✓ Bayer CropScience Inc
- ✓ Better Farming
- ✓ Canadian Seed Growers' Association
- ✓ CanWEA
- ✓ Dairy Farmers of Canada
- ✓ Farm Business Communications
- ✓ Monsanto Canada Inc.
- ✓ Ontario Farmer Publications
- ✓ Quarry Integrated Communications
- ✓ Richardson International Ltd.
- ✓ The Western Producer

International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ)

By Allison Finnamore, CFWF representative to IFAJ

Dear CFWF Friends,

Any minute now, the online submission forms will go live for this year's IFAJ Star Prize for Photography and the Online Broadcast Award. As chair of IFAJ's professional development committee, this is an exciting step forward for our organization, creating a streamlined, modern entry system. As co-ordinator of the photography contest, I'm looking forward to all of the extra time this will give me now that I won't have to sort and file email.

In other IFAJ business from the past year, the executive committee held our regular annual meetings in Berlin, Germany in January. At that time, we completed the rewrite/update of the IFAJ constitution and election process. This will now be brought to the delegates' assembly (annual meeting) in October in New Zealand.

IFAJ has finished our first full year as employers of two part-time staff. The hiring of global manager Jose van Gelder and global assistant Anne Kluivers was a partnership with Dutch-based Agriterra. That partnership is currently under review by Agriterra management and the IFAJ presidium and it's expected the future of the partnership will change.

The federation continues to work hard to deliver a broad spectrum of opportunities for members. In addition to the annual congress (New Zealand in October 2015; Bonn and Berlin, Germany in July 2016; Johannesburg and Cape Town, South Africa in April 2017 and the Netherlands in July 2018), several countries regularly invite IFAJ to their annual meetings and farm tours. In March, IFAJ is partnering with Rabobank, CFWF and the 2014 Star Prize winners of the online broadcasting award to present a worldwide webinar, and we expect this webinar will be the first of many. Combining these opportunities with the annual contest program, press tours and leadership training, the goal of the IFAJ executive is to create a multitude of opportunities that will engage various members at different levels.

The ongoing support from Hugh Maynard and Christina Franc is greatly appreciated. They're always willing to help me out when needed and I truly appreciate the efficiency and expertise they offer.

In you ever have any concerns or questions about IFAJ, please contact me. My phone number is 506-860-7761 or email me at allison@finnamore.ca.

Respectfully submitted,
Allison Finnamore
CFWF's IFAJ representative

Regional Reports

British Columbia Farm Writers' Association

Prepared by Tamara Leigh, BCFWA Representative

Things are moving quietly forward for BC farm writers. Membership is holding steady, with some exciting new additions to the fold. This year we welcomed our first member blogger, Julaine Treur, who blogs about dairy farming at In Udder News (<http://inuddernews.wordpress.com>).

We have also seen a regional migration of members to the southern Interior of BC. To accommodate the needs and inquiring minds of our members, the BCFWA is planning a road trip for our members this summer, to explore agriculture in this often overlooked part of the province. The plan is to open the tour to CFWF members in other parts of the country, so watch for more information in May and June.

This year, the BCFWA AGM featured a discussion panel on the rise of animal activism in BC and across the country. Geoff Urton (Manager of Stakeholder Relations, BCSPCA), Geraldine Auston (General Manager, BC Pork) and Dave Taylor (Chair, BC Dairy Association) offered their perspectives from the front lines working with animal activists and the industries that have been targeted by them in recent years. The discussion was off to a good start when Geoff Urton confessed that even the BCSPCA has been picketed by animal rights activists for serving meat at one of their events.

The official business of the was brightened by the announcement of two new initiatives inspired and implemented by our Secretary, Trevor Hargreaves. First, the Dairy Industry Research and Education Committee (DIREC) has agreed to fund two yearly \$500 travel bursaries for BCFWA members in good standing to offset travel costs to either the CFWF annual conference, or IFAJ congress. This year the BCFWA will also be offering a one-time \$1000 travel bursary to attend IFAJ in New Zealand, also graciously funded by DIREC. Trevor has also facilitated a member benefits package for BCFWA members that will be rolled out this Spring. Full details of the package will be available soon at www.bcfwa.ca.

Members also approved the addition of a new director position to the BCFWA board with specific duties to manage social media accounts. Julaine Treur will take over responsibility for BCFWA's Twitter and Facebook accounts this year. We would like to thank Sarah Godin from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, for managing our Twitter account so ably and enthusiastically for the past two years.

Every year, the BCFWA awards the Tom Armstrong Bursary to a deserving student in agriculture or journalism studies. This year, the committee awarded the \$1000 bursary to Kasha Foster, a second year student in the UBC in the Faculty of Land and Food Systems' Global Resources Systems program.

The BCFWA executive for 2015:

President & CFWF representative - Tamara Leigh, Shiny Bird Communications

Vice President - Cheryl Davie, BC Chicken Marketing Board

Treasurer - David Schmidt, Country Life in BC

Secretary - Trevor Hargreaves, BC Dairy

Director, Social Media - Julaine Treur

Saskatchewan Farm Writers' Association

Prepared by Myrna Stark Leader, CFWF representative

This is an opportunity to reflect on the SFWA events of the previous year as summarized below. And, in Saskatchewan, we're already thinking "next year country" as a great group of volunteers are planning CFWF 2016 in Saskatoon and vicinity September 29 to October 2.

