



FACStracs

Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan

Fall 2000

FACS 9th Annual General Meeting and Conference

Mark your calendars to attend the FACS 9th Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Conference, to take place at Saskatoon's Ramada Hotel. The AGM is scheduled for Thursday, January 11, 2001, at 7:00 p.m., and the Conference will take place on Friday, January 12, 2001, with registration at 7:30 a.m. The 2001 conference, "Animal Agriculture: Issues, Information and Action," encourages livestock and poultry producers, veterinarians and agribusiness leaders to come together to learn how to excel and lead in their industry. Topics to be discussed are both current and timely, and will include the economics of practicing sound animal welfare, fighting misinformation, castration, dehorning and much more. The conference features several well-respected speakers, including:

Dr. Janice Swanson: Dr. Swanson has been an Associate Professor of Animal Science and Industry at the Kansas State University since 1992. She teaches behavior of domestic animals, contemporary issues in animal science, and food-animal well being. She also acts as Associate Director for the University's International Meat and Livestock Program and serves on a number of high profile committees, including the Kansas State University Animal Care and Use Committee, the Board of Trustees Scientists for Animal Welfare, the United Egg Producers Animal Welfare Scientific Advisory Committee and the McDonald's Blue Ribbon Animal Welfare Council.

Dr. Larry Martin: Dr. Martin was raised on a dairy farm in Ohio. He received his MSc from Ohio State University in 1968, and his PhD from the University of Illinois in 1972. Dr. Martin currently serves as the CEO of the George Morris Centre, based out of Guelph, Ontario. He has worked extensively in the field of economic analysis and research, having published a number of papers and reports related to agricultural international trade, agricultural sector-specific competition, meat production and processing, and other pertinent topics.

Ms. Pat Tigges: Ms. Tigges administers a fact-based, proactive environmental education program called "Eat First!," based out of Cle Elum in Washington State. The program has been taught to over 5,000 teachers, 45,000 students and thousands of urban residents. She also speaks to natural resource groups nationwide about environmental topics. In addition to teaching, Ms. Tigges spent 17 years as a newspaper publisher and 35 years in agricultural innovation. She holds a Masters Degree in Nutrition from the University of California at Davis.

Dr. Joseph Stookey: Joseph Stookey, born in Belleville, Illinois, was raised on a mixed livestock farm. From an early age he was fascinated with the behaviour of farm animals and spent countless childhood hours observing their habits. He was trained as an animal scientist, gaining his Bachelor, Master and PhD degrees from the University of Illinois. For his PhD he studied aggression in newly mixed pigs. He has served as manager of research facilities for both sheep and swine for the University of Illinois. Since 1991, Dr. Stookey has worked as a professor at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Saskatchewan. In addition to teaching, he conducts research on animal behaviour and welfare issues, primarily in beef cattle, but also including pigs, horses, and elk.

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Thanks to our Sponsors . . .

FACS acknowledges the generous support of the many sponsors of the FACS 9th Annual General Meeting and Conference. With the financial assistance of these agriculture and agri-food organizations, FACS is able to present “Animal Agriculture: Issues, Information and Action,” in conjunction with its Annual General Meeting, on January 11 and 12, 2001, in Saskatoon. Sponsors of the FACS 9th Annual General Meeting and Conference are:

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FACS 9th Annual General Meeting and Conference
 “Animal Agriculture: Issues, Information & Action”

REGISTRATION FORM

I will attend the:

- FACS Annual General Meeting on January 11
- FACS Conference on January 12
- both events

Register by mail:

Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan Inc.
 502 - 45th Street West, 2nd Floor
 Saskatoon, SK S7L 6H2

Full payment must accompany registration.

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Early Bird Fee is \$80 (including GST). After January 5, registration is \$95 (including GST). Students may register for \$35 (including GST) prior to January 5, and \$95 (including GST) thereafter. Fees include lunch. Please make cheques payable to the Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan Inc.

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The FACS 5th Annual Billboard Campaign

FACS is pleased to announce the continuation of our immensely popular outdoor billboard campaign. Watch for our billboards across Regina and Saskatoon this November and December. Thanks to our billboard partners: Sask Pork, the Saskatchewan Egg Producers and Heartland Livestock Services. Thanks also to Randy Ruppel of Randy's Graphics for his design of the artwork.



