

Canadian Farm Writers' Federation



2021 Annual Report

Presented to the CFWF 2022 Annual Meeting
By telemeeting

Thursday, June 9, 2022

Canadian Farm Writers' Federation

2022 Annual Meeting

3:00p.m. EDT
Thursday, June 9, 2022
By telemeeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85425272494?pwd=dnRBcEE4YjExTnhwWlFRS1ViTDNOUT09>

Meeting ID: 854 2527 2494 / Passcode: CFWF

Dial by your location

647-558-0588 / 778-907-2071 / 204-272-7920 / 438-809-7799 / 587-328-1099 / 647-374 4685

AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Adoption of the minutes 2021 annual meeting
4. Business arising from the minutes
5. President's Report
6. Secretary-Treasurer's Report & 2021 Financial Statement
7. Awards Program Report
8. Professional Development Fund Report
9. IFAJ Report
10. Conference Report
11. Regional Reports
12. Board Elections
13. New Business
14. Adjournment

Canadian Farm Writers' Federation

Minutes of the 2021 Annual Meeting

Wednesday, June 2, 2020, at 3:00p.m. EDT

By telemeeting

Present: Trevor Bacque, chairperson; Hugh Maynard, Secretary, Alexandra Hayden, Norma Tolhurst, CFWF Secretariat; Allison Finnamore, Andy Walker, Anne Thompson, Ashley Robinson, Brenda Trask, Clare Wooding, Clare Stanfield, Craig Lester, Crystal Jorgenson, Crystal Leader, David Schmidt, Diane Goski, Elaine Vininsky, Jane Robinson, Janet Kanter, Jay Whetter, Jessika Guse, Jillian Bender, John Morriss, John Muggeridge, Karen Davidson, Karen Briere, Kelly Daynard, Kelly Green, Kelsey Johnson, Kim Ratz, Laura Thygesen, Laurie Harris, Lilian Schaer, Lisa Guenther, Lorne McClinton, Marlene Hursh, Mary Feldskov, Michelle Chunyua, Myrna Stark Leader, Owen Roberts, Rachel Telford, Reg Norby, Ron McCullough, Sharon Grose, Toban Dyck, Tommy Wilson, Tracey Feist, Trudy Kelly Forsythe.

1. Welcome

Trevor Bacque called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

Moved by Ashley Robinson and seconded by Kelly Daynard to adopt the agenda as presented. Carried.

3. Adoption of the Minutes of the 2020 Annual Meeting

Moved by Lisa Guenther and seconded by Kelsey Johnson to adopt the minutes of the 2020 annual meeting as presented. Carried.

4. Business Arising

Lisa Guenther asked about the status of the PD Fund. Hugh Maynard noted that the emphasis for board activity had been on revamping the awards program.

5. President's Report

Trevor Bacque noted that details are in the annual report for everyone to read. He acknowledged the challenging times we are all facing with the COVID pandemic, and noted that everyone seems to be taking things in stride. He thanked the awards committee for all their hard work in updating the program and wished Eastern Canada all the best in organizing the in-person conference for Windsor, On in September.

6. Secretary-Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement

Hugh Maynard presented the 2020 Secretariat report and noted that generally everything has been fairly smooth. Although there had been income from the annual conference, this was offset by a larger summer grant from YCW and lower expenses. He noted that the overhaul to the awards program was the largest change in over two decades, and he thanked

Allison Finnamore for taking the lead on preparing a code of conduct for CFWF events. Work continued on developing the mentorship program.

He then reviewed the 2020 financial statement, despite no income from the conference the YCW grant partially offset the lower income, and the Bayer bursary will be held over until next year for the IFAJ congress in Denmark. Most other revenue and expenses were related to the awards program.

Professional Development Fund

The fund finally gained some ground and closed pretty much where it started in 2014 (market fluctuations). No money was withdrawn as CFWF surplus funds were used for PD activities.

Hugh Maynard moved and Trevor Bacque seconded to approve the 2020 financial statements. Carried.

Hugh Maynard moved and Jessika Guse seconded that Flo Johnson, bookkeeper, be nominated to carry out the review audit of CFWF finances for 2021. Carried.

7. Awards Program Report

Hugh Maynard gave a summary of the awards program; the details are in annual report. A webinar was held to present the changes, the recording is available on the website. The major change was explaining the “of the year” awards. Myrna Stark-Leader asked about sponsorship. Hugh explained that each category will still have the gold/silver/bronze categories. The Secretariat is still in the process of contacting sponsors but response so far has been positive.

