

# Canadian Farm Writers' Federation



## 2023 Annual Report

Presented to the CFWF 2024 Annual Meeting  
By telemeeting

Wednesday, September 4, 2024

# Canadian Farm Writers' Federation

## 2024 Annual Meeting

2:00 p.m. EDT  
Wednesday, September 4, 2024  
By telemeeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81159484599?pwd=2BVDEXeI6z6KsJpSSVr4z0kb8LpvMD.1>

Meeting ID: 811 5948 4599 Passcode: 176804 - Dial by your location  
647-558-0588 / 778-907-2071 / 204-272-7920 / 438-809-7799 / 587-328-1099 / 780-666-0144

### **AGENDA**

1. Welcome
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Adoption of the minutes 2022 annual meeting
4. Business arising from the minutes
5. President's Report
6. Secretary-Treasurer's Report & 2023 Financial Statement
7. Awards Program Report
8. Professional Development Report
9. IFAJ Report
10. Conference Report
11. Regional Reports
12. Board Elections
13. New Business
14. Adjournment

*Following the adjournment of the AGM, and for those interested, there will be an update provided regarding the 2024 Conference and 2024 Awards program.*

# Canadian Farm Writers' Federation

## Minutes of the 2022 Annual Meeting

1. Welcome - Rachel invites everyone to the meeting at 3:03
2. Adoption of the agenda - Elain first and Ronda Seconded
3. Adoption of the minutes 2022 annual meeting - Changes: Item 9 amend Beck with Becky.

Move Karen Davidson and Seconded by Myrna

4. Business arising from the minutes
5. President's Report - Rachel presents her report. Key points:
6. Secretary-Treasurer's Report & 2022 Financial Statement

Hugh gives his report. Hugh will be stepping down at the end of the year. The board has a committee that will be discussed later.

Move by Hugh seconded by Ronda

### a. Membership Fees

Background: Hugh is stepping back and the reality is that Hugh does a lot for the organization and without him, we will need to pay for someone. This would be a part-time contract starting in 2024. Hugh will stay on to help with the transition.

The managing director will manage all finances, and administration. Currently the compensation per year is \$6800.

The board finds it a good idea to increase the number of money coming from the CFWF amount is increased from 30 to 50 dollars.

And the second would be to make everyone fee to 75\$

The part-time contract would be \$15,000

Alberta met and discussed and would like to divert this decision to the fall.

Other organizations are way over the 100\$ price point.

Things to address: We should have cohesiveness across the country.

Freelancer rate vs rate for employed by a media publication.

Ronda in BC is in favour of the price increase.

Motion to increase the fee to \$50 by Allison and seconded by Lillian.

Zoom poll vote for all in favour (43/45)

All against (2/45)

Mary suggests doing regular reviews of the membership fees.

Motion to continue allowing the regional association to choose their fees Lisa and second Tracey.

Opposed Reg to not make a motion.

#### 7. Awards Program Report

Ally gives her awards report. Reg motioned to BRING THIS TOPIC UP AT THE next board meeting

Vote all for.

#### 8. Professional Development Fund Report

#### 9. IFAJ Report

Owen has been working on the PD committee of IFAJ and is actively seeking ways of offering more training to its members.

#### 10. Conference Report

#### 11. Regional Reports

#### 12. Board Elections

BC: Myrna nominated by Ronda. Accepted

Alberta: Craig Lester by Trevor. Accepted

Michelle Chuyna by Craig. Accepted

Saskatchewan: Crystal Leader by Marlene. Accepted

Manitoba: Ashley by Jay. Accepted

Eastern: Rachel and Mary by Clare. Accepted

Atlantic: Allison by Trudy

Eastern at large: Hugh by Elaine

Western at large: Jessika by Ashley. Accepted.

#### 13. New Business

#### 14. Adjournment - 4H52

# Annual Reports

## President's Report

*Prepared by Allison Finnamore*

Why do you belong to CFWF? Seriously – take a moment to consider that question.

A common question when recruiting members for any organization, or in discussions about what could change within a group, is “what do you offer me?”

Networking? Professional development? Press card from our international federation? Career opportunities? Drinks in the hospitality suite? All are among valuable benefits of CFWF membership.

I find I often want to reply to queries about what a group offers with, “what are you prepared to give?”

During my years of involvement with CFWF and other groups, I’ve found the greatest benefits come from getting involved and volunteering. I’ve gained valuable skills that I use daily in my professional life. I’ve advanced my career as people got to know me and my work acumen. And I’ve made many lifelong friends.

There’s a multitude of volunteer opportunities within CFWF, many of them related to professional development, regionally, nationally and online. If you are interested in volunteering, reach out to me. My email is [allisonfinnamore@gmail.com](mailto:allisonfinnamore@gmail.com) or call or text me at (506) 863-8797.

In addition to volunteer opportunities, what else does CFWF offer you? The list is long. There’s professional development, writing, broadcast and photography contests at reduced rates and access to national and international farm media tours. Plus, from within our members, you can find employers looking to hire, contractors searching for markets, experts prepared to consult, mentors ready to offer advice, and more.

The best way to access these specific benefits within our membership is to get out and attend CFWF events in person – whether that’s at a regional association event, at the national level or on the world stage. Talk to people. Share your contact info. Be open to the opportunities that may present themselves. And, if you’re inspired by a volunteer opportunity, seize it and contribute.

