



Learn Agri-Food Network

January to
February 2006

Supporting agripreneurs in sharing information with peers to build **businesses** of ag or rural based experiences, products and services.

Attend a LAF Meeting to Learn from Others

Five businesses, six people attended the **Falher** meeting. Greg Radstaack provided our meeting room in the MD office.

Gilbert Wolfe of Wolfe Honey is expanding from bulk only to include packaged honey. He came to inquire about equipment and learned Alberta Agriculture's web site has a source of used equipment at:

[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agp7095](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agp7095)

In addition, we have a spreadsheet of sources if anyone would like to see it. Just call Karen Goad or Susan Meyer.

Julie Gour, Peace Country Baskets helped wonderfully and very capably helped facilitate the meeting.

She sold \$11,000 in gift baskets before Christmas and had to learn about inventory control and estimating for orders. The baskets need to be different each year. The first year, Julie used baskets made in the Peace Country. Due to a shortage of supply, she shifted to ceramics then onto wood and painted metal tubs

showcasing local artists and crafters. We await the 2006 creation.

Julie will be attending the *Meet the North* conference in Edmonton in May as a delegate. If the team creating the PREDA display needs help or supplies, call Julie. She is an energetic and enthusiastic Peace promoter.

Celine Dubois created a classy presentation jar for her antipasto. She brought some antipasto and crackers for sampling which we devoured. Her challenge is where to make it (legally) and how to handle the persons and markets who detract. We brainstormed some options. Celine will chat with her health inspector and work on an ingredients lists and maybe even a nutrition list label. Celine, another dynamo who needs 48 hours in a day, also makes hot beverage mixes some of which went into Julie's



At the Bee Hive in Falher, you can find honey and more. Lorraine Desaulniers is a great host. Here she shows off some of the candles.

baskets.

Paul Benoit and Michelle Duval, Benoit Apiaries introduced themselves. While Paul is the 'production guy', Michelle is learning about production, finding markets and trying to ensure the continued

health of their business. Benoit Apiaries is one of four partners in Snowkist Honey. They, along with Lorraine Desaulniers, explained that they use the best and the whitest honey from their hives to promote their snow white, pure honey. Their registered Snowkist label proudly displays a bee wearing a Canadian maple leaf toque. How exciting! Their challenges includes CFIA regulations on package sizes combined with the need to sell honey by weight not volume.



Signs are important. The bees in Falher are tourist attractions. Meet Baby Bee at the Beehive.

Join us for one of these Learn Agri-Food Network meetings

- Falher—MD Building
- Rycroft—Alexander's
- Grande Prairie—Alberta Agriculture

They run the second Tuesday evening each month from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Attend the location most convenient to you.

The group discussed the need for good web sites. Check out the table on page 3. It is a reference for small businesses to create the look they want.

Susan Meyer

...continued on page 2

Peace Value Added Food & Ag Association

directors announced their annual meeting will be held at the Melsness Mercantile, in Valhalla Centre on February 6th after lunch with Kathryn Engel & Jack Howell. Contact Gail Briggs for more info. See page 4.



Rycroft Meeting The seven businesses and eight people at the **Rycroft** meeting discussed their plans for 2006 and ways to take care of business while taking care of yourself.

One technique requires the aid of a spouse. As a gift, Gail Briggs' husband, Stan, shut off the gas to her processor so she couldn't work even if she wanted. She is reading and working through the daily assignments in a book by Cheryl Richardson. She says the exercise of building a list of accomplishments was both tough and rewarding. Being on a rest month doesn't mean doing nothing. Rest is change and change is energizing.

Heather Porrill is also taking January off; she's enjoying not having to go or do anything right now. Her plans for 2006 are; a) to complete her processing kitchen, and b) to prove rest is connected to passion.

Tara Sallis recommends reading "First Things First" a time management book by Stephen Covey. Covey says to do the right things instead of attempting to do every thing the right way. Tara has her values in order she enjoys her son's hockey games and celebrates having product on hand.

