



Learn Agri-Food Network

October to November
2006

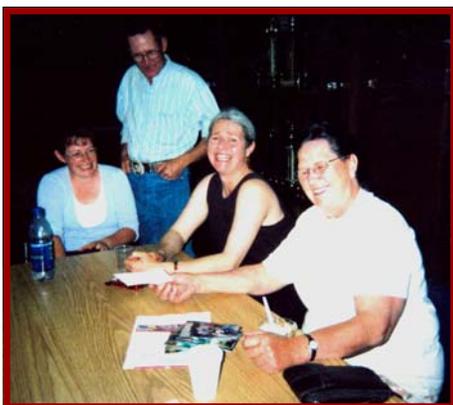
Supporting agri-preneurs in sharing information with peers to build **businesses** of ag or rural based experiences, products and services.

Learn Agri-Food Network Meeting

October Notes

Two groups met in October and both discussed Christmas markets, selling and how to cope.

The **Grande Prairie group** met at 1:00 pm at Mini Creek Farms, where Gerty Sorenson acted as host and facilitator. Thank you, Gerty! She even provided the information for this report. The next meeting will be at 1:00 pm on November 14 at Mary Antonio's.



Sue King, Larry King, Petra Hoentgesberg, and Gerty Sorenson brainstorming

Four business people shared information and ideas. Gerty Sorenson, Mini Creek Farm, used information from the marketing course she attended a year ago to encourage others to charge enough to cover all costs (including distribution and promotion in addition to the obvious ingredient, packaging and labels) and then to add profit to the final sticker price.

Dian Sehleiter lives in Teepee Creek with her two sons. She makes saddle pads and tractor seat cushions out of wool rovings. She's also a very talented artist, sells her pictures and is looking for places to display and market her product.

Mary Antonio is involved in mixed farming that leans more to beef. Mary's big garden provides income and ingredients. She is thinking about a move into laying hens for eggs for the Farmers' Market. Gerty thinks that Mary's perfectionism related to the 'fresh baking issue' is her challenge. Mary, some people say that baking done one day before market is "still

**Learn from others at the next
Learn Agri-Food Network meeting:
Tuesday, November 14, 2006**

Grande Prairie 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at Mary Antonio's house. East on Highway 43, turn left onto Range Road 35, go 4 miles north to township 730, 1/2 mile on right hand side. If you need help finding Mary's, call 567-2217.

Rycroft 1:15 to 3:15 p.m. Elaine Stenbraaten will be joining the group at Alexander's Restaurant. She'll be there for lunch at 12:00 if you'd like to share food.

High Prairie 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., Susan Meyer, will be in attendance at the Triangle Pioneer hall and you can call at 780-538-5630 for more information. Use 310-0000 for toll free access.

fresh". As if this all weren't enough, Mary also does cake decorating and some crafts.

Learn Agri-Food Network meetings go where the participants need to be – both in subject and geography, so Susan King and Mary spent time designing a business card for Mary. The Grande Prairie group also brainstormed ideas for crafts, flowers and gift baskets.



Access Business Viability

Hear Charlie Touchette, Executive Director of the North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association, on November 6, 2006, through a **free** "Webinar". Touchette will be talking about the viability of ag tourism and farm direct marketing through this unique, interactive presentation forum. Please tell your experience with this learning tool, if you try it. For more information on how you can take in this free seminar without even leaving your desk, visit the Canadian Farm Business Management Council's website:

<http://farmcentre.com/english/agriwebinar/webinars/speaker/speakersindex.htm>



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In **Rycroft**, joining for a meal attracts people, but these folk decided also to move the meeting to the afternoon starting November 14. Lunch at Alexander's is a possibility and then we'll have a meeting from 1:15 to 3:15 pm.



Gail, Kathy, Barb, Maureen, Dan and Elaine with issues of City Palate

Elaine Stenbraaten brought great coaching help including stories about how the department's New Venture Coaches work. Her challenges include needing to make a quick relationship with a phone call with a stranger who is excited about a new idea and finding a way to channel at least some of the energy into due diligence on the business front. General conversation around the protection of our food processing industry was a key issue for everyone around the table.... what all can we do to ensure any processor doesn't make a mistake in safety, regulations, flavour or looks that might be damaging to everyone in the eyes of customers?

