



Learn Agri-Food Network

November to
December
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

November Notes

High Prairie report:

The meetings are at the Pioneer Hall at Triangle but we're calling them the High Prairie group to indicate everyone in the area is welcome. Representing the Enilda farmers' market vendors, Ileen Shaw and husband Stan, enjoyed the meeting in November.

As honey producers they are regular vendors at Enilda and have a wealth of ideas for building business.

There was plenty of laughter and ideas that cold, snowy evening. The discussion started around goal statements. A goal statement sets direction and helps communicate to self, family, community and buyers what your business is about. Being clear about your purpose will help them offer appropriate support.



At the November High Prairie Learn Agri-Food Network meeting, Petra Hoentgesberg, from Snipe Lake, Betty Claydon and Stan and Ileen Shaw, from Sunset House, enjoyed sharing business ideas.

Petra Hoentgesberg described building a new home at Snipe Lake, her job in Valleyview and, of course, her booth at the farmers' market. After listening to her business and personal goals, we

Learn from others at the next Learn Agri-Food Network meeting: Tuesday, December 12, 2006

Grande Prairie 1:15 to 3:15 p.m. at Diane Schleiter's house: Go North of Bezanson on Highway 733 and at Township Road 744 turn East (right) and drive 1 mile to Range Road 32. Turn North and Diane 's is the first house on right (East). Phone Diane at 568-3409 if you need help.

Rycroft 1:15 to 3:15 p.m. at Alexander's Restaurant (join us in the restaurant for lunch at noon if you can.)

High Prairie 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Pioneer Threshermans Hall at Triangle. Call Susan Meyer at 780-538-5630 for more information. For toll free access use 310-0000.

decided Petra Hoentgesberg's mission statement might say: to expand the bee keeping operation and related work to earn enough to enjoy life while endeavoring to produce local products in environmentally sustainable ways.

Betty Claydon is full of business building ideas and shared a bit of her experience with the group. The conversation revolved around the need for PASSION in each area: product or service, marketing (both selling and promotion) and financial management (the decisions around ensuring profit from the business). Betty says she wants to build a business she can do at home without the need to work away full time. Betty's stories of her past business ventures and sales. We learned how to think through how to promote in the right place for a target market.

Susan Meyer received a gift of locally milled whole wheat. The Pioneer Association uses some of their heritage equipment at an annual July 1st event to demonstrate how grains used to be processed. Participants can taste baked products made from freshly ground wheat and can buy a bag of wheat to take home. Stored in the freezer to preserve the fresh flavour and nutrients, Susan says "thanks". Husband Arnie, who's been enjoying truly fresh bread, is happy, too.

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The High Prairie group found the two hours gone in an instant - and each person expressed joy in the opportunity to meet even with the stormy weather. Conversation included ideas for raising prices and attracting thicker pocket books to the market. One story was of a doll maker (very special hand made dolls of course) in Fort McMurray who could not keep up with purchases at \$500 to 800 per doll.

Grande Prairie report:

Mary Antonio created the beginning of a mission statement at the meeting as the conversation started with the usefulness of a succinct message about your business. She says hers might read "to get a good quality product out there and do it at a profit." Mary is still working on a business name. She's learning that there are loads of considerations and even if you don't plan to have international sales, you want the name to say the right thing to the right people.



The Grande Prairie LAF group took time to 'smell the roses' at Mary Antonio's. Gerty Sorensen and Mary first shared ideas for telling their business messages and then smelled the anniversary roses all around Mary's house.

Gerty described her immediate goals as "selling the BIG turkeys at a profit this winter" and "creating a Christmas gift pack". Gerty's Learn Agri-Food Network goal is "Ensure that our neighbours and families are aware of what we are up to in our businesses." Her concern is that your closest allies (friends and neighbours) don't even know what

you're doing.

A pat on the back!

"Gerty Sorensen, Mini Creek Farm, is my mentor in this whole business. She's guided me in pricing and labeling," Mary Antonio says.

Letters to the Editor:

Hi Susan. I agree with the demand for "proper" pricing, but I keep finding that people often shop for the lowest price. The more I hear, read and think about it, the more my passion is for small regional markets where customers actually know you and can check for themselves what they are buying and eating.



