

Learn Agri-Food News

Issue 3.03
March 2005

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Great opportunities for sharing ideas and information.

Learn Agri-Food Meeting

April 12, 2005

7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Let's review the winter and plan for our summer.

March Meeting Report



Marketing was the subject at our March 8th Learn Agri-Food Network meeting.

Lianne Read and Shirley Ulland might not have pre-planned their presentations, but the wool (sheep & alpaca) products they brought for us to feel and enjoy made the conversation about pricing and selling very real. Openshaw's wanted feed back on the presentation of their organic carrot pudding. That conversation covered the whole business spectrum.

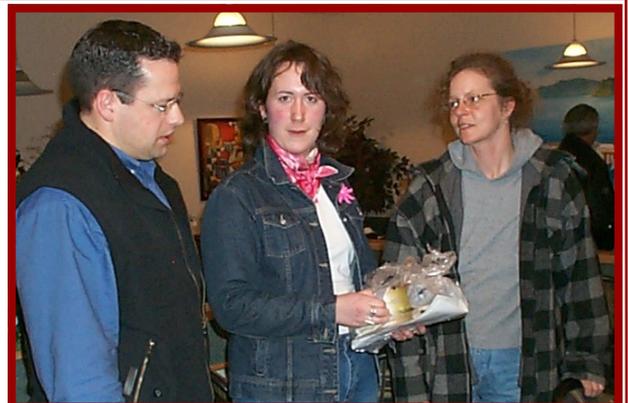
Brocke's drove from Dawson Creek and added much to the meeting. Doris would be a good person to chat with about pulling together in a trade show booth—and of course to get your product and business branded.

Tara Sallis, brought ideas on marketing—from her soap experience. Kathy Meyer, Coveralls for Kids, says word of mouth on a great product is key—and she uses trade shows for a large part of her sales.

We met Martine Bolinger who is working with Susan & Karen until winter. She has been to the Calgary Currie Farmers' Market and took the photos of Valta Bison. Gil Hegel was at the meeting and discussed the value of their story for the buyers.

At the beginning of the evening the Peace Value Added Food & Ag Association met over supper to confirm their intention to be an association ready to act when advocacy or programs for members are needed. They have been given a fund to cover some small part (up to \$500) of risk if a group of members plan a training event and don't sell enough seats to cover the costs of the instructor—or whatever. If you have a bright idea, call Gail Briggs or one of the other LAF Network team on the back cover.

Marketing was the focus of the last meeting. Special guest, market specialist Kevin Timanson showed special skills in first listening, then checking out what the business owners plans and goals included and last offering ideas and advice.



Trust—and how to get it (back)

Consider this approach when dealing with a disappointed customer. Your mission is not just to fix the customer's problem or to keep their business. It's to regain trust. Imagine the reaction of the customer when you slowly and sincerely state, 'We don't want to just regain your business - we want to regain your trust. So, what would it

take for you to trust us again - you tell me.' This approach gives the customer the control they probably felt they've lost. Plus, since it espouses the virtue of trust - it's less likely that they'll attempt to take unreasonable advantage.

Go to these sites or people for business information and help:

Peace Branding
www.peacecountry.com



Guidelines for using the brand are at:

<http://www.peacecountry.com/branding/>

Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development
<http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca>

For the Innovation Network:
<http://www.peacecountrycanada.com/innovation.aspx>

Sharing: to Get to Market

Kevin Timanson, expert marketer and guest at the March Learn Agri-Food Network meeting gave numerous examples of how to get 'more bang for your buck' by sharing marketing (promotions & selling).

We want to do a news column on this topic for the Peace Country Sun. If you'd like your business named in the column, tell us a story of how you do it, have done it or plan to try: marketing in concert with another event.

Here are some examples we've heard so far:

The Rycroft Farmers' Market lets vendors put their business name along side the name of the Farmers'

Market on temporary signs showing the way to the market for use on the day of the market. The vendors, we think, put up the sign on their way to the market, take it down on their trip home and voila!... everyone wins.

