



Learn Agri-Food Network

May to June
2006

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

Share ideas with businesses from across the region

Learn Agri-Food Network Meeting

Tuesday, June 13, 2006
Log Cabin in Falher
5:30 to 9:00 pm

Directions to the

Log Cabin in Falher

From highway 49 turn into Falher
Straight down Main Street to the 3-way stop
Turn left at IDA Drugs
1/2 block down on left side to the Town Office, then the Log Cabin.
Street address: 015 Central Avenue SW



Supper at 5:30 pm.
Please call us by June 10 if you're coming so we can order food:
Toll free: 310-0000 and then 780-538-6208

After a year of conversing about building your business, it's time to celebrate. We'll visit, network and enjoy dinner from 5:30 to 7:00 pm. Then we'll have our usual style of meeting from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. You'll learn from people in the other three groups and perhaps make some partnerships for promotions, selling or sourcing supplies and information. If you've never attended a meeting this will be a fun first one.



Conner & Colten Kemp proudly display Kemp

Learn Agri-Food Meetings All Over the Place in May

There were meetings in Falher, Rycroft, Grande Prairie, Triangle, although only Heather Porritt showed up in Rycroft. Heather reports joy spent over a supper and contemplation of her own business by herself. LAF Meetings are supposed to be a time for reflection and planning and Heather can make it so. Go Starbright Farm!

Twelve producers representing seven businesses attended the afternoon commercial saskatoon growing and marketing talk in Falher. Janine Marek, **Innovative Food Concepts**, Medicine Hat came to represent a buyer's point of view. Arnie Meyer, **The Berry Basket**, says it was great to roll around ideas for the whole chain from planting to profit with saskatoon producers and a fruit buyer.

The steps to a commercial sale include:

- U planning and planting—two years
- U protection & maintenance—two to three years
- U capacity for harvesting, cleaning, freezing and packaging up to 10,000 pounds per day from each 10 to 50 acre orchard
- U meeting & learning from industry players including buyers

There are a number of orchards in the Falher, Nampa and Girouxville areas in steps one and two above.

The Triangle meeting turned into a tour of Kemp Honey with Martine Bolinger taking photos for an article in the Peace Country Sun. Ryan and Rachel (and their helping family) hosted Martine in a evening of learning for everyone.

In Grande Prairie, Cindy Cuthbert facilitated seven people and four businesses through the meeting. She asked two questions to jump start the conversation. Jerome Backmeyer and Sarah Grant attended with new daughter, Gretchen, their best accomplishment in the past year. Other achievements include a budget and a business plan. They say they still need to find some materials to achieve their goal as organic market



gardeners. They need to do more research and the work required for organic designation but are afraid their proximity to non organic farms around them may be an issue.

As of the May meeting, Petra & Gereon Hoentgesberg still had wrapped hives, plans for a bit of willow honey this year and hoped for a great crop of dandelion honey. Cindy Cuthbert reports, "Both Petra and Gereon work full-time while trying to get their honey operation buzzing along." Just a bit of bee humour.

Petra and Gereon are frustrated that consumers don't appreciate the value (flavour and texture) of locally produced honey. They think there are two types of honey buyers: those who use honey for everything they cook and those who only use it as a spread. A seller is challenged to show the value in both uses and maybe convince some people to switch.

Sue and Larry King reported lots of progress in the past year. They've reorganized their business to move toward their goals which include making the best use of their time and energy to create a livelihood from the farm for their family.

Jerry Kitt, Cindy reports, adds a mature yet forever young and curious, voice to the meetings. His experience and effort in the Goodfare area since 1977 have produced an organic farm of pigs, turkeys bison, beef and chicken. His latest addition is a heritage turkey breed that will sell like the wild turkeys.

Learn Agri-Food Network members added to our list of ideas for training and some questions to be researched:

- U creating an internet presence – website, where to go, etc.
- U intercropping – programs on how to do a woodlot and graze animals in the same area
- U nutritional labeling and regulations

If you have other ideas – call anyone on page 4.

Ag-Entrepreneurship Scholarship

Look for a chance this fall to apply for a scholarship to take training outside the province. We hope to have a program in place by then. Think about places you might like to travel this winter for a conference, tour or workshop.

Jerry Kitt and Ted Buchan received assistance to the BC Certified Organic Association Conference last winter. Chat with them about the usefulness of the program.

Alberta Approved Farmers' Markets & the Alberta Farmers' Market Association



Farmers' Market

Summer markets are up and running in the region. If you are keen to be a vendor or to support them by buying local, pick up a brochure at our office or a tourist booth or check out the web site: <http://www.sunnygirl.ca>

Tyla Klassen & Ann Toderian are both farmers' market passionate and work on behalf of their provincial association, the Alberta Farmers' Market Association (AFMA). They built a regional workshop for vendors and managers in May and report:

The AFMA Regional workshop was great. We had 21 for the morning session and added another 5 for the afternoon session.

The speaker from our insurers, The Cooperators, was informative. Vendors asked questions and started thinking about what they should be doing and how they can tie things together in their businesses.

Kelli Krause, an instructor from Grande Prairie Regional College, did a session on merchandising and displays. It was fantastic! She did a great job presenting and is a high energy type personality. She was eager to learn about each participant, what they were doing and how. Kelly was surprised and impressed that so many had a business plan in place. In her opinion, vendors, including those with a business plan don't give enough value to being a vendor at the farmers' market.

Participants let her know that markets are a close community that works as a team. She had anticipated competition amongst them. All in all it was great: an awesome turnout of vendors from all over and representation from market managers and sponsoring bodies.

Thanks to Tyla Klassen, Grande Prairie Downtown Farmers' Market Manager, for this report.