With plenty of one-of-a-kind features, we look forward to piquing the interest of and welcoming national members. Special thanks to our organizing committee co-chairs Marlene Hursh and Neil Billinger for taking on this big job.

Commercial over, here's what our approximately 50 members were up to over the last year.

January: As major industry conferences happen in Saskatoon at this time of year, the SFWA annual meeting was held there to benefit many members who were already in the city for other business. At the meeting, we were reminded of the great job done on our website remodel this year. We also discussed the need for a SFWA information package, that we, or employees, could use to promote the organization to (training and budget controlling) managers. As this would benefit all members, Lisa Guenther and Christina Franc are looking at developing something at the national level.

June: Our annual spring tour was set in the Cypress Hills, in southwest Saskatchewan. On Friday night, members stayed at the historic Commercial Hotel in Maple Creek. Royce Pettyjohn, manager of community and economic development, regaled members with stories about the region's history during a walking tour of the town. We then lunched and toured the Cypress Hills Vineyard and Winery, an award-winning winery owned by Marty and Marie Bohnet. Next stop was rancher Eric Lawrence's place. Farm writers got a first-hand look at the damage done during the 2010 flood and took in the incredible view from the top of the cutbanks overlooking Eric's ranch. Finally, there was a visit to the Reesor Ranch, which included great food, cowboy poetry and luxury bunkhouse accommodations.

November: The Communications Chair of the Sask. Chapter of the Canadian Agri-Marketing Association (CAMA) was the guest at the annual gathering of members in Regina during Agribition week. The group discovered many commonalities and opportunities to share and learn from each other. It was a good reminder that both SFWA and CAMA have several professional development opportunities and bursaries/grants.

SFWA will again offer a bursary for one member to attend the CFWF national conference in Calgary. While there have been challenges enticing multiple candidates, the Board is moving forward to offer the bursary again this year as we strongly believe in the opportunity that it affords a member who cannot meet the costs of travel on their own.

We continue to encourage all that are interested to come for a visit or speak with any of the members and get involved. Contact information for the executive is available on our website at www.saskfarmwriters.ca. The SFWA website includes a freelance writer/consultant directory. Please let Diane Goski or Lisa Guenther know if you'd like to be included in this directory.

The 2015 Board includes:

President - Lisa Guenther, Grainews

Vice-President - Diane Goski, Farm Credit Canada

Past-President - Kevin Hursh, Hursh Consulting & Communications

Secretary - Jan Côté, Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada

Treasurer - Marlene Hursh, Hursh Consulting & Communications

Director/CFWF Rep - Myrna Stark Leader, City of Regina

Director/Member at Large - Alice McFarlane, CJVR FM/CK750 AM

Manitoba Farm Writers and Broadcasters Association

Prepared by Crystal Jorgenson, Interim President

Interim President & Membership Chair: Crystal Jorgenson

Past President: Maureen Fitzhenry

Secretary: Anne Coté

Treasurer: Kelly Green

Promotions chair: Karli Reimer

Director: Kelvin Heppner

Director: Ellen Goodman

Events

We held our 2014 annual general meeting and dinner on March 5 at Canad Inns Polo Park, with a stellar turnout of 28 people. The evening featured presentations by members Anne Coté and Kelvin Heppner. Anne presented on her trip to Uganda via the IFAJ/ Agriterra E-4-D program. Kelvin provided a summary of CFWF 2013 in British Columbia, for which he received the MFWBA bursary. At the meeting, MFWBA recognized the contributions of Ron Friesen to the organization and to Manitoba agricultural journalism with a Lifetime Membership. During the business portion of the meeting, the membership confirmed the election of Kelvin Heppner to the board (as Maureen Fitzhenry stepped down), and the re-election of Shannon VanRaes and Anne Coté.

On May 15, our luncheon presenter was Melinda German, the new general manager of Manitoba Beef Producers. Melinda discussed what's happening in the beef sector as producers are seeing strong prices after a decade of challenges. She touched on the current frame-of-mind among ranchers, as well as herd inventory levels, animal/beef prices, consumer response and other beef trends.

On June 24, we had a special treat when MFWBA past president Maureen Fitzhenry gave us a behind-the-scenes tour of the new Canadian Museum of Human Rights. Maureen, who is the Museum's media relations manager, described the architectural highlights along the way, then gave us a presentation of what we can expect in the gallery spaces, which were still being fit-up with exhibits. After the tour, we retired to Finn McCue's pub at The Forks for refreshments. Our surprise guest for the evening was Allison Finnamore from ACFWA!

While technically not an MFWBA event, our members were invited to attend (at member pricing) a CAMA Manitoba event on October 30 featuring MFWBA member Shannon VanRaes and Chris Procajlo on the future of drones in agriculture in Manitoba. Shannon and Chris discussed how drones work, some of their technical limitations and the government red tape that will keep the technology earthbound.