8. Professional Development Fund Report

Hugh Maynard presented the report on the Professional Development Fund which did not see a lot of action this year because of COVID and the focus of revamping the awards. At this stage, the board is putting forward a project, as mentioned we are working on the mentorship program. Lisa Guenther or Crystal Leader mentioned that they were still working out the details of the program, but if anyone is interested in being part of the planning or the program to just get in touch.

9. IFAJ Report

Trevor Bacque presented the IFAJ report and noted all the details are in the document. Hugh Maynard added that the eCongress will again be online this year at the end of August with professional development, delegate assembly, awards, etc. IFAJ will be starting research on a professional development certificate which Owen Roberts will be leading as past president. They will be doing needs assessment within the next few weeks. One important item will be giving accreditation for PD activities undertaken as a journalist. Watch for an announcement next week. Lilian Schaer asked about an update on the Canadian congress. Trevor said the chairpersons have met to discuss the next steps. If anyone has questions, contact any of the co-chairs for details.

10. Conference Reports

Rachel Telford shared details of the upcoming “Risky Business” conference in Windsor, ON. The event will be a hybrid in person and online. Right now the hotel is shut down, but is thinking optimistic for the fall. Thank you to everyone who participated in the survey. Still looking at providing transportation from Pearson airport. Tours are still in the planning stage. Registration will be open in early July. If anyone has any favourite social media advocates, the PD committee would be grateful to hear from them.

11. Regional Reports

Trevor Bacque suggested that if there were specific questions about the regional reports to contact the regional reps. All regional reports can be found in the AGM report.

12. Board Elections

Trevor Bacque asked Owen Roberts chaired the elections and Hugh Maynard provided an explanation of the process according to the constitution: nominations from each region and 2 from Alberta and Eastern Canada because they have more than 80 members. Two members at large, one from the east and one from the west. Next board meeting the officers will be elected by the board.

Position	Name	Nominated by
BCFWA rep	Myrna Stark-Leader	David Schmidt
AFWA reps	Trevor Bacque	Jessika Guse
SFWA rep	Crystal Leader	Diane Goski
MFWBA rep	Ashley Robinson	Crystal Jorgenson
ECFWA rep	Rachel Telford & Mary Feldskov	Kelsey Johnson
ACFWA rep	Allison Finnamore	Trudy Forsythe
Western member-at-large	Jessika Guse	Janet Kanthers
Eastern member-at-large	Hugh Maynard	Rachel Telford

Owen Roberts closed nominations and asked for a motion to approve the slate of nominations presented.

Moved by Lisa Guenther seconded by Clare Stanfield to accept all nominations as presented. Carried.

13. New Business

Nothing specific was raised. Trevor Bacque thanked Crystal Jorgensen for her time on the board and as president.

14. Adjournment

The agenda having been completed, Trevor Bacque declared the meeting adjourned at 4:08 p.m. EDT.

Annual Reports

President's Report

Prepared by Rachel Telford

Ten years ago, when I first started at Grain Farmers of Ontario, I was told by my communications colleagues that I would be a member of the Eastern Canada Farm Writers Association, and by association, the Canadian Farm Writers' Federation. Four months later, I was on a plane to Manitoba, for my first CFWF conference – Mud, Floods, and Suds (I still have the umbrella!).

I remember two things from that conference. After spending years talking about the Manitoba floodway in my previous news job, I got to go inside a control gate for the floodway. It was so exciting! (I'm serious!) But second, as an introvert who didn't know anyone other than one co-worker, it was overwhelming. Everyone else seemed to know each other, and I wasn't very good at meeting and introducing myself into an already formed group. I was more the 'sit at an empty table and let others make the move to join me' type of person. But here's the thing – people did join me, and introduce themselves, and include me in their conversations. It was my first introduction to the supportive community that CFWF members have developed.

So why this trip down memory lane? I never expected that one day I would be CFWF president – and yet I had the honour of being elected to serve in that capacity for the past year. As I started to think about what I could write in this year-in-review report, I couldn't help but be reminded that the one thing CFWF excels at is driving that sense of community. The COVID-19 pandemic has kept us from meeting in person for two years, but every opportunity we have had to meet up online has been not only an opportunity for professional development but a chance to reconnect with old friends and welcome new ones.

The CFWF 2021 online conference was a good example of this – taking advantage of technology such as an app and a dedicated site for casual conversation allowed attendees multiple ways to connect. It also gave us the opportunity to meet a new international friend that we would not have met otherwise and gave new CFWF members a good sense of the camaraderie that is found at in-person events. Our online discussion session about the war in Ukraine offered the chance for us to learn from each other and share our collective experiences and knowledge. It was a more solemn event, but it showed how our national network fosters cooperation. There are similarities in the impact the war is having on agriculture here in Canada and regional differences that highlight the diversity of our industry.