The Grande Prairie Farmers' Market is working with Grande Prairie Live Theatre to produce the comedy called A Couple White Chicks Sitting Around Talking. The theatre gets more bums in seats, the market makes some money and more people become aware of them.... everyone wins!

Keys to Success in Value-Added Agriculture

Fourteen farmers in the Southern U.S. were interviewed for a project funded, in part, by the USDA's Southern Region Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) Program. This publication presents, largely in the farmers' own words, important lessons they learned in adding value to their farm products and marketing directly to consumers. The keys to their success in value-added agriculture include high quality, good record-keeping, planning and evaluation, perseverance, focus, and building long-term relationships with customers.

Go here for the full report:

<http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/PDF/keystosuccess.pdf>



Learn Agri-Food Events to Attend

you are welcome to any or all

Tuesday April 12 7:00 to 9:00 pm for LAF Alexander's north east corner of highways 2 and 49 at Rycroft	Learn Agri-Food Meeting An evening for review and sharing: 1. how was your winter and where are you in your business and marketing? 2. bring and share materials you've created 3. update on other associations: Branding, Small Scale Food Processors and Farmers' Markets in the region It's free and an opportunity to get and give feedback on your business products, challenges and ideas.
May 13 Dawson Creek	Branding the Peace Annual Meeting Are you branded? Want to learn more. Plan to attend. Call 250-782-5745 for more.
May 14 10:00 to 2:00 Grande Prairie Farmers' Market	Grande Prairie Farmers' Market pancake breakfast Attend the market and enjoy breakfast with the family. See what they've done to the market.
June 1 8:30 to 4:00 Calgary	Canadian Nutrition Labelling workshop - (sponsored by AFPA) http://www.afpa.com/cal/month.cgi?syear=2005;smonth=6 It's mandatory to have Nutrition Facts on your food products. Find out what the new regulations mean to you, how to calculate Available Display surface, hands on examples and how to turn this into a great opportunity to grow as a company.

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

- Lianne Read—Silver Valley Fibres
780--351-2091
sheepo@telusplanet.net
- Charlotte Openshaw—Prairie Dream Organics
chartom@telusplanet.net
780-835-4550
- Kathy & Leo Meyer—Coveralls for Kids
780-774-2051
- Tara Sallis—Birch Hills Bath Company
bhathco@telusplanet.net
780-694-2377
- Gil & Darlene Hegel—Valta Bison
hegel@telus.net
780-356-3627
- Jerry & Sam Kitt—First Nature Farms
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780-356-2239
- Gail & Stan Briggs
Briggswood Country Preserves
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780-765-2408
- Heather Porrill—Star Bright Farm
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780-353-3050
- Linda Prudholme-Warrior
Rosewood Meadows
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780-624-8227
- Gerty Sorensen—Mini Creek Farms
gertys@telusplanet.net
780-568-3308
- Arnie Meyer—The Berry Basket
berrybas@telusplanet.net
780-567-2495
- Julie Gour - Peace Country Baskets
peacecountrybaskets@telus.net
780-322-2270
- Ann Toderian—Mama T's
toderian@telus.net
780-765-2292
- Kevin Timanson, - Marketing Consultant
timanson@teluplanet.net

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

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Editor

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An Inspected Kitchen

Yes, you can have an inspected kitchen in your home. It has to be separate from the family kitchen, able to be closed off (with a door or other means) and supplied with a separate set of utensils and equipment, etc. It must have a potable water supply; all equipment, fixtures, etc must be constructed of appropriate (CFIA approved) materials. It should have a triple sink or mechanical dishwasher and separate hot water supply (simply because the required



water temperature is hotter than what we normally have it set at for household use). Talk to Jeremy at the health unit for details. Check out the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA) Reference Listing of Accepted Construction Materials, Packaging Materials and Non Food Chemical Products at

www.inspection.gc.ca/english/ppc/reference/cone.shtml



Attend the
Learn Agri-Food meeting on
April 12 . We'll hear how the
first days of the marketing
course went, share ideas and
solutions to problems and
plan our summer.
Bring a friend.



Martine Bolinger & Lianne Read with the
Silver Valley Fibres socks she is marketing
from her own wool