Watch for the 2000 FACS Billboard Campaign, across Regina and Saskatoon this November and December.

New FACS Board Member

FACS Welcomes Dr. John F. Patience, President and CEO of the Prairie Swine Centre Inc. (PSCI), to the FACS Board of Directors. Dr. Patience is a graduate of the University of Guelph (BSc, Agriculture, 1974; MSc, 1976) and of Cornell University (PhD, 1985). Prior to joining the staff of PSCI, he was employed by the Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture and by Federated Co-operatives Ltd. In 1987, he joined the University of Saskatchewan as Research Associate and Director of PSCI and was appointed an Adjunct Professor in 1988. When PSCI was re-organized as a non-profit corporation in 1991, Dr. Patience was appointed its first President and Chief Executive Officer. He has served on

the editorial boards of both the Journal of Animal Science and the Canadian Journal of Animal Science and was President of the Canadian Society of Animal Science from 1993 to 1994. He is a member of the American Society of Animal Science, the American Society for Nutritional Sciences, the Canadian Society for Nutritional Sciences and Sigma Xi, the Scientific Society, and the author of several journal articles, books and abstracts.

The Farm Stress Line and Livestock Care Service

It's natural to ask for help when we have a big project to accomplish, such as harvesting or construction. When facing a problem we look for advice from friends, neighbours and experts. In farming, it's important to protect our most valuable asset: people. Calls received at the Farm Stress Line show people in crisis often have difficulty focussing on their farming operation. Consequently, the business can become neglected and livestock may not receive their usual care. Over time, a successful farming operation can become unstable.

The Farm Stress Line is a safe place to call and explore options, or get information. Callers remain anonymous. Farm Stress Line counselors are active livestock and grain producers who understand today's farming challenges. They know what it's like to lose an animal or experience a crop failure. Counselors provide support, help solve problems and give referrals.

When calls are specifically related to livestock, referrals are made to the Livestock Care Service. The Livestock Care Service, a joint FACS and Farm Stress Line initiative, is accessible through the Farm Stress Line. Livestock Care Service volunteers are farmers with extensive experience in a range of commodities. Volunteers listen attentively and provide support, as well as advice.

The Farm Stress Line and Livestock Care Service remain open Monday to Saturday, from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Just call 1-800-667-4442.

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Winter Demands Care in Hog Transportation

By Wilfred Popoff

With winter approaching, the Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan Inc. (FACS) wants to remind producers and truckers to pay special attention to the humane transport of pigs.

When temperatures dip below freezing it may be necessary to cover some of the air holes in aluminum trailers to avoid potentially deadly wind chill, which can be created by the truck's motion. On a -7 C day, when a truck is moving at 80 km/h, the wind chill factor for the pigs on board can be -31 C.

Pigs have very little natural protection from the cold. They can suffer frostbite very quickly and can even be killed by wind chill. Adding bedding and liners can prevent this.

Winter also demands greater care in the loading and unloading of pigs, and proper maintenance of ramps to prevent ice buildup, which can cause pigs to slip.

SIAST to Offer Livestock Transportation Course

In response to expansion within Saskatchewan's livestock industries, the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) has initiated the development of a Livestock Transportation Course. The course will equip new truckers with essential skills and information necessary for the responsible transportation of livestock. Course materials will incorporate the federal Codes of Practice as the foundation of the industry's best practices. During the two-day program, participants will learn about specific topics such as transportation as a marketing activity, proper equipment usage, livestock behavior and needs, regulations, and human behavior management. The course will be accessible through a self-taught method at approved instructional sites. SIAST's Business and Agriculture Division is co-ordinating the development and delivery of the course. More details about the course will be available in upcoming editions of *FACStracs*.

Why do Women Choose Vegetarianism?

Over the past decade or two there has been a noticeable growing interest in vegetarian eating patterns, although the percentage of Canadians who don't eat meat has remained under three per cent.

Still, it has become almost fashionable for young women to claim that they are vegetarian. This led nutrition researchers Susan Barr and Gwen Chapman to ask the question, "Why do some women think that eating meat is bad?"

Dr. Ban, nutrition professor at the University of British Columbia (UBC), surveyed 193 women between the ages of 18 and 50 years and Dr. Chapman, Associate Professor, then conducted in-depth interviews with 15 of the survey participants. About half the women surveyed said they followed or were trying to follow a vegetarian-eating pattern; half were non-vegetarian. Included in the non-vegetarian group were women who had practiced vegetarianism for a period of time, but had since returned to eating meat.