In some ways the shift to online has brought us closer together, allowing us to be more involved in activities together throughout the year. Our regional associations have continued to host webinars that they have opened to all CFWF members. Another great example of the supportive community of CFWF is the development of a mentorship program and the work that has been put into getting the program going despite the challenges and delays created by the pandemic. It has been my honour to serve as president of CFWF for the past year.

I want to thank everyone who has dedicated their time to working at the regional or national level to support our events and programs. I look forward to seeing everyone in person in Saskatchewan later this year.

Secretariat Report

Prepared by Hugh Maynard, Secretary-Treasurer

Administration

The Secretariat continued to function relatively normally within the context of the pandemic, with the main activities at the Secretariat being the provision of support to the board of directors, managing the finances and office functions such as membership, communications and administering the awards programs and professional development fund. Many thanks to the volunteers on the board and the Qu'anglo staff who help to make things go smoothly, Norma Tolhurst and Alexandra Hayden. Norma is off on maternity leave for 2022 but continues to help out with bookkeeping.

Finances

The bank balance remains healthy due to the generous contribution of sponsors to the 2021 online conference and some timely support from the federal government through the summer student grant program. This has helped maintain the CFWF surplus which will enable the organization to contribute to professional development activities and maintain operations in the as we head toward hosting the IFAJ congress in 2023. CFWF requires a surplus of ~\$20,000 in the bank for cash flow and operations, and the board is committed to investing amounts higher than this in programming when the additional surplus is available.

The Professional Development Fund (PD Fund) finally generated some reasonable returns in 2021 with the PD Fund's year-end capital tipping slightly over \$60,000 for the first time. There were no PD disbursements as the board prepared a mentorship program to be supported by the fund.

Awards

The CFWF board committee completed the work on the revisions to the awards program started in 2019. The major changes were to group categories together to facilitate 'of the year' prizes, to remove frequency as a criterion for submissions and the addition of story, writer and new writer of the year awards. The revised awards program attracted a much higher number of entries than in recent years and generally received favourable comments in the post awards survey.

Board of Directors

The CFWF Board met four times during the year via telemeeting. Membership numbers continued their downward trend that has been in evidence during the COVID years, now down around 300. Hopefully, the resumption of in-person activities will help revitalize numbers. Work also continued on a mentorship program, an initiative started by Saskatchewan director Crystal Leader and CFWF past-president Lisa Guenther. Details of the program are still being finalized with a launch in conjunction with the 2022 CFWF conference in Regina, SK planned.

The 2021 board of directors were:

Rachel Telford	President (Eastern Canada)
Jessika Guse	Vice-president (Western members-at-large)
Hugh Maynard	Secretary-Treasurer (Eastern Member-at-Large)
Myrna Stark-Leader	Director (British Columbia)
Trevor Bacque	Director (Alberta) & IFAJ rep.
Crystal Leader	Director (Saskatchewan)
Ashley Robinson	Director (Manitoba)
Mary Feldskov	Director (Eastern Canada)
Allison Finnamore	Director (Atlantic Canada)

With the postponement of the 2020 CFWF conference due to the COVID19 situation, the CFWF conference schedule was revised. The SK 2022 conference will be held in Regina, SK from September 29-October 1, the IFAJ Congress to be held in Olds, AB in 2023 and the 2024 conference in Halifax, NS (TBC). The remainder of the rotation is as follows:

The Annual CFWF Conference Schedule

2022	SK	2029	AC	2036	AB
2023	AB (IFAJ)	2030	AB	2037	MB
2024	AC	2031	MB	2038	EC
2025	MB	2032	EC	2039	BC
2026	EC	2033	BC	2040	SK
2027	BC	2034	SK	2041	AC
2028	SK	2035	AC	2042	AB



Keep updated on the 2022 CFWF conference at
<https://saskfarmwriters.ca/>

CFWF Financial Review 2021

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

June 2, 2021

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 2021 financial year.

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

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

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

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 years, most items were in line with the normal level of variance. Items of note was the increase in conference income over 2020 and the continued reduction in expenses due to the COVID pandemic.