Barb Barrs is reviewing her business goals & planning her next steps. She's still getting calls from a wedding registry she did. People are coming in to buy products as wedding gifts.

Kathy Meyer & her family are going to in Edmonton and she's looking forward to buying fabric from wholesalers.

Brockes are still exploring opportunities with rhubarb. They're assessing how to make it a valuable item at farmers' markets.

Elaine Stenbraaten

In **Grande Prairie**, six people and three businesses shared with wide ranging discussion which started with plans for 2006.

Two businesses traveled to the meeting together. The conversation was relaxed while these farmers' market vendors chatted about ways to improve traffic flow at the market.

Sue and Larry King, Harmony's Way Farm say they are moving to a new location at the market and expanding. They'll be offering hot food in single servings to be consumed at the market.

Kings have a number of customers who shop at their booth every week. By maintaining a strong food/farmer foundation they hope to increase their weekly client base.

Petra Hoentgesberg's 2006 plans hinge on off-farm work and available labour to help with the bees. They'd like to expand and do more.

On the topic of labour, Jerry Kitt, First Nature Farms

shared information on working volunteers. World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms volunteers, also called WWOOFers do chores and come for an on-farm experience. It's an interesting option but not a fully reliable work force. Independent types who can entertain themselves during down time are preferable. At Jerry's, WWOOFers bed (a separate ranch building) and board (two meals a day with the family). Other farms may handle bed and board differently. This experience Jerry's family the push to take a break from the farm while showing WWOOFers what the Peace has to offer.

Jerry is looking for ways to streamline his day-to-day operations to be less labour intensive. Less time spent putting out fires would be great.

The group asked Jerry about the Old Strathcona Farmers' Market. His customers shop for food at the market as part of their weekly routine.

Jerry made a great comment about the different types of customers. Some know what they want and need it quick, others want to visit with Jerry and tell their story to enrich their buying experience. He would like to eventually go to bar coded products to speed up the sale process and have a "leaning on the fence" area for talking about the farm.

Cindy Cuthbert gave a great elevator speech about her work with the Protein Team and shared newly released factsheets. Meeting in the Agriculture office it made it easy to access the resources. Call Cindy if you'd like the fact sheets.



Martine showed photos of the Old Strathcona Farmers' Market and the Calgary Farmers' Market at Currie Barracks.

Martine Bolinger

Agri-preneur Scholarship is available for business learning until March 30... Call Karen Goad or Susan Meyer to learn more.

This is a scholarship to attend an event of interprovincial, national or international scope. Go, learn and return to share ideas with others.



Planning E-Sales? Building a Web Site?	
A good web site:	What to do to make sure it's good:
8 tells people what they need to know about your business	8 know the purpose of your website...share info, make contacts, sell products 8 what do you want users to do or know?
8 is readily found by search engines, especially Google	8 learn to do it or hire it out
8 is linked to other appropriate sites. Users can easily return to your site	8 what links do you want associated to your site? 8 keep an updated list of where you are linked
8 loads fast on low speed connection	8 test on a low speed connection
8 the look suits your business	8 decide on a look and cost of set up i.e. homey, classy, bargain basement or all out
8 has no errors 8 has current contact information	8 Methodically review and get others to do the same
8 is easily updated?	8 the web builder is available (contactable) when needed (contractable) or will teach you the easy ways to update the site
8 is e-commerce ready if that is its purpose. Ensure it's: 8 easy to use 8 easily verified and a system is in place for quick turn around 8 payments are ensured and cover all costs and profit	8 is this an appropriate selling route for your products? 8 practice receiving and handling orders 8 decide who, when and how your business will handle this type of selling 8 investigate options for payment and work out a good pricing plan which includes planning for delivery and related costs 8 answer the question at every level and geography: IS IT LEGAL?

Great opportunities for sharing ideas and information.

Learn Agri-Food Network Meeting

*Tuesday, February 14, 2005
7:00 to 9:00 p.m.*

There are three facilitated meetings in the region. Share ideas, solve problems and learn from each other. Choose the location nearest you:

Falher — The MD Building, park on the west side and look for the door with the sign.