On November 4, MFWBA hosted Japhet Emmanuel, Farm Radio International's country program manager in Tanzania, at a luncheon where he described FRI's effort to bring relevant agricultural information to subsistence farmers in 38 African countries. Japhet listed gender issues, climate change and land-grabbing as some of the main challenges

facing farmers in Tanzania. He noted that much of their programming is prepared for a female audience, as field work is often carried out by women. FRI is the Ottawa-based organization founded by CBC journalist George Atkins in 1979.

On December 10, the MFWBA held its annual holiday gathering at King's Head Pub, with food, drink and a door prize draw. About 16 attended and enjoyed the merriment.

Our 2015 annual general meeting has been scheduled for March 12 once again at Canad Inns Polo Park. Guest speaker will be Dan Mazier, the newly elected president of the Keystone Agricultural Producers.

Other matters

The MFWBA awarded its first annual bursary for the 2014 IFAJ conference in Scotland to Anne Coté. The bursary provided \$1000 to help cover some of Anne's costs in attending the conference. Although a 2014 CFWF conference bursary was offered, no one applied for the \$1000 award. Both awards will be offered again in 2015 for the New Zealand IFAJ conference and the Calgary CFWF conference.

In early 2014, MFWBA invested a portion of its savings in laddered term deposits, which will provide guaranteed income on an annual basis to support MFWBA bursaries and activities.

Board director Shannon VanRaes stepped away from the board in the fall due to other commitments. Ellen Goodman from Cigi has agreed to allow her name to stand for election to the board at our upcoming AGM.

The MFWBA website is back online with a new and improved look - www.mfwba.ca. MFWBA can also be found on Facebook and Twitter (@MFWBA).

Membership

Our membership in 2014 declined slightly from 69 to 66 members. We currently have five life members. We are pleased to now offer online credit card payment for membership and other activities via the CFWF portal and PayPal.

Eastern Canadian Farm Writers' Association

Prepared by Christina Franc, President

ECFWA Annual Meeting

The annual meeting will be held on May 13-14, in Ottawa. This will be a great opportunity for our colleagues in and near the region to gather. We will be planning a shuttle bus to and from, with pick-up/drop-off locations in the Guelph area as well as Milton area. Lots of exciting activities are planned, so make sure to clear your schedule if you can.

PD, socials and tours

As always, ECFWA keeps busy with plenty of activities for our members. January 2014, we held a workshop on crisis communications with Sarah Andrewes at Hill+Knowlton Strategies. She spoke about best practices, how to manage crises and how to know if you are prepared.

In April, we worked with CAMA (Canadian Agri-Marketing Association) to plan a session about getting to know marketers and journalists better. The workshop had a panel discussion about the marketer/communicator perspective, followed by a panel of the journalist/editor perspective. Later on in the day, the discussion surrounded how can each group work together. It was a very interesting and insightful day.

In August, we organized a bus tour through the Chatham-Kent region. The two-day event featured a tour of a local family farm and market, Pioneer's work with Truly Green Farms and an ethanol and specialty alcohol plant. Day two included a visit to Weather Innovations Consulting, Buis Beef and the Vince Family farm.

Clare Wooding of Syngenta Canada Inc. led our fall professional development. She spoke about her Master's in Communications Management, "A capstone on sponsorship in Canadian agriculture." The presentation highlighted her survey of farmers and agribusiness individuals about how they consider products for purchase, whether they follow sponsorship and how that affects their purchases.

The next session we are planning is this week, and will be with Jo-Ann McArthur, who will present a case study on turning a commodity into a brand as well as highlight the latest food and consumer trends from North America that should be on your radar.

ECFWA Bursaries

ECFWA awarded our annual bursary to attend the CFWF Conference in Charlottetown, PEI to Jillian Craig this year.

Other News

Make sure to check out our new website at www.ecfwa.ca - special thanks to Karen Dallimore for getting it up and running.

All in all, it's been a great year for ECFWA and we look forward to what the future will bring. In conclusion, I would like to say a special thanks to all the dedicated board members and volunteers whose continual perseverance allows us to have so many fantastic events throughout the year.

ECFWA 2014/2015 executive

President: Christina Franc

First Vice-President: Melanie Epp

Second Vice-President: Kristy Nudds

Secretary-treasurer: Andi McKillop

Communications coordinator: Karen Dallimore

Past president: Clare Wooding

Directors:

Sarah Andrewes

Sharon Grose

Jeanine Moyer

Guylaine Gagnon

Courtney Denard



Feast of the East Tour at COWS Ice Cream, Charlottetown PEI 2014

Atlantic Canada Farm Writers' Association

Prepared by Andy Walker, President

It was a banner year for the Atlantic Canada Farm Writers Association as we hosted the CFWF annual meeting for the first time. This was a major undertaking for a small organization like ours and kudos to the organizing committee under the chairmanship of Allison Finnamore, who did a fantastic job.

Now, it is upward and onward to this year. We held a social event around the Atlantic Canada Farm mechanization Show in Moncton in early March. We are planning our annual meeting in late May or early June in the beautiful Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia. We are also exploring the idea of holding a professional development session later in the year.



Fathers of Confederation at the PEI conference