Thank you. Petra

PS. Petra says she has other commitments on December 12 and can't make that LAF meeting.

Social networking for a business person has always been essential. In the past we said, "He has a great rolodex!"

Steve Dotto, on Dotto Tech television says the internet is building on this with web connections such as <http://www.linkedin.com/>

The premise is that people build circles or networks where they connect to people and then people connect others to us.

There is an inner circle built on trust from which people broker introductions.

We do it with the **Learn Agri-Food Network**, the meetings and information sharing through this newsletter and in the Peace Country Sun articles.



Grow West - North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Convention
February 12-17, 2007
Hyatt Regency in Calgary, Alberta



Interested in participating in this once in a lifetime opportunity in Calgary? Have a look at the registration package enclosed with this newsletter. Check out the enclosed news release for program contacts if you're interested in pursuing financial scholarships to reduce the cost of learning.

Top 10 Reasons to Do a Business Plan

1. Forces you to think of all aspects of your business
2. Helps you determine and plan for cash needs
3. Can be used to secure financing
4. Explains your business ideas and concept to boards, investors, employees, etc.
5. Provides a benchmark to measure your progress against
6. Helps you understand the overall market for your product or service and who your competitors are
7. Helps determine the feasibility of your product or service
8. May identify opportunities you would otherwise have overlooked
9. Helps you anticipate change and adapt to it
10. Identifies areas of weakness so you can work to correct them

Source: http://www.cbasc.org/alberta/newsletter/September2006_1.html

Who can help with research and business development?

The **Canadian Agricultural Skills Service (CASS)** program is for education but they may be worth contacting because they may know who would be able to help.

http://www.agr.gc.ca/ren/cass-scdca/index_e.php

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The **Alberta Food Processors Association (AFPA)** handles some programs that non-members can access.

<http://www.afpa.com/tec/irap.shtml>

While there, look for Terry Rachuk and ask about the IRAP program.

http://irap-pari.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/howirapcanhelpyou_e.html

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This is a listing of many agriculture scholarship programs. Go here to get support to learn and experience new things:

<http://farmcentre.com/english/learningcentre.htm>

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Community Futures offer business development information and are a great resource as you develop your new venture. After discussing your business plan with them, you'll be ready to take it to the bank or other partners.

Food Safety Displays Now Available

Two food safety displays are available for use at industry events and conferences. One is a table top display, the other a three panel, pull-up floor model. For more information or to book them, call Karen Goad at 538-5629.



For Peace Region agriculture entrepreneurs.

Learn Agri-Food

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

Jim Smith

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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 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 in
the school of hard knocks.**

RENEWAL.
the
way to
grow

Learn Agri-Food Events to Attend

**Tuesday,
December 12**
Check times and
venues at the
right

Learn Agri-Food Meeting

Grande Prairie 1:15 to 3:15 pm at Diane Schleiter's house
(directions on Page 1)

Rycroft 1:15 to 3:15 p.m. at Alexander's Restaurant

High Prairie 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Pioneer Threshermans Hall

**January 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 Farmers' Direct Marketing Association

(NAFDMA) - more information on Page 3

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 farm direct
marketers from across Canada, USA, and the United Kingdom.
Take part in discussions, networking and sessions that will
stimulate your business and allow you to harvest the world for
new ideas.

Included with this newsletter:

A Blank Business Profile. Every business should have a business
profile at hand. It's for sharing with advisors, buyers, bankers, even
your insurance agent. The format is less important than the fact that it
exists. This is a start if you don't have one. Bring it to the December
meeting to discuss uses.

The Upcoming Events Pages. We try to keep you aware of opportuni-
ties. Feel free to hang it on the fridge – or your public bulletin board to
share with others. If YOU have something of an educational nature
(and open houses to train your buyers counts) tell any of the people
on the last page of the newsletter.

The Grow West Package. Have you registered yet? Would you like to
ride share? Give us a call at 780-538-6208.

Scholarship News release. It lists program contacts if you're inter-
ested in pursuing financial scholarships to reduce the cost of learning.

We're on the web:
www.peacecountrycanada.com