The strongest motivators for choosing vegetarianism were concerns about animal welfare, personal health and the environment. Many also started avoiding animal products because they believed it would help them reduce fat intake or cut calories.

But in reality, that doesn't happen. When Dr. Susan Ban analyzed the diets of vegetarian and non-vegetarian women, she found more similarities than differences. The vegetarian women were not leaner than their non-vegetarian counterparts; their caloric and fat intakes were almost identical.

Still, as women move from experimenting with vegetarianism to establishing this pattern of eating as a way of life, their beliefs become more entrenched. "Dislike of the taste of meat also doubles as the habit becomes ingrained into their way of life," says Dr. Chapman. "Vegetarians claim they find meat hard to digest or that it makes them feel heavy."

A typical response to Dr. Chapman's interview was: "My initial decision to become vegetarian was probably ethical, but within the next year I read 'Diet for a New America' and that expanded my reasons to include environmental and health reasons."

“It’s important to contrast the beliefs of women who are currently vegetarian with those held by women who tried it for a while and then returned to eating meat,” says Dr. Chapman. “The past vegetarians share the concerns of vegetarians about antibiotics and hormones in meat. However, the past vegetarians are far more likely to believe that red meat is as healthy as fish and poultry and that it provides essential nutrients, such as protein and iron.”

As one past vegetarian commented, “During the ten years that I was a vegetarian, my mother always asked me: ‘Are you getting enough protein?’ Now I think she was right; I wasn’t.”

Pat Scarlett, the Beef Information Centre’s National Nutrition Manager, thinks this study provides important insight for people in the beef industry who are concerned about a surge in vegetarianism. “This study suggests that it’s very difficult to change entrenched beliefs, but if we reach people with accurate facts and compelling information while they are in the experimental stage, we can counter the impact of misinformation. Consumers need more education about the nutritional benefits of lean red meat, particularly iron and zinc. They also need reassurance about the meat production practices in Canada, particularly as related to use of antibiotics, hormones and bacterial contamination.”

Dr. Gwen Chapman from UBC presented the findings from this Beef Industry Development funded study at two functions: the first was June 1999 at a poster session at the Dieticians of Canada conference; the second was February 2000 at the Canadian Meat Council meeting in Quebec City. (Source: *The Beef Information Centre Report, October 2000*)

University Course on Animal Welfare

ANSCI 898.3: The Welfare of Agricultural Animals, is a graduate level course offered in alternate years at the University of Saskatchewan. Currently, seven students from Animal and Poultry Science and Large Animal Clinical Studies are enrolled, including four MSc and three PhD students. Application has been made to the University to have the course listed within the university catalogue. The course will likely appear listed as ANSCI 811.3. The course covers the developments in

farm animal welfare since the publication of *Animal Machines* by Ruth Harrison in 1964. Various definitions and approaches to farm animal welfare are discussed. Much of the course uses the “Five Freedoms” as a basis to examine welfare issues for various species and as a means of assessing animal welfare. The course also examines the Codes of Practice for farm animals, the role of various animal and industry interest groups (SSPCA, FACS, etc.), policies of scientific societies, and the Expert Committee on Farm Animal Behavior and Welfare. Students prepare two major reports: the first on the assessment of welfare under a particular management system or practice, and the second on identifying a means to improve some particular aspect of welfare in farmed animals. Course instructors are Dr. Harold Gonyou (Prairie Swine Centre, Adjunct Professor in Animal and Poultry Science) and Dr. Joseph Stookey (Large Animal Clinical Studies).

SUPPORT FACS

A membership in FACS holds many benefits, including membership recognition, a quarterly newsletter, notification of special events, access to the FACS library, FACS publications, and much more.