Sincerely,



Florence Timms-Johnson
Bookkeeper

CFWF Financial Statement 20210 - OPERATIONS

		<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
<u>INCOME</u>			
Awards	Fees	\$ 2,702	\$ 4,123
	Sponsors	\$ 7,600	\$ 7,350
	IFAJ Bursary	\$ 2,500	\$ 0
Conference	Registrations	\$ 0	\$ 0
	Sponsors	\$ 0	\$ 0
	Other	\$ 0	\$ 6,680
Memberships		\$ 8,447	\$ 7,232
Interest		\$ 0	\$ 0
Other		\$ 12,127	\$ 10,454
TOTAL INCOME		\$ 33,376	\$ 35,840

EXPENSES

Administration	Admin-Coordinate	\$ 12,127	\$ 10,454
	Secretariat	\$ 1,784	\$ 2,227
Prof. Development	PD Fund	\$ 0	\$ 250
Awards	Administration	\$ 286	\$ 385
	Certificates	\$ 60	\$ 425
	Judging	\$ 1,750	\$ 1,650
	Prizes	\$ 7,625	\$ 6,250
	IFAJ Bursary	\$ 0	\$ 0
Conference	Expenses	\$ 0	\$ 0
Farm Journalist	Honorarium	\$ 0	\$ 0
	Travel	\$ 0	\$ 0
IFAJ	Fees	\$ 3,902	\$ 3,364
	Congress rep.	\$ 1,518	\$ 0
	Other	\$ 0	\$ 257
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$ 29,052	\$ 25,262

TOTAL INCOME/EXPENSE	\$ 4,324	\$ 10,578
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CFWF Financial Statement 2021– PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

		<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
Opening balance		\$ 47,357	\$ 47,953
<u>INCOME</u>			
Interest		\$ 0	\$ 0
Dividends		\$ 2,159	\$ 3,395
TOTAL INCOME		\$ 2,159	\$ 3,395
<u>EXPENSES</u>			
Disbursements	PD projects	\$ 0	\$ 0
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$ 0	\$ 0
Sub-total		\$ 49,515	\$ 51,348
<u>ADJUSTMENTS</u>			
Investments	Gains (Losses)	\$ (1,562)	\$ 8,669
BALANCE		\$ 47,953	\$ 60,017

CFWF Balance Sheet - 2021

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
<u>ASSETS</u>		
Current assets		
Chequing	\$ 23,043	\$ 37,647
Accounts receivable	\$ 9,976	\$ 7,271
Undeposited funds	\$ 5,120	\$ 7,010
Total current assets	\$ 38,139	\$ 51,928
Investment assets		
PD Fund	\$ 47,683	\$ 60,017
Total investment assets	\$ 47,683	\$ 60,017
Total Assets	\$ 85,822	\$ 111,945
 <u>LIABILITIES & EQUITY</u>		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$ 0	\$ 2,885
Other Liabilities	\$ (722)	\$ (398)
Total current liabilities	\$ (722)	\$ 2,487
Investment liabilities		
PD Fund	\$ (10,621)	\$ (10,621)
Total Investment Liabilities	\$ (10,621)	\$ (10,621)
Total Liabilities	\$ (11,343)	\$ (8,133)
Equity		
Opening balance	\$ 16,296	\$ 16,296
Retained earnings	\$ 75,106	\$ 80,869
Net income	\$ 5,763	\$ 22,913
Total Equity	\$ 97,165	\$ 120,078
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$ 85,822	\$ 111,945

Awards Program Report

prepared by Alexandra Hayden, Awards Program Coordinator

Another great year for entries! We received around 230 entries which is an increase of 65 from 2020. With the help of the awards committee we were able to update and create new categories to reflect the current publishing and broadcasting practices across Canada.

New list of categories & number of entries:

- **Farm Writer of the year (5)**
- **New Writer of the year (1)**
- **Communication categories**
 - Electronic Media - Video (4)
 - Electronic Media - Audio (11)
 - Communication - Short (5)
 - Communication - Long (5)
- **Opinion writing (16)**
- **Feature Categories**
 - Technical Feature (26)
 - Current Affairs Feature (33)
 - People Feature (29)
- **Reporting categories**
 - Technical Reporting (19)
 - Current Affairs Reporting (22)
 - Business/Economics Reporting (18)
- **Photography**
 - People Photography (13)
 - Production Photography (11)
 - Landscape Photography (11)

The online entry system continues to improve and has made it simple for people to submit their entries and this year, all the entries for the contest were submitted using the online system. Those entering are individuals or groups (frequently editors or managers submitting larger groups of entries). The entries are then reviewed for criteria (eligible dates, proof of publication, relevancy to the category) and then coded so the judges receive blind entries for evaluation. Using a blind judging system allows for a fair and unbiased evaluation as well as for the possibility of entries from companies who are also sponsors. Another perk of CFWF membership and entering the CFWF contests is that the winners of the CFWF contests are reviewed for eligibility to the IFAJ contests and are automatically entered if they meet all the criteria (dates, content). This year we had an entry in almost every IFAJ Star Prize category.