The strength of CFWF and the benefits of membership comes from us – the members. The community we build through our shared profession of writing about agriculture is the CFWF superpower. Your involvement in the abundance of opportunities offered by CFWF strengthens our organization, yes, but at the end of the day, you are the biggest winner, both professionally and personally.

That's what CFWF gives to you. What can you offer CFWF?

**Major accomplishment:** 2023 was a big year for CFWF. In June/July, we welcomed our international colleagues to Olds, Alta., for the IFAJ Congress. The Alberta Organizing Team worked countless hours on the event and deserve hearty congratulations for their dedication and commitment.

**PD Partnership:** Developed a partnership for summertime learning sessions with the Canadian Freelance Guild. The CFWF board agreed to pay CFG's \$10 registration fee, therefore making the four summer sessions free to CFWF members. Expect an announcement coming soon about a renewed agreement for 2024.

**Secretariat Changes:** Our long-standing secretariat Hugh Maynard announced his retirement in 2023. Following the IFAJ congress, the CFWF board created an ad hoc committee to write the job description, conduct the search and hiring process for a new managing director.

Myrna Start Leader of BCFWA, Craig Lester of AFWA, Rachel Telford of ECFWA, Hugh Maynard and I worked together on all aspects of the process, consulting with and welcoming input from the rest of the CFWF board as the process unfolded. We received a total of eight applications. Board members were invited to submit questions for the potential candidates and sit in on the interview, all conducted over Zoom. Two board members asked questions while another two listened with cameras off. We interviewed the top three highest scoring candidates and happily welcomed Della Oberhoffner to the role of managing director.

In 2004-2005 when I was CFWF president the first time, I had the pleasure of signing the contract with Hugh, making him CFWF's first staff person. It's a pleasure to welcome Della to the CFWF group and sign her contract, in late 2023, making her our second staff person (I won't be president when we sign a third contract!). Della began with CFWF in January 2024.

The transition of the secretariat role from Hugh to Della has included many meetings, some of which I've attended. As well, Della and I email daily and speak almost weekly as the transition continues.

**Many many thanks:** Thank you gifts on behalf of the board and the CFWF membership were sent to Hugh and Alexandra Hayden, who worked with Hugh and therefore became an important role in CFWF operations.

Many thanks to Hugh and Ally for their years of dedication and hard work for CFWF in their staff roles, as well as Norma Tolhurst, who through her work with Hugh, has also been part of the CFWF world.

Thank you as well to all the regional representatives who make up the national board as well as welcome and congratulations to new and returning board members.

Last year was also the time when Rachel Telford of ECFWA stepped down as president. Her commitment and professionalism to CFWF as a board member and as president was unwavering. I learned a lot from Rachel's composure and appreciate her guidance over the last several months.

**Looking ahead:** There's much work ahead for CFWF. We begin a strategic planning process later this year to lay down the path for the organization in the years ahead. I look forward to working with you on this, and more.

## Secretariat Report

*Prepared by Hugh Maynard, Secretary-Treasurer*

### Administration

It was an extremely busy year for the Secretariat, first with the congress, second with the post-congress follow-up, and then preparations for the transition to a new manager for the CFWF operations. In addition, the Secretariat continued with its main functions of supporting the board of directors, managing the finances and office functions such as membership, communications, and administering the awards programs and professional development fund. CFWF moved into the modern era with an upgrade to its banking capabilities with the addition of online payments, a credit card and a line of credit. These were all necessary in order to be able to efficiently function for the many additional transactions required by hosting the IFAJ congress.

### Succession

The board also undertook actions to finding a successor to operate the CFWF secretariat given that Hugh Maynard, who has been secretary-treasurer for the past 30 years, had announced his intention to step down at the beginning of 2024. After an extensive application and review process, Della Oberhoffner from Abbotsford, BC was hired as the new managing director. Hugh remained as secretary-treasurer on the board of directors given the heavier than normal workload post-congress and to assist with the transition to the new secretariat. Once the congress clean-up has been completed in 2024, Hugh will hand over the reins for secretary-treasurer to a new person.

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. Both moved on to new pastures at the end of 2023, Norma on maternity leave and Ally to a marketing position for a commercial distributor.

### Finances

The bank balance remains healthy due to the generous contribution of sponsors to the 2023 IFAJ Congress (instead of the usual CFWF conference) which contributed a modest surplus of \$3,481 from operations. This has helped maintain the CFWF surplus which will enable the organization to contribute to professional development activities and maintain operations. CFWF requires a surplus of ~\$30,000 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. Given that the federal summer grant (Young Canada Works) will no longer be available with the Secretariat moving location to BC, the board of directors decided to increase the membership fee for 2024 to \$50 to ensure adequate funds would be available to support management and administration.

The Professional Development Fund (PD Fund) returned to 'normal' after a less than stellar 2022, adding ~\$3,500 to the total value and bringing the fund's equity back up to where it had been at the end of 2021. There were no PD disbursements from the fund in 2023.

### IFAJ Congress

Hosting the IFAJ Congress was the heavy lift of the year, without doubt. The finances for the congress were run through the CFWF books in order to take advantage of sales tax refund, liability

insurance the application to Agriculture & Agri-food Canada (AAFC) for a grant. The congress managed to generate a welcome surplus of \$42,450 from sponsorships and registrations (details in the financial report). The AAFC grant was approved but due to the lateness of the approval in fiscal 2022-2023, the agreement was later consolidated into one fiscal year (2023-2024) and resulted in processing delays for the claim, the approval of which is still pending. Once the claim is approved (up to \$137,000 depending on review of eligibility of expenses and audit of invoices), the amount will be distributed amongst CFWF and the regional associations on the same basis as the congress surplus (35% Alberta, 30% CFWF and 7% each for the other regional associations).