Rycroft — Alexander's Restaurant if enough of us go for supper first, they don't charge rent. Meet at 5:45 pm for supper.

Grande Prairie — The Provincial Building, enter at the west end of the building. Park on 103 Avenue north of the building. The meeting room is in the Agriculture office.

Mark your Calendars

Here are the Tuesday **dates for Learn Agri-Food Network meetings**. Please tell others.

February 14, 2006
March 14, 2006
April 11, 2006
May 9, 2006
June 13, 2006

2010 Olympics Procurement



Conrad Lindblom, Rocky Ridge Vegetation Control with instructor Gloria Cleve at the workshop.

We have the workshop notes and the workbook if you'd like a copy. Call one of us. Go onto the web site <http://www.2010commercecentre.com/> for loads of information.

"What a great group you had for the Procurement 2010 workshop! I certainly enjoyed meeting everyone. Thank you, for coordinating the event from your end. That silly border is not going to stop us from benefiting all residents of the Peace region."

Gloria Cleve

For Peace Region agriculture entrepreneurs.

Learn Agri-Food

Network Team includes Gail Briggs and Jerry Kitt, as well as:

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The Learn Agri-Food Network Team helps agripreneurs build profitable businesses to grow their industries. Members look at business issues and apply them to the larger industry by supplying knowledge and information, reducing business development barriers and identifying resources.

We help reduce the tuition in the school of hard knocks.



Learn Agri-Food Events to Attend

<p>February 6 Valhalla Centre 11:30 a.m.</p>	<p>Meet the Media Help us honour Jack Howell, Call of the Land and Kathryn Engel, Peace Country Sun for their help in promoting your businesses, Dine Alberta and other Learn Agri-Food projects. It's an opportunity to promote your products) We will introduce ourselves, share lunch with them and then pick their brains on what the media needs to build a story. Call Sherry Smith (780-538-6208) or Susan Meyer so we can tell the Melsness Mercantile how much food to prepare.</p>
<p>February 6 Valhalla Centre 1:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Peace Value Added Food and Ag Association Annual Meeting This is your opportunity for input into your industry association. Buy or update your membership, elect the Board of Directors and hear about their activities. There will be conversation about budget and banking.</p>
<p>Tuesday, February 14 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.</p>	<p>Learn Agri-Food Meeting Bring the "love of your life" and let's talk about balance between home and business. Head for Alexander's in Rycroft, the MD Building in Falher or the Alberta Agriculture office in Grande Prairie.</p>
<p>Tuesday, February 28 1:00 to 4:30 Community Futures of the Peace Liard 904 - 102 Avenue Dawson Creek</p>	<p>Learn from Revenue Canada 8 Small Business Seminar will cover payroll, GST, PST, and the Income Tax Guide. 8 Electronic Services for Business will cover internet services available to small business owners. There is room for 20 people to register for this informative workshop. Get the scoop straight from the "the horse's mouth." It's FREE. To register call Gloria Cleve at 250-782-8748 (Toll Free: 1-877-296-5888)</p>
<p>Tuesday, March 14 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.</p>	<p>Learn Agri-Food Meeting An opportunity to review your annual business plan with others. Use a check list to rate including your passion for your product or service, (labour, legal and risk issues), your marketing (promotion and sales) and financial planning (tracking and planning).</p>
<p>Nanaimo—Feb. 27 Abbotsford—Feb. 28 Creston—March 2 Penticton—March 3 Kamloops—March 4</p>	<p>A workshop for developing, marketing and selling quality value-added farm products and experiences http://www.agritourismbc.org/caravan/ This might be eligible for a scholarship—see page 2.</p>
<p>March</p>	<p>Table Top Selling Learn some tricks and tools for creating a great booth for selling and promotion. Watch for details.</p>

We're on the web:
<http://www.peacecountrycanada.com>
Look for The Innovation Network and then Learn Agri-Food