



L.A.F. Meeting

Learn Agri-Food Meeting Tuesday, December 9, 2008

See page 4 for more information.

Sue King reports that the Wanham meat plant, Heart Valley Processors, now has their own organic certification. Congratulations Heart Valley!

Barb Barrs hosted the September meeting of the Learn Agri-Food Network. Held at her Burnt River Clay Pottery studio, we enjoyed coffee and tea from our individually potted, signature clayware. We raised our mugs to Barb and her successful fundraising efforts for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Canada. She surpassed her goal of \$6,000.

Network members discussed the challenges of deadlines and the many items on their to do lists.

Barb shared that she's a procrastinator by nature. "I was finalizing glazes right up to the deadline. I made changes even as I worked."

Petra Hoentgesberg, Sue King and Heather Porrill also admitted to pushing their time limits. "Crisis management is how I work," says Sue. "I have a list and only work to a deadline."

"I work best with a deadline," says Petra, although she admits that she can accomplish results without pressure.

Heather Porrill sometimes finds herself working until 2:00 a.m. before a deadline but really tries not to. "I'll give up sleep if I have to but I do try to fill my orders in advance so I have time to deal with unexpected problems."

Barb found the Learn Agri-Food mug order challenging. "It was good because I wanted to do it. It was challenging to consider different shapes

and ways of throwing. The handle-less mug was thrown upside down and closed."

What's Barb's dream for the future? "My dream is to be well known enough that people come to me here. I don't have to find them."

Petra's focus is on her goats this year. With 25 goats she says, "I get between 1.5 and 2 L twice a day from each goat. The milk is naturally homogenized. It has the same milk fat as cow's milk but very little of it rises to the top."

Petra is looking into pasteurizing her goat milk for sale and using it in soaps and cosmetics. She's experimenting with soaps but is having difficulty finding a source of lye. Elaine Stenbraaten suggested she ask Joan Parkinson or Tara Sallis for possible suppliers.

Heather Porrill spent the summer getting ready to open her farm store. Watch for the new Star Bright Farm signs on the south side of Highway 49 as you approach Bay Tree. "As soon as they went up I



Barb Barrs, Burnt River Clay

L.A.F. Meeting cont'd

What's Happening with Ag and Food Distribution Project

Phase 1 of the Ag and Food Distribution project is complete. The logistics consultant identified four options for participants to consider for phase 2. The group agreed to explore two of them; consolidated freight shipping (outbound) to Edmonton and Calgary, and consolidated purchasing (inbound raw materials and supplies).

The outbound consolidated freight has taken priority for Phase 2. Due to critical timing and need, a participating business spearheaded the consolidated freight option. As a result, the "pilot" is well underway with Valta Bison acting as the Freight Coordinator for phase 2.

Want to find out how the Ag and Food Distribution in the Peace project might benefit you and your business? Call Karen Goad at 780-538-5629 for more information.

realized they were too small," Heather says. "They should be 4 x 8 feet. Even having just my logo and website on the sign they're hard to see." Each 2 x 3 foot aluminum sign cost \$135 with an additional \$60 for the pole.

A fully stocked Star Bright Farm Store opened for business on September 22. Store hours are Monday and Tuesdays year round from 10 am – 7 pm. Stop in and pick up a treat for dinner, a unique gift or a specialty item from one of the 16 local producers featured in store.

Heather shared these words of advice, "Promote your business every chance you get. Have a marketing kit at the front door with business cards, photos, commission contracts, etc. Take it everywhere you go and use it."

Sue and Larry King were busy preparing for their trip to Italy for the Terra Madre conference and a self guided learning tour. They're updating their booth at the Grande Prairie Farmers' Market as



Petra Hoentgesberg reading the Peace Country Sun at the L.A.F. meeting.

customers can't tell where Sue's booth ends and the next one starts. She's adding fencing to clarify boundaries and improve customer service.

What does the future hold for the King family? Within the next few years they want to be in a position where Larry can work full-time on the farm. "We had a set back this year but we're working towards it," says Sue. Our markets continue to expand as our business grows." Harmony's Way Farm organic products are available at the Grande Prairie Farmers' Market,

Nutter's health food store in Jasper, and health food stores in Grande Prairie.

Gail Briggs went back to work at the Briggswood Country Preserves shop after taking the summer off. She had her best year ever for sales at the Dawson market. "Focusing on my top sellers has improved sales," says Gail. She received orders for 120 wedding favours in small hex jars as well as 70 jelly squats for a nursing school reunion. "About half my work is orders" says Gail. "I like them as they let me plan my time."

Our Condolences

Leo Meyer Jr., eldest son of Learn Agri-Food Network member Kathy (Coveralls for Kids) and Leo Meyer of Woking passed away unexpectedly on October 28, 2008. Funeral services were

held November 3 at the Northmark Lutheran Church.

Memorial donations may be made to Northmark Lutheran Church Box 171

Woking, AB T0H 3V0.

Our thoughts and sympathy are with the Meyer family during this sad and very difficult time.

Farewell to Susan

The Learn Agri-Food team, clients and Alberta Agriculture staff bid farewell to Susan Meyer on September 30, her last day with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development.

“The department is undergoing a program review and supporting a new meat and livestock agency. To meet our changing needs all Alberta Ag employees were offered voluntary severance. After a rewarding career spanning 27 years I am one of over 130 staff who chose to leave,” says Susan.