As always, there were some challenges. With the new categories and updates it was sometimes unclear if an entry was the best match for the new categories, or better suited in another. This led to some debate on certain entries. Moving forward this will be something we will plan and work on getting more specific category requirements.

Another challenge we faced was with comments from the judges. We received many complaints from participants who received a cookie cutter response from some judges and some received what they considered to be unconstructive criticism. As a result of this we will not be asking those judges to return and will look for new judges who are willing to take the time and provide good feedback.

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 & IFAJ Bursary



Sponsors



Professional Development Fund Report

prepared by Hugh Maynard, Secretary Treasurer

The CFWF Professional Development Fund was launched in 2015 with a mission to support professional development for agricultural journalists and communicators for CFWF members. The PD Fund is the legacy of a lot of hard work by volunteers and generous contributions by sponsors who, over the years enabled CFWF to generate a surplus from fund-raising activities that can now be used to support professional development activities.

The fund defines professional development as an activity that enhances the knowledge of the profession and/or contributes to the development of a person's professional attributes, abilities, and skills. This can be accomplished through participation in activities that relate to agricultural journalism or communications including areas such as research, educational programs, conferences, workshops, and exchanges.

No projects were approved in 2021 due to the pandemic so, to date, a total of \$22,510 has been disbursed to thirteen recipients, with \$14,362 being paid from the fund and \$8,148 contributed from the general CFWF surplus.

The fund has struggled with inconsistent returns since its inception: a mediocre 2018 was followed by an excellent 2019 and a mediocre 2020 and (finally!) an excellent 2021. The less than stellar returns from the fund's investments have been offset by the capacity of the CFWF board to make a contribution towards the bursaries in order to maintain the capital base as much as possible. Given that the initial investment was modest for the goals of the PD Fund that were established at the outset, it is important that we continue to build the capital base for future years.

For 2022, the CFWF board is proposing a shift in activity with the establishment of a mentorship program. Those participating in the mentorship program will be able to apply for financial support for their activities, possibly including support to attend the CFWF conference to meet with their mentor and other mentees. More information will be available soon.

CFWF Financial Statement 2021 – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND							
		<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
Opening balance		\$45,642	\$49,013	\$48,968	\$39,172	\$47,356	\$47,953
<u>INCOME</u>							
Interest		\$317	\$227	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Dividends		\$4,679	\$1,766	\$6,615	\$2,436	\$2,159	\$3,395
TOTAL INCOME		\$4,996	\$1,993	\$6,615	\$2,436	\$2,159	\$3,395
<u>EXPENSES</u>							
Disbursements PD projects		\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Sub-total		\$50,638	\$51,006	\$50,583	\$41,608	\$49,515	\$51,348
<u>ADJUSTMENTS</u>							
Investments Gains (Losses)		-\$1,625	-\$2,038	-\$11,411	\$5,748	-\$1,562	\$8,669
BALANCE		\$49,013	\$48,968	\$39,172	\$47,356	\$47,953	\$60,017

International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ)

By Trevor Bacque, CFWF representative to IFAJ

Preparation continues for the IFAJ Congress to be held at Olds, Alta., June 27 to July 3, 2023. But before that, the Danish congress will take place June 27 to July 3, 2022, at Vingsted, Denmark. Canada has a strong contingent attending the 2022 Congress with more than 30 participants, second only to the Danish guild. Annemarie Pedersen will represent the 2023 congress co-chairs in Denmark and will deliver a presentation formally inviting international delegates to the Canadian event. It is important to have a strong showing and Canada will be well represented and eager to sell other attendees about the unique nature and appeal of Western Canada. Also representing Canada through the Young Leaders program is Beckie Zimmer of Pattison Media. She is one of 10 journalists under 35 selected to the prestigious program that takes place immediately preceding the main Congress. Congratulations, Beckie!

The Danish Congress will be special and memorable for four countries. Brazil, Chile, Nepal and Uganda will all have their applications for full membership in the IFAJ accepted. This will bring the total number of member countries to 60. This exciting news builds on the “I” in IFAJ and the fact that we are all part of a truly global network of journalists and communicators.

