

Learn Agri-Food News

Issue 3.01
January 2005

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January Report

It was a dark and stormy night for the January meeting, but Ann Toderian of Mama T's and the Rycroft Farmers' Market was present in case anyone braved the storm.

We are a polite bunch as a number of Learn Agri-Food Network members did e-mail or phone to say "sorry, won't be present tonight."

Next meeting, we'll catch up on everything members have been up to. It will be awesome because members have been incredibly busy.

Bring to the meeting any or all of the following:

1. your business card,
2. a story of your product or business, or some facts that could be developed into a story (see page 2),
3. a question for the group to answer, and/or
4. anything that would be of value to others.

Great opportunities for sharing ideas and information.

Learn Agri-Food Meeting

February 8, 2005

7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

The equipment report will be ready. Bring your ideas and questions. We'll take advice on where to go from here.

Sign up for the four day Marketing Workshop

Call Martine Bolinger to register (780-538-5633) for March 29 & 30 for the first two days. It will be held in Grande Prairie.

Last year's participant, Paulette Langenecker, Berry Fields, says anyone with a saleable product who wants to grow their business should attend. She and Earl attribute their movement from only Peace IGA stores to 108 stores in the Save-On-Foods chain to the skills they learned from the course.

The instructors are adding a **Public Relations** module. On April 26, graduates from this year and last year can attend.



Instructors, Joan Hohenstein and Sarah Oliveira at last year's course.

Peace Country Sun

Every challenge is an opportunity, they say.

Want to build presence in the Peace? Create a story about your product or your service. We have the fabulous opportunity of producing half a page every week for the Peace Country Sun. Write it, and we can make it happen.

The 'working group' (those people listed on the back page who coordinate Learn Agri-Food Network activities and this newsletter proposed to the Peace Country Sun, a weekly article talking about you.

Kathryn Engel, editor, said "yes". Now, of course we must meet the challenge of filling that space every week of the year.

Be a part of it. We have a deal for you. If you create a story, we promise to ensure that it reads well, says good things in a bright and sparkly way. Karen Goad, Martine Bolinger and Susan Meyer are pretty good writers, but we are even better editors.

Start today and fax or e-mail the material to us. Here are some questions about your product that might help you:

- why would a buyer think your product is special?
- is there a quote from a buyer (happy buyer) you can share in the paper?
- how can your product be used to give pleasure, ease or health?

And to tell a story about your business:

- what challenges did you have to master to get to market?
- is there a great mini story about what you've done?
- where did you learn? get your idea?
- what's your business goal?

In addition, start taking photos of yourself and your products. Get to know what works visually.

Start today. Call us tomorrow.

Proudly Peace Full Products

Can you imagine a better title for a newspaper column for



Learn Agri-Food Network members?

Just how good is the coverage in the Peace Country Sun? Within two hours of the first article being published we received a phone call from wanting some of Dan Prudhomme's fudge.

Clarity, Plain Language & Manners

Telus published our phone number wrong one year—after years of getting it right. The second silliness of this story is that we didn't even know it—until a friend said so. Imagine the frustration and even anger of acquaintances. Imagine the sales we missed.

Save money and make more profit with good manners. Do it with plain language, a program of good communications and a good editor.

Try these ideas this month:

- listen to your answering machine message
- 'Google' yourself and check all the facts http://www.google.ca/advanced_search?hl=en
- look your name up in the phone book—every phone book, every year.



Learn Agri-Food Events to Attend

you are welcome to any or all

These Group Members agree to put their contact information in the newsletter so you can call with advice or a question.

- Charlotte Openshaw
chartom@telusplanet.net
780-835-4550
- Kathy & Leo Meyer
780-774-2051
- Tara Sallis
bhbathco@telusplanet.net
780-694-2377
- Gil & Darlene Hegel
hegel@telus.net
780-356-3627
- Jerry & Sam Kitt
jkitt@telusplanet.net
780-356-2239
- Gail & Stan Briggs
brigswod@telusplanet.net
780-765-2408
- Heather Porrill
porrill@telusplanet.net
780-353-3050
- Linda Prudhomme-Warrior
warrior1@telusplanet.net
780-624-8227
- Gerty Sorensen
gertys@telusplanet.net
780-568-3308
- Arnie Meyer
berrybas@telusplanet.net
780-567-2495
- Julie Gour
peacecountrybaskets@telus.net
780-322-2270

Saturday
February 5
1:00 to 5:00 p.m.
Stanford Inn
Grande Prairie

Olds College wants to meet with saskatoon growers and processors.
In hopes of building nutritional information and a promotion plan for Alberta dark skinned berries, Olds College is asking for advice. Join us for lunch at noon.

Tuesday
February 8
5:30 to 7:00 for
Association Meeting
7:00 to 9:00 pm for
LAF

Alexander's north
east corner of
highways 2 and
49 at Rycroft

7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

The Peace Value Added Food and Ag Association annual meeting from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. over supper.
Stay for the Learn Agri-Food Network

Learn Agri-Food Meeting

1. Reports from Explore Direct
2. Equipment report
3. Updates from members.
4. What did Heather Porrill have to do to get into a Community Hall?

It's free and an opportunity to get and give feedback on your business products, challenges and ideas.

Learn Agri-Food Meeting
Put these on your calendar so you can plan to share a ride or bring a business idea for feedback

March 29 & 30
Grande Prairie
9:00 to 4:00

Make Marketing a Successful Experience
Product, promotion, place price!
Improve your selling & communication skills.
See page 1 for more.

For Peace Region Agriculture
Entrepreneurs, brought to you
by:

The Working Group
which includes: **Gail
Briggs and Jerry Kitt,**
as well as:

Jim Smith

The Innovation Network Fairview
1-866-835-5005

Nicole McMullan

Alberta Economic
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Sharing Learning for More Impact

Learn Agri-Food Network members have figured out that learning equals ideas and profit. Many have taken the bull by the horns (so to speak) and created their own route to learning:

Gerty Sorensen, Mini Creek Farms, values her product (lamb in today's example) and her industry. She organized the fabulous hands on **Building Better Lambs** workshop in order to hear, see and even touch her way to knowing what the customer wants. Sunterra sent two employees north to demonstrate on live lambs and with carcass halves just how to judge a good lamb. Way to go Gerty!



Gil and Darlene Hegel, Valta Bison, entered and were awarded a scholarship to attend the **North American Farm**

Direct Marketing Conference. We will hear from them some of the things they saw, smelled, tasted and heard.

Jerry Kitt, First Nature Farms, also took advantage of an opportunity for learning. He applied for sponsorship to a conference in Italy. The Terra Madre **Slow Food Meeting** in Europe was an experience of a lifetime.



Arnie Meyer, The Berry Basket is bringing a **packaging expert** to the Peace in March. Like Gerty, if he can persuade a few others to share Frank Webb's travel expenses it will be a useful and low cost day. Frank is donating the day because he enjoys helping enthusiastic, start up entrepreneurs. Do we fit the bill?

Explore Direct, the largest Alberta conference which addresses ideas on how to sell directly to your buyers. Some of our LAF members are there as we write this newsletter. In fact some of them are traveling together and will return with ideas to improve their own business and their farmers' markets. Ann Toderian, Mama T's and Rycroft manager and Gerty Sorensen are two of our Peace Region registrants.



Attend the

Learn Agri-Food meeting on February 8 for a report on equipment, how Heather Porrill is using a community hall to process and news from other members of the group.

Bring a friend.