Susan and her family are not leaving the region. She'll remain in the community shopping at our farmers' markets, visiting friends, neighbours and friendly strangers (or 'unknown friends' as Susan describes them) and participating in community events. As a passionate supporter and advocate of local foods and Alberta's ag industry I expect Susan will continue to be in touch with many of you over the coming years.

Thank you, Susan, for your commitment to the Learn Agri-Food Network, Agri-Preneur Scholarship

program, Dine Alberta and farmers' markets across the Peace. Tackle your new life challenges with the same joy and passion you brought to ours. As you move on know that your former team in the office and in the field will miss you.



Congratulations to Sue and Larry King who just returned from Terra Madre and a self directed tour of ag tourism operations in central Italy. They were joined at Terra Madre by Jerry Kitt, Ted Buchan, and Peter and Mary Lundgard.

Sue received an Agri-Preneur Scholarship for the self directed portion of their trip.

Marketing Tips

Looking for an idea that will bring more sales?

Learn from the big companies. Scope out what works for them and apply their winning ideas to your business.

Retail marketing giant **Ikea** introduced a simple but effective coffee display. It included a photo of three delectable edibles made from coffee, a recipe card for each, a package of coffee, a coffee pot and coffee glasses for sale. The photo feature edibles were hot sellers in their restaurant.

Ikea knew they were selling the experience, not simply the product. This is marketing at its best.

Translate this to your business.

Take a look at your product give your customers ideas for creative ways to use it. Include recipe cards, offer product demonstrations or team up with another vendor who has a complimentary product. Sometimes a serving suggestion and a recipe can be just the ticket to increase sales.

Look at innovative ways to bundle your products. Combine slow selling meat cuts with hot sellers and market to a specific niche. A 'heritage pack' might include pot roasts, minute steak and other slow cooking family favourites. Add your product to others and create a regional gift

basket. Partner with a meat vendor to sell your washed, 'ready to stew' vegetable packages with his stew meat. Include a recipe with products you have in ample supply and sample the dish featured in the recipe.

Getting your customer to think of your product as an ingredient may help you sell more product. You've just turned an objection for your product into a sale. For instance, not everyone uses honey as a sweetener or topping on toast. But they may use it as a salad dressing ingredient, in a savory mustard sauce, fruit punch, peanut brittle, meat glaze or muffins. Thinking outside the box gives more customers the opportunity to buy your product.

Agriwebinars?

Tuning in to an internet presentation on Farm Diversification, Elaine Stenbraaten thought, "What a great way to learn." She listened for just under an hour, had the chance to ask questions and didn't have to leave home. "Wow, learning doesn't get better than that," says Elaine.

The Canadian Farm Business Management Council runs a live webinar each Monday from Nov 3, 2008 to March 30, 2009 at noon EST. There is no cost but you must register to participate. For topic information and to register go to www.agriwebinar.com.

You can log on via dial-up or high-speed Internet. Each presentation lasts 60 minutes and includes a 20 minute question period.

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

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

Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development

Elaine Stenbraaten

Fairview
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Grande Prairie
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Send submissions to Sherry.

For Peace Region agricultural entrepreneurs.

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

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

We're on the web:

www.peacecountrycanada.com

Look for Culture of Innovation and then Learn Agri-Food

Learn Agri-Food Events

Fridge Keeper Events

Learn Agri-Food Meeting
Tuesday, December 9

Grande Prairie: Provincial Building—1:30 to 3:30 p.m.
Rycroft: Alexander's Restaurant—1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Design Your Business
Image Workshop
Wednesday, December 3

Grande Prairie Provincial Building Meeting Room #1905.
See enclosed flyer for information and to register.

Setting a Profitable Price
January 28, 2009

Grande Prairie Provincial Building Meeting Room #1905.
See enclosed flyer for information and to register.

Learn Agri-Food Meeting
Tuesday, February 10, 2009

Grande Prairie Provincial Building—1:30 to 3:30 p.m.
Rycroft: Alexander's Restaurant—1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

How To Approach Retailers
February 17, 2009

Grande Prairie Provincial Building Meeting Room #1905.
See enclosed flyer for information and to register.

Learn Agri-Food Meeting
Tuesday, April 14, 2009

Host site-TBA—1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. If you want to host this meeting please contact Sherry Smith.

See the enclosed upcoming events sheet for lots of educational and promotional events.

Farm Wife Wanted!!!

Qualifications:

- * multi-skilled (Jill-of-all-trades)
- * strong and healthy
- * cooperative and agreeable
- * adaptable to any adverse situation
- * ESP and go-fer abilities
- * excellent book balancing skills
- * looks like fashion queen in blue jeans and gum boots
- * cooks like mother under any circumstances
- * full-time mom, hired hand, loving wife, vet, fencer, mechanic, truck driver, seamstress, housekeeper etc.
- * loves working without help but loves helping others
- * enjoys the outdoors in any weather – any time
- * angel by day – devil by night



This means you! Plan to attend the
31st Annual Farm Women's Conference
November 20th & 21st, 2008 Grande Prairie Inn
All farm women and non-farm women welcome!

For information call:
Cindy Cuthbert toll free at 310-0000, then 780-538-5287
or Melinda Trudel at 780-494-2627

Canada

The Agricultural Policy Framework (APF)
A FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL-TERRITORIAL INITIATIVE

Alberta