Dan Prudholme did a great introduction to his Rosewood Meadows business and products: grains and cereal mixes, sauces and of course all his fudges and candies. His short term problems include sourcing product at a price to keep him competitive, working on UPC coding, U.S. health regulations and a huge problem that looks small from the outside: he's rural and has no address that courier and trucking companies can understand. Dan says they planted 6000 strawberries for the u-pick market this summer.

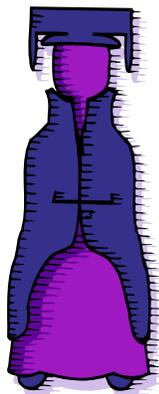
Maureen Johnston, a new participant is also new to the Peace and even Canada. She's horse keen and the group immediately became energized in discussion around the possible contacts she could make in the 'horsey' crowd. Ideas for money making ranged from training to sales. Go Maureen.



Rachel Kemp, Kathy Meyer and Julie Gour checking out the latest Peace Country Sun's Proudly Peace Full Products

Act like a teenager and apply for a scholarship:

The first deadline for applications for this year's **Agripreneur Scholarship** is December 8. Application information and additional program deadlines are available from Marian Williams with the Farm Direct Marketing Initiative. Call (780) 679-5168 (toll free at 310-0000) or email marian.williams@gov.ab.ca.



Burnt River Clay's Barb Barrs is into her first season as a full time potter. Full time might be a bit of a stretch as she is still very busy as mom and wife and needs to really parlay her artistic talent into saleable product. Her concern is throwing and firing enough product for the coming seasonal markets. She certainly has her 'key message' about her business in quick sentence form. December 9 is her planned open house so she is building on last year's inaugural event.

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Using a wedding registry for marketing is very successful for Barb. She is also planning to take a web site design course. We hope for an update next meeting.

Focus, focus, focus, said Gail Briggs. Briggswood Country Preserves, Gail's baby is maturing and Gail's pithy statement is "a weary mind can foster critical business mistakes" so she is working on her pressing need to 'put the fun back in business'. At the same time, she's been doing a thorough look at the business side of the business to build a good exit strategy for herself.

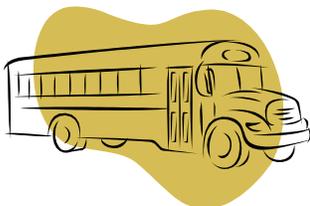
Christmas markets were also in the mind of Tara Sallis. She has her soaps ready and ideas for other products, but likes the part of finding time for each part of life. Hockey mom cuts into Birch Hills Bath business sometimes.

Kathy Meyer encouraged the LAF Network team to get Christmas sales and markets into the Peace Country Sun any way we can as this is the main marketing push for the year for many members. She finished her 200 pair of Coveralls for Kids before harvest on her farm. Talk about focus! She says there are 7 sizes and many colours. If you know about other sales, please call or e-mail someone on the last page of this newsletter.

Provincial Ag Service Board Tour: County of Grande Prairie No. 1

If you interested in having municipal politicians and staff to tour your business in the Summer of 2008. This is a great marketing opportunity for sales and exposure. Please contact Mary for more information:

Mary Lupwayi
Grande Prairie County #1
Phone: 780-513-3955
E-mail: mlupwayi@coutygp.ab.ca



Grow West - North American Farmer's Direct Marketing Convention

February 12 – 17, 2007
Hyatt Regency in Calgary,
Alberta

First time held in Alberta, over 700 direct marketers from the USA & Canada are expected to attend.

Karen Goad & Cindy Cuthbert are on the international planning group. Talk to them. We think that two van loads of Peace country entrepreneurs should attend.

Book Your Seat and Grow West

Sit back, relax and network with other Peace Country farm direct and ag tourism operators as you travel to Southern Alberta for Grow West, the North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association convention February 12-17, 2007 in Calgary. Catch a ride—we've booked two vans to take Peace agripreneurs to the convention.