Many thanks to the chairs of the organizing committee (Annemarie Pedersen, Trevor Bacque and Jessika Guse) for all their hard work, as well as the multitudes of committee members, and a special thanks to Tracey Feist who handled all the data gathering and activity reporting for the AAFC grant.

### Board of Directors

The CFWF Board met eight times during the year via videoconference and in-person, which is twice the usual number of meetings and due to the transition of the secretariat and the congress. Membership numbers increased slightly to ~320, a small uptick no doubt due to the congress.

### **The 2023 board of directors were:**

|                    |                                               |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Allison Finnamore  | President (Atlantic Canada)                   |
| Craig Lester       | Vice-President (Alberta)                      |
| Hugh Maynard       | Secretary-Treasurer (Eastern Member-at-Large) |
| Myrna Stark-Leader | Director (British Columbia)                   |
| Jessika Guse       | Director (Western Member-at-Large)            |
| Michelle Chunyua   | Director (Alberta)                            |
| Crystal Leader     | Director (Saskatchewan)                       |
| Ashley Robinson    | Director (Manitoba)                           |
| Mary Feldskov      | Director (Eastern Canada)                     |
| Rachel Telford     | Director (Eastern Canada)                     |
| Trevor Bacque      | IFAJ representative                           |



### **The Annual CFWF Conference Schedule**

|      |    |      |    |      |    |
|------|----|------|----|------|----|
| 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 |
| 2029 | AC | 2036 | AB | 2043 | MB |
| 2030 | AB | 2037 | MB | 2044 | EC |

**Halifax, NS**  
**Atlantica Hotel**  
**October 3-5, 2024**

## CFWF Financial Review 2023

Josée Ménard  
Technicienne comptable/Bookkeeper  
745, Fisher road  
Hemmingford, QC J0L 1H0 438-862-9588

August 12, 2024

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 2023 financial year.

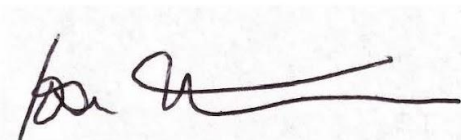
I have verified the figures listed on the CFWF Financial Statement by comparing:

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.

Based on the procedures performed, I am pleased to report that the financial records for the period under review appear to be in good order. No significant issues or discrepancies were identified during 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, taking in consideration 3150 \$ of uncleared cheques as of Dec 31st 2023. When comparing the overall amounts listed with previous years, most items were consistent with the normal level of variance other than the noted increase in income and expense categories related to IFAJ 2023 conference activities.

Best regards,



Josée Ménard  
Bookkeeper

## CFWF Financial Statement 2023 - OPERATIONS

|                             |                  | <u>2022</u>      | <u>2023</u>      |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b><u>INCOME</u></b>        |                  |                  |                  |
| Awards                      | Fees             | \$ 3,932         | \$ 2,775         |
|                             | Sponsors         | \$ 9,000         | \$ 5,200         |
|                             | IFAJ Bursary     | \$ 0             | \$ 2,500         |
| Conference                  | Registrations    | \$ 0             | \$ 0             |
|                             | Sponsors         | \$ 0             | \$ 0             |
|                             | Other            | \$ 20,267        | \$ 12,735        |
| Memberships                 |                  | \$ 7,556         | \$ 8,462         |
| Other                       |                  | \$ 13,010        | \$ 7,992         |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>         |                  | <b>\$ 53,765</b> | <b>\$ 39,664</b> |
| <b><u>EXPENSES</u></b>      |                  |                  |                  |
| Administration              | Admin-Coordinate | \$ 13,010        | \$ 15,256        |
|                             | Secretariat      | \$ 3,466         | \$ 3,696         |
| Prof. Development           | PD Fund          | \$ 3,998         | \$ 775           |
| Awards                      | Administration   | \$ 182           | \$ 1,071         |
|                             | Certificates     | \$ 505           | \$ 0             |
|                             | Judging          | \$ 1,500         | \$ 725           |
|                             | Prizes           | \$ 6,900         | \$ 6,975         |
|                             | IFAJ Bursary     | \$ 2,500         | \$ 2,500         |
| Farm Journalist             | Honorarium       | \$ 1,000         | \$ 1,000         |
|                             | Travel           | \$ 1,000         | \$ 1,000         |
| IFAJ                        | Fees             | \$ 2,845         | \$ 3,185         |
|                             | Congress rep.    | \$ 2,071         | \$ 0             |
|                             | Other            | \$ 2,470         | \$ 0             |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>       |                  | <b>\$ 41,447</b> | <b>\$ 36,183</b> |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME/EXPENSE</b> |                  | <b>\$ 12,318</b> | <b>\$ 3,481</b>  |