In addition, this is an election year at the IFAJ. The four presidium positions (president, vice-president, secretary-general and treasurer) were open to any IFAJ members. Candidates were announced on May 31, 2022, with all but one position (secretary general) set to be won by acclamation. This is disappointing since multiple candidates for such important positions signals a healthy and engaged membership. All positions carry two-year terms. Online voting takes places between June 23-30, and on July 1, 2022, at the delegate assembly in Denmark, the election results are to be publicly shared.

Back home, work is underway for the 2023 Congress, which will take place at the Olds College campus. The College received a \$16 million grant a few years ago and the money was earmarked to build a new agriculture-focused learning hub with a specific focus on 21st century farming practices. Congress organizers are eager to show off this new facility to our international delegates as it truly is a world-class post-secondary for agricultural related studies. By the time the Danish Congress begins, the Canadian IFAJ microsite will launch with details and a provisional program outlined for delegates. The goal is, generally speaking, to have a Congress that will cost less to attend since flights for delegates outside of continental North America are often quite expensive.

After the congress in Canada, IFAJ congresses will take place in the following countries:

2024: Interlaken, Switzerland – Aug. 14-18 (<https://www.ifaj2024.ch/>)

2025: Israel – Location TBD

2026: Kenya – Location TBD

2027: Croatia – Location TBD

Regional Reports

British Columbia Farm Writers' Association

Prepared by Myrna Stark-Leader, BCFWA Representative

As much as we've all learned to get together virtually, online meeting burnout is real and lack of in-person connectivity made 2021 more challenging without any in-person events due to Covid.

In fact, our first in person meeting in a long time was the 2022 BCFWA AGM held at the end of March 2022 in Abbotsford. We had 13 participants in attendance plus two online.

With members being far apart and not being able to host the normal in-person operations tours, we tried a few things, some more successful than others.

We hosted the AGM in January 2021, a virtual spring social and an evening session with Minister Popham for Halloween to try and stay connected. We thank the other regional associations for continuing to invite other CFWF members to their online sessions. (A March 3, 2022, online "Words Matter" BC workshop had much better attendance by inviting national CFWF members to participate, which they did. Our guest speakers appreciated the much fuller zoom room and so did the organizers.)

The BC board met 10 times in 2021 at 2 p.m. Vancouver time, the first Tuesday of the month, except in summer. We made improvements to clarify website content, ensured an up-to-date members' list and that people that should get notified are receiving information and updated the BC constitution to reflect modern life (virtual meetings) and made changes to other sections that didn't align with how the organization works. Plans for a member directory fell off due to lack of interest at the time.

Our small but powerful BCFWA continues to have a healthy bank balance. BCFWA paid membership in 2022 sits at 21 plus 1 life and 1 honorary member. We had 29 paid, plus the life and honorary members in 2021. Bringing new members onboard continues to be challenging as ag reporting in the province is shrinking and many potential members already have full plates.

Despite our size, we know that we can help show off BC to the world and are planning for a BC Pre-tour for IFAJ Canada 2023. David Schmidt is organizing. Yay David! Guests will travel from Vancouver through interior BC, the Rockies and end up in Calgary in time for the conference start. For those who plan to attend IFAJ In Denmark from outside Alberta and not organizing a pre-tour, we'd sure appreciate you plugging BC. I am attending Denmark so will for sure have my welcome to BC game face on.

BCFWA also continues to have a healthy balance in the Tim Armstrong Memorial bursary account which enabled a 2021 \$1,000 bursary to Courtney Wallace, an Animal Science program student with Lakeland College. A second bursary was provided by BCFWA general funds due to lack of spending during Covid. That \$1,000 bursary was awarded to Lana Harach who is also in Animal Science but with the University of Frazer Valley.

The BCFWA executive for 2022:

President – Ronda Payne, Girl with a Pen (acclaimed)