The North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association convention is the biggest farm direct industry gathering on the continent. It has helped catapult the farm direct marketing industry across North America. Convention attendees not only increase profitability they develop networks with industry peers worldwide.

Grow West Alberta 2007 offers participants numerous chances to learn. The three main opportunities are the Bus Tour (February 12, 13, and 14), the Workshop Day (February 15) and the Conference (February 16 and 17). You can attend the Bus Tour, the Workshop, the Conference or better yet, all three. And the activities don't end there. There are also two days of post conference options. Apply for the scholarship on page 2 to help with costs to attend this event.

This year's convention is being presented in partnership with the Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association, Alberta Farmers' Market Association and Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development.

Convention details are available at www.nafdma.com or by calling the NAFDMA office at 1-888-884-9270. Registration packages will be available on the website November 1, 2006.

Call Karen Goad at 780 538-5629 to book your seat on the van or to receive a copy of the convention registration package in the mail. For toll free calling, dial 310-0000 first.

For Peace Region agriculture entrepreneurs.

Learn Agri-Food Network Team includes Tyla Klassen, Gail Briggs and Jerry Kitt, as well as:

Jim Smith

The Innovation Network
1-866-835-5005

Elaine Stenbraaten

Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development,
Fairview
835-7531

Gary Christopherson

Consultant, Grimshaw
338-2000

Karen Goad

Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development,
Grande Prairie

538-5629

Cindy Cuthbert

Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development,
Grande Prairie

538-5287

Susan Meyer

Editor
Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development,
Grande Prairie

538-5630

Fax: 538-5288

susan.meyer@gov.ab.ca

Send submissions to Susan.

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

The Learn Agri-Food Network Team helps agri-preneurs 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

RENEWAL.
the
way to
grow

Learn Agri-Food Events to Attend

**Nov. 6
11:00-2:30**
Rycroft

Alberta Farmers' Market Association Regional Information Session

(One of five sessions in the province.)

You survived the busy summer, now come celebrate, network and listen to experts from local Colleges, Businesses, Alberta Agriculture, Food Industries, Entrepreneurs & more...Gain valuable information that will help grow your business. Contact Melisa Zapisocky, AFMA Program Coordinator at (780) 427-6403 (310-0000 for toll free access) or melisa.zapisocky@gov.ab.ca
\$20 AFMA & AFPPA, \$25 non-members

**Tuesday,
November 14**
Check times at
the right

Learn Agri-Food Meeting

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Grande Prairie (1:00-3:00pm) Mary Antonio's—Please call 780-567-2217 if you get lost.

High Prairie (6:00-8:00 pm) Triangle Pioneer Hall—Susan Meyer, will be in attendance and you can call at 780-538-5630 for more information. Use 310-0000 for toll free access information. Use 310-0000 for toll free access.

Nov. 16 & 17
Grande Prairie
Inn

29th Annual Farm Women's Conference

Always a chance for rejuvenation, making new friends and learning. Get a registration form soon and reserve a space for yourself. Share a hotel room with a friend or even your mother or daughter in-law. It's a great *'here's your Christmas present'*.

Contacts or for more information:

Cindy Trudel – 780-359-2107

Melinda Trudel – 780-494-2627

Cindy Cuthbert – 780-538-5287 (call toll free with 310-0000)

Jan. 24-25, 2007
Royal Executive
Inn
Nisku AB

AFMA Conference and Annual General Meeting – A great opportunity to talk to managers and vendors from across Alberta and western Canada. Interesting speakers will motivate you to have the best market year yet! Join the Alberta Farmers Market Association. Contact the AFMA office at (780) 644 5377

**February 12-17,
2007**

North American Farm Direct Marketing Association

(NAFDMA) - more information on Page 3

[\(www.nafdma.com/Alberta/\)](http://www.nafdma.com/Alberta/)

It only happens once! Alberta will be hosting the North American Farmers' Direct Annual meeting, conference and tour. This one week event brings together approximately 800 marketers from across Canada, USA, and the United Kingdom to take part in discussions, networking and sessions that will stimulate your business and allow you to harvest the world for new idea.

We're on the web:

www.peacecountrycanada.com