## CFWF Financial Statement 2023 – IFAJ CONGRESS

|                     | <u>2022</u>     | <u>2023</u>      | <u>Total</u>     |
|---------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>REVENUE</b>      |                 |                  |                  |
| Bootcamp            |                 | \$ 31,376        | \$ 31,376        |
| Registrations       |                 | \$209,214        | \$209,214        |
| Sponsors            | \$41,500        | \$170,569        | \$212,069        |
|                     | <b>\$41,500</b> | <b>\$411,159</b> | <b>\$452,659</b> |
| <b>EXPENSE</b>      |                 |                  |                  |
| Entertainment       |                 | \$ 18,230        | \$ 18,230        |
| Meals               |                 | \$123,180        | \$123,180        |
| PD                  | \$ 3,500        | \$ 32,520        | \$ 36,020        |
| Transport           |                 | \$ 35,228        | \$ 35,228        |
| Venue               | \$ 3,000        | \$141,908        | \$144,908        |
| Other               | \$ 2,138        | \$ 50,505        | \$ 52,643        |
|                     | <b>\$ 8,638</b> | <b>\$401,571</b> | <b>\$410,209</b> |
| <b>Balance</b>      | <b>\$32,862</b> | <b>\$ 9,588</b>  | <b>\$ 42,450</b> |
| <b>Distribution</b> |                 |                  |                  |
|                     | AB              | \$14,858         |                  |
|                     | CFWF            | \$12,735         |                  |
|                     | ECFWA           | \$2,972          |                  |
|                     | MFWBA           | \$2,972          |                  |
|                     | ASFWA           | \$2,972          |                  |
|                     | AFWA            | \$2,972          |                  |
|                     | BCFWA           | \$2,972          |                  |
|                     |                 | <b>\$42,450</b>  |                  |

## CFWF Financial Statement 2023 – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

|                           |                | <u>2022</u>      | <u>2023</u>      |
|---------------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Opening balance           |                | \$ 60,017        | \$ 57,208        |
| <b><u>INCOME</u></b>      |                |                  |                  |
| Interest & Dividends      |                | \$ 3,073         | \$ 559           |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>       |                | <b>\$ 3,073</b>  | <b>\$ 559</b>    |
| <b><u>EXPENSES</u></b>    |                |                  |                  |
| Disbursements             | PD projects    | \$ 0             | \$ 0             |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>     |                | <b>\$ 0</b>      | <b>\$ 0</b>      |
| <hr/>                     |                |                  |                  |
| <b>Sub-total</b>          |                | <b>\$ 51,348</b> | <b>\$ 57,767</b> |
| <b><u>ADJUSTMENTS</u></b> |                |                  |                  |
| Investments               | Gains (Losses) | \$ (5,882)       | \$ 3,295         |
| <hr/>                     |                |                  |                  |
| <b>BALANCE</b>            |                | <b>\$ 57,208</b> | <b>\$ 61,062</b> |

## CFWF Balance Sheet - 2023

|                                            | <u>2022</u>       | <u>2023</u>       |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b><u>ASSETS</u></b>                       |                   |                   |
| Current assets                             |                   |                   |
| Chequing                                   | \$ 32,968         | \$ 81,775         |
| Accounts receivable                        | \$ 25,007         | \$ 11,615         |
| Undeposited funds                          | \$ 20             | \$ 0              |
| Total current assets                       | <u>\$ 57,995</u>  | <u>\$ 93,390</u>  |
| Investment assets                          |                   |                   |
| PD Fund                                    | \$ 57,208         | \$ 61,062         |
| Total investment assets                    | <u>\$ 57,208</u>  | <u>\$ 61,062</u>  |
| <b>Total Assets</b>                        | <b>\$ 115,203</b> | <b>\$ 154,452</b> |
| <br><b><u>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</u></b> |                   |                   |
| Current liabilities                        |                   |                   |
| Accounts payable                           | \$ 0              | \$ 1,590          |
| Credit card                                | \$ 0              | \$ (1,435)        |
| Other Liabilities                          | \$ (4,858)        | \$ 27,991         |
| Total current liabilities                  | <u>\$ (4,858)</u> | <u>\$ 27,836</u>  |
| <b>Total Liabilities</b>                   | <b>\$ (4,858)</b> | <b>\$ 27,836</b>  |
| Equity                                     |                   |                   |
| Opening balance                            | \$ 16,296         | \$ 16,296         |
| Retained earnings                          | \$ 91,447         | \$ 120,061        |
| Net income                                 | \$ 12,318         | \$ 45,931         |
| Total Equity                               | <u>\$ 120,061</u> | <u>\$ 182,288</u> |
| <b>Total Liabilities &amp; Equity</b>      | <b>\$ 115,203</b> | <b>\$ 154,452</b> |

## Awards Program Report

*prepared by Alexandra Hayden, Awards Program Coordinator*

Another great year for quality entries! However, the number received, around 140 entries, was substantially less than the year before. The main reason for this decrease was that some of our larger publications, which usually enter for a large group of writers, (~90 entries) did not do so in 2023. This was likely due to the increased level of volunteer activity with organizing the congress and also the split structure of the awards, with some presented at the congress and some during the online ceremony in October, in which 62 CFWF members participated.

List of categories & number of entries:

Farm Writer of the year (5, increase)

New Writer of the year (3, decrease)

### Communication categories

Electronic Media - Video (4, increase)

Electronic Media - Audio (8, increase)

Communication - Short (3, same)

Communication - Long (5, increase)

Opinion writing (11, decrease)

### Feature Categories

Technical Feature (14, decrease)

Current Affairs Feature (20, decrease)

People Feature (14, decrease)

### Reporting categories

Technical Reporting (11, decrease)

Current Affairs Reporting (16, decrease)

Business/Economics Reporting (13, decrease)

### Photography

People Photography (9, increase)

Production Photography (3, decrease)

Landscape Photography (3, decrease)

The past year was a struggle getting judges to cover all the categories. However, some judges offered to judge two categories and, with this, all the categories were covered. And, as always, we could not have offered the 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! Again, it was a struggle to find sponsors as many companies said they already agreed to sponsor the IFAJ congress so they didn't have the available budget for the awards. Our hope is that next year we get more sponsors since it won't be a congress year.