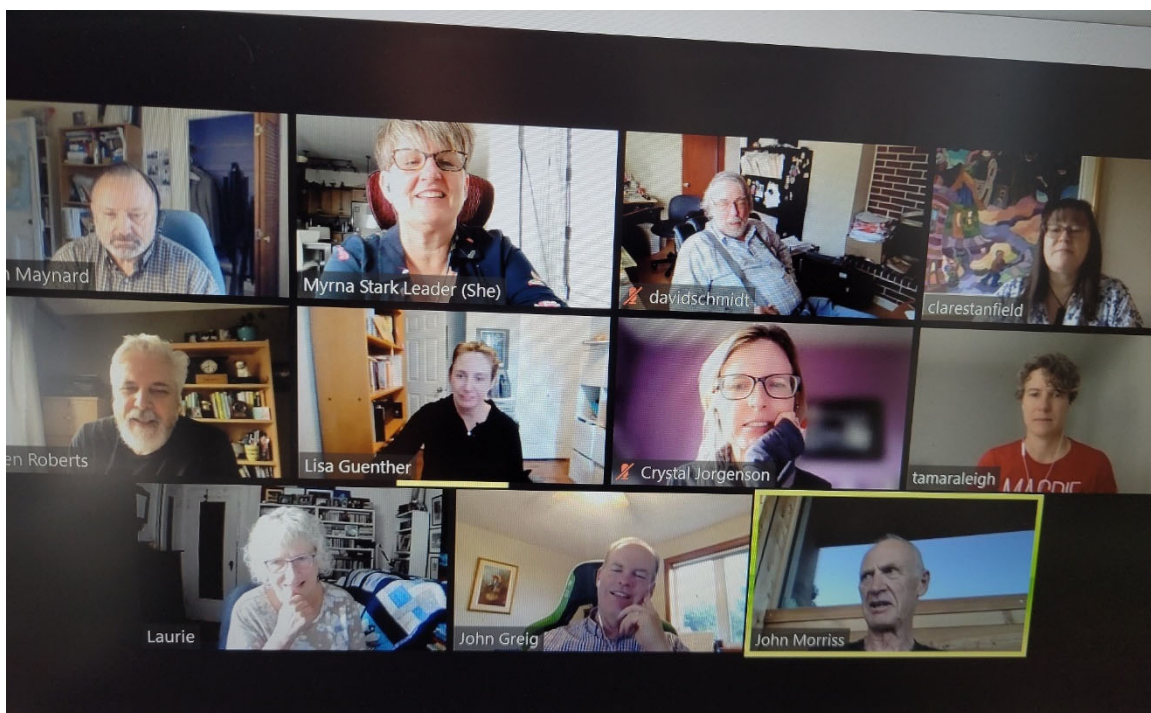
Treasurer – David Schmidt, retired writer, (acclaimed)

Secretary – Barbara Johnstone-Grimmer, Fir Hill Farm (acclaimed)

Director at large – Amada Brittain, Director Communications and Marketing, BC Egg (New, acclaimed and we all thank Amanda very much for agreeing to step up)

BC CFWF Director – Myrna Stark Leader, Writing and Communications (acclaimed)

Note: Special mention to former Board member Cathy Glover, Country Life in BC, who stepped away from the Board due to other commitments. We appreciate Cathy's work on the Board, particularly in helping get our newsletter out.



BC Senators were the main stay of the zoom social held in late 2021.

Alberta Farm Writers' Association

ALBERTA FARM WRITERS' ANNUAL REPORT

Prepared by Craig Lester, AFWA president

2021 was another quiet year for the Alberta Farm Writers' Association as we continued to weather the COVID-19 pandemic and wait when we could all gather in person again. While many of our events were on hiatus for most of the year, we spent considerable time working on the Legacy Project, which was announced in April 2022.

A program aimed at increasing awareness of careers in agriculture journalism and communications involving post-secondary schools and youth programs across the province. Planning also commenced in earnest for the IFAJ World Congress, which the AFWA will be hosting in 2023. AFWA members, alongside CFWF members from across the country, are working to bring together this global event. The planning is led by Co-Chairs Trevor Bacque, Annemarie Pedersen and Cole Christensen. We are excited to welcome journalists from around the world next summer.

This past spring, we were able to bring members together for the first time since 2019. More than 30 AFWA members gathered at Olds College for a day of speakers and an in-depth tour of the research projects underway at the post-secondary institution in central Alberta. Our gracious hosts made sure everyone was filled with knowledge and well-fed. It received excellent reviews from all in attendance, who enjoyed being able to gather in person and network. The tour also served as the backdrop for the official rollout of the Legacy Project. Over a year of work was finally realized with the launching of the initiative. We also gained several new members at the event who have taken an interest in volunteering on future AFWA initiatives.

Our representative on the CFWF board, Trevor Bacque, recently completed his term as president of the CFWF. Thank you, Trevor, for your time and dedication to the role. AFWA Secretary-Treasurer Jessika Guse currently sits as the director-at-large for western Canada. This coming year will be an exciting one as we continue to prepare for the IFAJ World Congress in 2023, a fall tour, the introduction of the Legacy Project into classrooms around the province, as well as several other initiatives.

Saskatchewan Farm Writers' Association

By Crystal Leader, SFWA representative

Conference planning is ongoing. A few changes to the format this year. Professional development will be online. More interactive sessions on the Saturday. Conference dates are September 29-Oct.1, 2022. See you all soon.