PS - By the way—the 'Program' is administered by Alberta Agriculture and the Alberta Farmers' Market Association belongs to member markets and vendors. This training was organized by your AFMA directors.

Balancing Home and Work Life

The group in Rycroft visited the issue of containing the energy output to each of home and business responsibilities so that both receive due care and attention.

That is long speak for: "How Can I Get a Life?"

They've been reading, coaching and taking coaching. One of them 'should' write us an article for the Peace Country Sun column on how it's going.

Until then, and for additional ideas, Karen Goad forwarded this web site:

<http://www.businessknowhow.com/growth/balance.htm>

Read the full article there. Writer Kelly Robertson's sub headings makes a good little checklist for a self talk or coaching session, however:

- U Love what you do
- U Make time for family and friends
- U Have a hobby
- U Schedule 'me' time
- U Take vacations
- U Disconnect yourself—from wires, wireless, maybe even TV & radio—for some this means news broadcasts—you should know what your connected stressors are—give yourself a complete rest from them regularly.
- U _____ (fill in the blank with the tool or process you KNOW you need and then do it.)

Locavores—a great new word

This is an excerpt from an article that appeared in the Edmonton Journal this spring:

"The Taste is evidence of a trend: eating locally. Canadian foodlovers have been talking about this for at least 10 years and now it has hit New York.

In the spring Style section of the New York Times, writer Amanda Hesser coins the term locavore, pronounced like carnivore, or omnivore.

"(Locavores) are a subset of activists who eat not just politically, sustainably and seasonally, but extremely locally," says Hesser. "All the food they eat should be sourced within a 100-mile (160 kilometres) radius of where they live. ... This small group has a grand purpose: they're supporting local agriculture, as well as fighting the environmental ramifications of (food) being shipped across the country."

That's right, folks, your average dinner has travelled at least 2,400 kilometres, and often up to 6,500 kilometres, and spent many days on the road before it lands on your plate."

Grow West—Start Planning Now

February 2007 will arrive sooner than you think. Start now to plan to attend the North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association (NAFDMA) conference and tours. It's coming to Alberta and there are lots of reasons to go: it's close to home and you'll learn much. Go to their web site or talk to Karen Goad for more information:

<http://nafdma.com/>

Great opportunities for sharing ideas and information.

Learn Agri-Food Network Meeting

Tuesday, June 13 2006
5:30 to 9:00 p.m.

It's the last meeting before summer holidays. Come to Falher for supper (please phone in a reservation by June 10 to 780-538-6208). After supper we'll have a fun meeting for all participants.

Grande Prairie people: we'll leave the Provincial Building at 3:50 pm and ride together in a van. Save some gas and extend the chatting time by traveling together. Or not...
Call 538-6208 to book your spot.

Dine Alberta 2006

Eat local and Alberta foods in September in participating restaurants.

BETTER, though... supply those restaurants with your local foods by getting on the producer directory. As mentioned in the last newsletter—take every opportunity to support the restaurants—and make mention to their staff that you enjoy the fact that they are supporting local.



For Peace Region agriculture entrepreneurs.

Learn Agri-Food

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

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Send submissions to Susan.

For toll free calling of all AAFRD staff dial 310-0000 first.

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.

RENEWAL.
the
way to
grow

Learn Agri-Food Events to Attend

June 5 and 6 8:30 am - 4:30 pm Grande Prairie	Food Safe Course - Sanitation Program for Food Handlers. A 14-hour course about safety preparing and storing food to prevent illness. Level I and II Certificate Program. For information call Marilyn Olson at (780) 513-7517
Tuesday, June 13 5:30 to 9:00 p.m.	Learn Agri-Food Meeting Two hours to talk business with like minded rural people. This will be at the Log Cabin in Falher. Supper is \$10.00 and we need to know how many the caterer should count when preparing food, so call (Use the RITE line 310-0000) 538-6802 before June 10 to reserve.
July 29	RCMP Musical Ride in Tumbler Ridge with an open air market on that day. If you are interested in a booth, please call 250-242-4499. Remember: Alberta Peace food producers must be legally able to sell their products in BC. Please contact Crys White at 250-242-4499 E-mail Address: cwhite@pris.bc.ca
September	Open House at NAIT & Custom Bike Building —a gigantic opportunity to show off the Peace and its products to bikers from near and really far. Call Kamie Currie if you'd like to strut your stuff: 780/835-4024 office 780/835-0377 cell kamie@mdfairview.ab.ca

Food Regulations

Note that effective April 1, 2006 changes to the old Food and Food Establishments Regulation occurred. They will impact farm direct marketers - so of course Learn Agri-Food Network members. The new name of the reg is simply Food Regulation. It's still one (of the many) regs with the Alberta Public Health Act.

Betty Vladicka, Food Safety Specialist, will analyze the changes and then check the validity of those interpretations with Alberta Health & Wellness before sending them out. Keep reading your newsletter for more information. Due diligence says you will do your own homework, too.

Karen Goad says, "I'll pass them along when she sends them out. I expect revisions will also occur to the Alberta foodservice and retail food code as AB Health & Wellness is aiming for consistent interpretation across the province with the exception of Calgary Health Region." (There's a story!)

Keep in mind that the regs are the MINIMUM standard. Health regions are able to add additional requirements to those stated in the regs and this is what Calgary has done for years. Calgary still intends to link the farmers' market permit to home processed products not being allowed for sale which is a condition over and above the reg.

http://www.qp.gov.ab.ca/documents/Regs/2006_031.cfm?frm_isbn=0779743954

We're on the web:

www.peacecountrycanada.com

Look for The Innovation Network and then Learn Agri-Food