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.

The initial investment in 2014 was \$60,000 minus \$14,362 in disbursements. The value of the fund as of December 31, 2023, is \$61,062, a modest gain of 6.7% over 2022 and 31.5% since the initial investment (less the disbursements). The less than stellar returns from the fund's investments have been offset, however, 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.

For 2023, there were no disbursements from the PD Fund as all organizational efforts were dedicated toward organizing the IFAJ congress. To date, a total of \$21,510 has been disbursed to 15 recipients, with \$14,362 being paid from the fund and \$11,148 contributed from the general CFWF surplus.

## International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ)

*By Trevor Bacque, CFWF representative to IFAJ*

**IFAJ 2024:** Registration is open! Come to Interlaken, Switzerland, and learn all about this small but mighty country's agricultural sector, Aug. 14-18, 2024. The price to attend is 790 Swiss Francs (\$1,211 CAD) until registration closes July 15, 2024. The Swiss guild decided to offer the early bird pricing for the entirety of the registration period. Please note, this price is for registration only. Accommodations are a separate, additional cost. See the website for more details. Canadians attending should expect to pay around \$2,500 or more (accommodation dependent) for everything.

**IFAJ 2023:** The 2023 IFAJ World Congress produced a healthy profit both through its sponsorship program and because of a grant through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC).

The profit from the sponsorship is being distributed to the associations and the CFWF as of late August 2024.

We continue to wait on AAFC to make a final decision on the grant after many rounds of questions and review. We remain hopeful that AAFC will follow through with the grant.

The exact numbers and breakdown on the sponsorship and grant can be found in the CFWF's fiscal statement.

**IFAJ elections:** Elections will occur Aug. 6-13, through an online voting system, with the winners announced Aug. 14, at the delegate assembly in Switzerland. Each presidium position is a two-year term. More information will be announced in the coming weeks. This election, similar to the last, was mostly comprised of acclamations (three out of four positions).

### **Presidium candidates for the upcoming election**

President: Steve Werblow (USA) – to win by acclamation

Vice-president: Adalberto Rossi (Argentina) and Katrin Fischer (Germany) – election

Secretary-general: Adrian Bell (U.K.) – to win by acclamation

Treasurer: Madga du Toit (South Africa) – to win by acclamation

**Young Leaders and Masterclass:** The Young Leaders were recently announced for the Swiss IFAJ. Canada did not have a member selected from the global pool of applicants.

The Masterclass will not occur this year due to Corteva's decision to not fund the program. The IFAJ presidium is working on securing a sponsor for 2025.

**Bayer Canada bursary:** Becky Zimmer of Saskatchewan has been named this year's winner. Congratulations to Becky, a freelance journalist and photographer who is also an alumni of the IFAJ's Young Leaders program.

**Global Foundation for Agricultural Journalism:** The Foundation has been established and nominations are open for trustee positions. Any individual IFAJ can apply for a trustee position via self-nomination.

A website, [gfaj.ngo](http://gfaj.ngo), is now live and will soon be populated with more information.

**Countries in arrears:** IFAJ announced the formation of a task force to assist guilds with lower GDPs that are actively in arrears. If you want to be involved, let me know and I can connect you with the task force. The IFAJ does not intend to suspend countries in arrears and wants to find another solution. Nigeria remains the only country currently suspended for being in arrears.

Report prepared for the **CFWF board of directors by Trevor Bacque, AFWA member and IFAJ representative for Canada.**

**IFAJ Star Prizes:** The entry period for the newly revamped awards has now closed. IFAJ received more than 300 entries. Winners will be announced during the Swiss Congress.

**IFAJ Executive Member for Canada:** My five-year term as Canada's executive member to the IFAJ has concluded. After taking over early in 2019, I've spent the last five years at the table, advocating for Canada and being involved in IFAJ business.

I'm happy to announce that Craig Lester (Alberta Farm Writers' Federation) has been chosen by the CFWF national board of directors to be the next representative for Canada. A big congratulations to Craig; and, an even bigger thank you to the CFWF for trusting me in the role over these last five years. The role coincided neatly overlapped with Canada being awarded to host the 2023 world Congress and it was a thrill of a lifetime to host 200-plus delegates from 30 countries last year at Olds. Thank you, everyone!

**Upcoming events and notices:**

**July 10, 2024:** Online presentations by presidium candidates (link will be sent out closer to the event)

**Aug. 5, 2024:** Deadline for nomination of delegates

**Aug. 6-13, 2024:** Online voting for presidium candidates

**Aug. 14, 2024:** Election results announced

**Exposure-4-Development (E4D), Sept. 25 to Oct. 4, 2024:** Thailand and Vietnam tour for approximately 12 IFAJ members (co-organized by Craig Lester, Melanie Epp and Niels Damsgaard Hansen). Application details are still to come.

**IFAJ Congress, Aug. 14-18, 2024:** Interlaken, Switzerland – (previous host in 1964, 1989, 2005)  
Future congresses (provisional):

**Oct. 14-18, 2025:** Nairobi, Kenya.

(<https://meshascience.org/kenya-mesha-set-to-host-globalagriculture-journalists-forum-in-2025/>)

No microsite yet available. The organizing committee announced they expect between 400-450 delegates.