Keep updated on the 2022 CFWF conference at <https://saskfarmwriters.ca/>

Manitoba Farm Writers and Broadcasters Association

Prepared by Ashley Robinson, President

MFWBA 2021 AGM

The MFWBA annual general meeting was held in May virtually with a business meeting and then games being played afterwards. Gail Grainger was re-elected to the board. Amanda Thorsteinsson and Joey Dearborn were elected to the board. Members of the board for 2021 included: Ashley Robinson (President), Gail Granger (Treasurer), Joey Dearborn (Communications co-chair), Amanda Thorsteinsson (Communications co-chair), Toban Dyck (Director) and Anne Cote (Director).

Christmas Party

In December we joined together for the first time in almost two years for our annual Christmas party at Bailey's Restaurant and Lounge. It was a throwback to the golden days of Winnipeg when the Grain Exchange and Wheat Board were located downtown and many would join at Bailey's for drinks.

Going Digital

We moved our banking services at Steinbach Credit Union to online in order to allow for us to accept e-transfers and use other online banking services.

Website Update

We are currently in the midst of making a new website. A survey was done of membership to determine what the new website should include. Joey and Amanda then put together a website proposal and are accepting offers on a contract to build the new website. The new website should be coming within the next year.



Eastern Canada Farm Writers' Association

Prepared by Kelsey Johnson, ECFWA President

While the COVID-19 pandemic continued to make life interesting throughout 2021-2022, the ECFWA board worked hard to ensure our members remained connected and could continue to partake in workshops over the course of the year. The organization's biggest achievement by far was managing to pull off an entirely virtual CFWF National Conference in September.

The conference was a huge success, with three days jam packed with informative sessions highlighting the very best of Ontario agriculture, from tomatoes to beef, grain to wine. It was so good to be able to reconnect with our farm writer friends from coast-to-coast in our virtual hospitality suite and learn ways to improve our social media skills, freelancing and data analysis. A huge thanks to the entire organizing committee who more than once had to return to the conference planning drawing board and then had to shift the conference entirely online with less than four months of notice! Your dedication to ECFWA and the broader farm writer community during such a tumultuous and unpredictable time did not go unnoticed. My sincere thanks to all of you. (As an added bonus – we even managed to turn a profit!)

In addition to the CFWF conference, ECFWA hosted a series of professional development workshops throughout the year. In November, we had the pleasure of hearing from journalist and editor Michael Robin about the challenges that can come with communication science in a skeptical world. The panel was open to all CFWF members and resulted in a great – and timely -- discussion about how to deal with misinformation and the resulting infodemic. Meanwhile, in January, ECFWA members got the chance to pick the brains of our three Lifetime Members: Jim Romahn, Owen Roberts, and Jane Robinson. With a combined 130+ years of experience in agricultural journalism and communications, these three industry veterans shared their tips and tricks on how to develop a career in agricultural communications. It was a true pleasure to be able to spend an afternoon with these three great people.

While efforts to host social events were largely stymied by the pandemic, we did try to remain connected with our membership via our Facebook and Twitter pages, including running a holiday baking photo exchange around Christmastime. The ECFWA photo contest also went ahead, which remains a wonderful opportunity to showcase the photographic talents of our membership.

Given the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic has posed on a number of organizations, our membership did dip slightly. We finished the year with 94 members. As we begin to return to more in-person events, like this year's AGM, the hope is that ECFWA will be able to demonstrate the value of this very special organization. I know the future of the organization is bright and I look forward to seeing where the new leadership takes ECFWA in the coming years.



The conference turned out to be a lot less risky than when the ECFWA crew started out. A great success all around!

Atlantic Canada Farm Writers' Association

By Allison Finnamore, ACFWA representative

An Atlantic Canada Farm Writers' revival is afoot. While in the last few years, the association has fully lived up to the laid-back stereotype of the East Coast, we are set for a break-out.

We had some professional transitions among our members with job changes and retirement, and now, as we look ahead to hosting CFWF in 2024, we've started making our preliminary plans. ACFWA, which is now 12 years old, will gather for the first time in four years in the fall of 2022 to start scouting the perfect tour stops for hosting the national conference in two years. We know farm writers are not immune to the migration east that has happened during COVID, and we are anxious to connect with old friends/new members in the months ahead.



Kelly Daynard and Lilian Schaer (the bookends) swung out east to meet up with Kim Waalderbos and Allison Finnamore (the books) for a mini farm writers reunion.

The Last Word



Trust farm writers on tour to find all the trendy spots . . .