**Early September 2026:** Osijek, Croatia. This is a prominent agricultural region.

(<https://www.danh.hr/t/ifaj-kongres-u-hrvatskoj-2026-godine/39240/>). No microsite yet available. Lower congress fees are expected due to accommodation on a student campus. The Croatian organizing committee must wait for official support approval from the newly elected government. They will provide a short update at the Delegate Assembly in Switzerland.

**Late March/early April 2027:** City TBD, South Africa (previous host in 2004, 2017)

**2028:** Argentina (previous host in 2013). Provisional locations for this Congress include Cordoba, San Luis and Mendoza. Focus on pigs, garlic, livestock, precision ag and wine.

**2029:** U.K. (previous host in 1960, 1972, 1981, 1987, 1997, 2014) No details yet.

**2030:** Mexico; no details yet.

## Regional Reports

### British Columbia Farm Writers' Association

*Prepared by Myrna Stark-Leader, BCFWA Representative*

BCFWA's 2023 was good but tempered with sadness at the end of the year.

January kicked off with the annual AGM, held in conjunction with the Pacific Agriculture Show. We had a fantastic presentation, a behind-the-scenes look into dealing with the Avian Flu crisis – the challenges, wins and loss for BC. Speakers Amanda Brittain, Director of Marketing and Communications, BC Egg Marketing Board and a BCFWA board member, as well as Cathy van Martin, egg farmer and retired firefighter, gave an insightful talk about crisis tactics (safety), logistics and communications.

In May, we held an online social which was appreciated by those who attended. (We continue to host online gatherings to help bridge the long physical distances between BC members.)

In the first six months of 2023, time was dedicated to planning the BC IFAJ pre-tour – a five-day brilliant odyssey largely put together by long-time member David Schmidt. All who took part said it was memorable, including a few BC members who joined in for part of the tour. Five countries were represented, a tribute to the well-thought-out tour schedule and David's insistence to feature a Columbia Ice Fields visit.

Directly following, BC was well represented at IFAJ in Calgary/Olds at the end of June. A big thank you to the organizers and volunteers (including some of our members) for doing Canadian agriculture proud, including giving attendees a taste of a prairie tornado.

In November, BCFWA hosted Artificial Intelligence – The Good, Bad and Ugly, an online PD session. Toban Dyck and Ronda Payne moderated a very well-attended event which brought awareness to the need to continue providing information on this topic. CFWF members were invited to participate and did.

Also in November, David, who had lightheartedly said the BC IFAJ pre-tour would be his swan song of tour organization, passed away suddenly of a heart attack. It was a shock and a blow to his BCFWA colleagues and to the BCFWA executive. David was not only the longest serving active member, but also our long-time treasurer (as far back as anyone can recall) and membership person. Several members attended David's funeral and toasted him with his usual beverage of choice, a glass of milk. It was a powerful reminder to ensure today that our friends and colleagues know how much we appreciate them.

Since David was well-known and well-respected for his writing by CFWF and IFAJ members, BCFWA hosted a zoom wake a few days after the funeral. It allowed everyone to have a place to share. Some of David's relatives and friends attended and we also had attendees from as far

away as Japan, proving the far reach of our Chilliwack-born writer colleague. It was a wonderful way to reminisce about David. BCFWA is grateful to the CFWF Board who agreed to naming the New Writer of the Year award after David. BCFWA continues to work toward an appropriate tribute provincially as we await settling of David's estate. David generously named BCFWA as a benefactor.

In the meantime, we were fortunate to have former BCFWA president Cheryl Davie offer to return to the Board to take on the treasury and membership roles. Ronda Payne offered to stay on one more year as President for continuity as we move through things like banking changes. The other executive members and the general membership are thankful for both.

Thank you to Tamara Slobogean who served on the 2023 board and to Vanessa Farnsworth who joined the BCFWA board mid-term. She is doing an outstanding job keeping the BCFWA FB page current.

There were 10 executive meetings held in 2023. Any member is invited to attend. And BCFWA awarded one J.R. (Tim) Armstrong Bursary to a student pursuing ag or an ag-related field. Thanks to sponsors Country Life in BC, Orchard & Vine and Holstein News for helping to publicize the ad.

As at Feb 26, BCFWA has 29 members, 1 life and 1 honorary member and continues to retain a healthy bank balance.

#### BCFWA 2024 executive

President Ronda Payne, Girl with a Pen

Vice-president Amada Brittain, Director Communications and Marketing, BC Egg

Treasurer and membership, Cheryl Davie, AgSafe Communications and Marketing Specialist

Director-at-Large Communications, Madeleine Baerg, Director of Content, Seed World Group

Director-at-Large, Communications, Vanessa Farnsworth, Perennial Communications

CFWF Director, Myrna Stark Leader, Writing and Communications

Secretary – vacant

## Alberta Farm Writers' Association

*By Michelle Chunyua, AFWA representative*

From hosting the International Federation of Agriculture Journalists Congress to launching a new website and logo, the Alberta Farm Writers' Association had a busy 2023!

Perhaps the best news of all is the steady increase AFWA has seen in its membership, growing from 68 members in 2021, to 105 members in 2023. Of that number, 12 are our [honourary life members](#). Thanks to that increase, Alberta boasts the largest membership guild in the Canadian Farm Writers' Federation (CFWF) network. By having over 80 members, it allows us to hold two seats on the CFWF board.

Olds College stepped up to be one of the greatest membership supporters this year. While we had a couple of members from the educational institute prior, this year saw their support increase to 11 members.

One of our members, if not our oldest, and biggest supporter of that new educational program is Ron McCullough. At 91, Ron is still passionate about ensuring the sustainability of agriculture communications and journalism in this province, and as such, made a sizeable financial donation to Olds College this year.

These synergies tie in nicely with AFWA's Legacy Project launched in April 2022. The program is aimed at increasing awareness of careers in agriculture journalism and communications, which will involve post-secondary schools across the province and other youth programs. Craig Lester continues to spearhead this project. Remember, we need our members to advocate on behalf of our profession. If you're interested in delivering a presentation (that is ready to go!) in 2024, please reach out to Craig. AFWA's goal is to continue to influence Alberta's students to consider a career in agriculture journalism and communications.

Another project the AFWA board has been discussing is the possibility of launching a student membership. This makes the connection back to the Legacy Project, and affords those students interested in this career path to make connections with our AFWA network and attend upcoming tours and webinars. It would be a pilot project, and while the students would not be full members of CFWF or IFAJ, it would be a great introduction to AFWA.

In addition to the above projects, the AFWA board is committed to delivering more professional development sessions to its members. Some will be stand-alone sessions delivered by AFWA, and others will be held in conjunction with CFWF. If you have some suggestions of webinars or PD sessions you'd like to see, let us know.

The IFAJ Congress was a monumental event for AFWA. It is unlikely that we will see the magnitude of this event back in our province in our lifetime. At a September board meeting, there was a great discussion on how we can continue the Indigenous conversation that was sparked at the IFAJ event.

Ian Doig is developing a project for AFWA to connect back with a local nation to open discussion on what we as an association could be doing to promote agriculture journalism and communications to Indigenous students going forward.

Alberta will also benefit from hosting IFAJ. Once the federal government grant documents are completed next spring, the financials of the event will be made available. We will share that information with our members once it's available.

And finally, the board is doing some heavy lifting that will ensure the sustainability of our organization going forward. There will be a member survey coming out at the beginning of December. We also have a draft mission, vision, and values, along with a set of bylaws that are now at the board level for review. Once they are ready, we will be sharing those with our membership.

We thank all members for their continued support of our 68-year-old organization. It is because of our members; we hope to reach many more milestones in the future!



*Past-president Craig Lester passes the official AFWA spike to incoming president Michelle Chunyua, September 2023.*

## Saskatchewan Farm Writers' Association

*By Crystal Leader, SFWA representative*

### **IFAJ Congress in Olds, Alberta**

Olds 2023 was an amazing experience with numerous Saskatchewan representatives making the trek to Alberta. SFWA members were happy to join other Canadian journalists and communicators as we welcomed media professionals from around the world to Olds for tours and talks, as well as Canadian food, drinks, and entertainment. While there were some minor hiccups, those in attendance heard great comments about the Canadian experience and the organizers worked hard to shine a light on Western Canadian agriculture.

### **Ag in Motion Meetup**

SFWA members and guests enjoyed a tour, and an informative session with Shawn Moen and Garrett Pederson while at 9 Mile Legacy Brewing on Wednesday, July 19 in Saskatoon. A small turnout of members, but those that attended enjoyed the outing and the beer tasting. A supper followed at the Cactus Club with a few CFWF members also in attendance as they were in Saskatchewan for Ag in Motion. A big shout out to Adele Buettner for arranging the evening's activities.

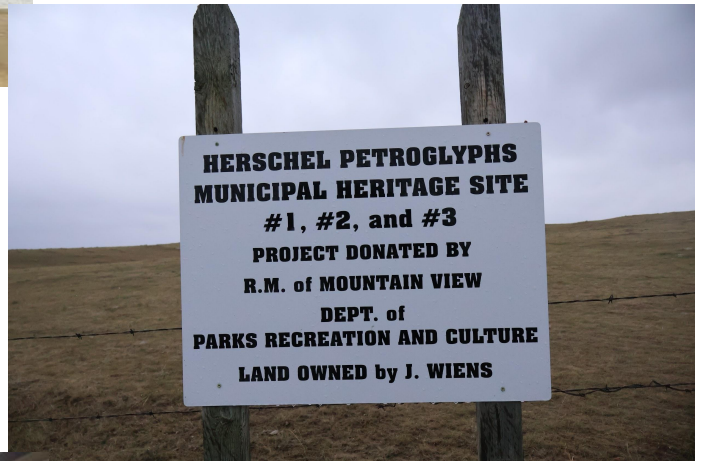
### **Fall Tour**

A small group of SFWA members attended the 2023 Fall Tour event based out of the Saskatoon and Rosetown areas on Friday, September 29 and Saturday, September 30. It was great to gather in person to share a meal and catch up on Friday.

On Saturday we faced a foggy drive out to the Rosetown area. It slowed our travel but the three car caravan managed to arrive at the Rosetown Museum on time for our first tour stop. We were hosted by Mary Lafayette and a few other volunteers. What a great facility and tour. We had homemade pie and a beverage following our tour. The pie was great!

Following the museum tour we ventured to Western Sales Precision Ag where we were shown around the facility and information was provided on their business and services. We enjoyed our lunch stop at Big Farmers Restaurant hosted by Joanne. The homemade milkshakes were a hit!

We then headed north and west of Rosetown to the Rosetown Hutterite Colony where we had a very interesting and informative tour with Joe Kleinsasser. Our final tour stop of the day took us to the Ancient Echoes Museum at Herschel. It was a drizzly field tour but well received. Jodie Mirosovski was a great tour guide sharing lots of interesting information about the petroglyphs and other history of the area. A big shout out to Marlene and Kevin Hursh for hosting members for a Friday night supper and arranging the Saturday tour.



## Manitoba Farm Writers and Broadcasters Association

*Prepared by Ashley Robinson, President*

In 2023 the Manitoba Farm Writers and Broadcasters Association (MFWBA) had 51 members. The MFWBA board for the 2023 year included Ashley Robinson as president, Gail Granger as treasurer, Joey Dearborn as communications chair, Toban Dyck as membership chair, Ed White and Allan Dawson.

Over the past year MFWBA hosted numerous events and took part in many national and international events.

Many MFWBA members attended the IFAJ Congress which happened in Alberta in July 2023. Numerous MFWBA members were honoured at the Congress including:

- Geralyn Wichers was part of the 2023 Alltech Young Leaders class
- Ed White received CFWF Farm Writer of the Year
- Laura Rance-Unger and Ashley Robinson received the IFAJ-Silver Medal for their work on planning the congress theme and professional development sessions

In August MFWBA hosted a webinar for CFWF members where MFWBA member and Reuters reporter Rod Nickel presented on his reporting in war torn Ukraine.



In September MFWBA hosted a pre-election agriculture issues debate for the 2023 Manitoba provincial election. Representatives from all four major provincial parties, including the Progressive Conservatives, NDP, Liberals and the Green Party, were in attendance. Questions were submitted by the provincial ag associations with Ed White acting as moderator. The debate was covered by numerous ag media publications and the Winnipeg Free Press.



In December MFWBA joined together to volunteer at the Christmas Cheer Board for our annual Christmas party. Members delivered hampers over the city in teams. Following the hamper delivery members then visited (and enjoyed a few drinks) at One Great City, a local brewery.



## Eastern Canada Farm Writers' Association

*Prepared by Matt McIntosh, ECFWA President*

The past year was a whirlwind of activity for ECFWA, CFWF, and IFAJ.

In March of 2023, ECFWA hosted a webinar with Brent Jolly, president of the Canadian Association of Journalists (CAJ) and managing director of the National News Media Council of Canada, who provided insights on the challenges and opportunities facing Canadian journalists and news providers.

The 2023 AGM was held at the University of Guelph, a familiar place for many members, where we got a behind-the-scenes tour of several places that are a little off the beaten path.

Starting at the Ontario Veterinary College, we heard about the plans to grow and expand the programming, including training veterinarians in northern Ontario, followed by a tour of OVC facilities – a highlight for all who attended. After lunch, we headed out to tour the Plant Science Weed Science lab, where we learned from graduate students how various weed problems are being studied, and the Canada GOOSE lab – where there were, to the disappointment of some, no actual geese. The Growth Options for Outer Space Environments lab works on cutting-edge technology to grow food in outer space or other non-growing climates, such as the far north.

The summer months were busy with all things IFAJ-Congress-related. While our colleagues in Alberta took on the bulk of planning and hosting the event, many ECFWA members were involved in supporting roles as volunteers. More than 20 ECFWA members took part in the IFAJ Congress along with members from across the country and worldwide.

As we headed into fall, we got to get together for a few drinks and some chat at a social at Canada's Outdoor Farm Show in September. And in October, we hosted an online webinar featuring Beverly Theresa, a social media specialist from Alberta.

More recently, in January, we hosted another webinar with special guest speakers from Nuffield Canada, who shared their experiences as Nuffield Scholars.

The 2023 ECFWA board of directors included Rachel Telford (past president), Matt McIntosh (president), vice presidents Kristy Nudds and Maegan MacKimmie, secretary-treasurer Mary Feldskov, and directors Greta Chiu, Clare Wooding, Diana Martin, Serge Buy, Shazia Khalid, and Mohsin Abbas. Thank you to Rachel and Mary for also representing ECFWA on the CFWF board of directors.

ECFWA will be hosting the 2026 CFWF conference. A planning committee has been struck.



## Atlantic Canada Farm Writers' Association

*By Allison Finnamore, ACFWA President*

ACFWA has been all about planning for CFWF 2024 in Halifax! Save the dates for Oct. 3-5, 2024.

In 2023, we refreshed our membership list, and while it reduced our numbers, we are happy to have active and involved members who are helping with the planning of our fall event.

Andy Walker is the new president for CFWF. Wayne Riley is the treasurer and Allison Finnamore is the Atlantic representative on the CFWF board and head cheerleader for the CFWF conference in Halifax.

The CFWF conference dates are Thursday, Oct. 3 to Saturday, Oct. 5 (or Sunday, Oct. 6, depending how late you stay up in the hospitality suite). For those who fly in on Wednesday (which we encourage), you'll have the option to take a full-day tour to two iconic Nova Scotia landmarks: the Town of Lunenburg and Peggy's Cove. As well, an afternoon historical and brewery tour of downtown Halifax will also be available. The Atlantica Hotel is our base for the conference. Tours on Friday will travel to the Annapolis Valley and Truro. After a day of professional development, our awards program will take centre stage on Saturday night.

Registration will open as soon as possible – but we are only seven people. I know you're all aware of what goes into organizing these conferences and we thank you for your patience as we work hard to welcome you to our corner of the country. We can't wait to see you in Halifax!