Associate memberships are available for contribution of \$50 to \$199.99 (plus GST). Active (or voting) memberships are available for contributions of \$200 and over (plus GST). Receipts are issued for all contributions. Please fill out the form below and return it with your contribution to:

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For more information, contact FACS by phone at (306) 249-3227 or fax at (306) 244-4497 or by email at facs@sk.sympatico.ca

Dehorning of Cattle

*By Dr. Joseph Stookey, Professor
Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences
Western College of Veterinary Medicine
University of Saskatchewan*

In June, 2000 the Expert Committee on Farm Animal Welfare and Behaviour met in Guelph, Ontario, to set research priorities and discuss emerging issues. This is an annual meeting for the Expert Committee and involves the gathering of scientists, industry representatives, government officials, Farm Animal Council representation, veterinarians and representatives from the humane society and the animal welfare movement. From a scientist's perspective it is clear that we do not need additional scientific studies to resolve some animal welfare issues. On some issues the scientific information is already quite clear and it is highly unlikely that new or additional research would overturn previous finding. A case in point would be the issue of dehorning cattle. It appears that there is sufficient evidence (and no contrary evidence) to make a sound recommendation to the beef industry regarding dehorning of cattle. The question is whether the industry will embrace the recommendation.

Below is one of the action statements adopted by the Expert Committee this past June and the background information that led to the recommendations. It is the committee's hope that the industry would embrace this action statement. Using Polled Beef Sires to Dehorn Beef Cattle Action Item: To promote the use of Polled Sires within the Beef Industry within Canada.

Background:

Horns on beef cattle pose several disadvantages to the cattle and to the beef industry. Horns are weapons that are used by cattle in competitive encounters at the feed bunk, hay bale, shade tree, water trough, over breeding privileges or dominance and against man in offensive or protective situations. Leaving horns on beef cattle makes all of these encounters potentially more dangerous, both to people and to other cattle.

When horns are left on feedlot cattle, the amount of bruised trim from the carcasses has been reported to be twice the amount measured from equivalent hornless groups (Meischke et al., 1974; Grandin, 1980). Bruised carcasses devalue the product. The Canadian Beef Quality Audit has estimated that bruising costs the industry \$10 million a year.

The alternative is to remove the horns of feedlot cattle. However, cattle dehorned in the feedlot experience a setback in average daily gain that can be detected up to 106 days post dehorning (Goonewardene and Hand, 1991), evidence of the long term effects from the pain and suffering that the dehorning procedure inflicts upon cattle of this age. Dehorning cattle prior to arrival at the feedlot, say at 3 months of age, does not circumvent the painful experience (Sylvester et al., 1998). Dehorning cattle shortly after birth using caustic paste or hot iron has also been proven to be painful (Morisse et al., 1995).

The use of local anesthetics administered prior to dehorning in calves has been shown to reduce the behaviours associated with the immediate pain response (Morisse et al., 1995; Sylvester et al., 1998), however, it is not common practice within the beef industry to administer analgesics prior to dehorning. Even when local anaesthetics are administered prior to dehorning their effectiveness in blocking pain is limited to a few hours post dehorning. Cortisol levels rise after the effect of the local anaesthetic wears off (Petrie et al., 1996) evidence that post-operative pain extends beyond the reach of local anesthetics alone. It is unlikely that the beef industry would embrace the use of long acting non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (such as ketoprofen) in a combination with local anesthetics, which are needed to control post-operative and immediate pain responses (McMeekan et al., 1998; 1999), when the common practice already is not to use local anaesthetics prior to dehorning.

The logical alternative to dehorning and one that is welfare and industry friendly is to use polled bulls to sire calves that do not need dehorning. Horns are inherited as an autosomal recessive gene, polledness being dominant (Long and Gregory, 1978). In one breeding season a producer can take a herd of horned cows and breed them to a polled bull (homozygous for the polled condition) and produce an entire calf crop of polled calves. Historically, horned bulls may have been superior to their polled counterparts, but today there is no scientific evidence that polled bulls are inferior. Polled Hereford and Charolais bulls at test stations have been found to be no different or superior to their horned counterparts in average daily gain, adjusted yearly weight, adjusted scrotal circumference and backfat thickness (Stookey and Goonewardene, 1996). Polled German Simmental cattle were no different from their horned counterparts in growth, carcass yield, carcass composition, health and reproductive performance (Lange, 1989). Horned and polled crossbred lines from various beef breeds were no

different in live weight, fertility and mortality rates (Frisch et al., 1980). Recent comparisons of three beef synthetic lines found no differences between horned and polled cattle in weight at birth, weaning weight, pre- and post-weaning average daily gain, carcass weight and carcass characteristics (Goonewardene et al., 1999a) nor were there differences in reproductive traits such as pregnancy rates, dystocia scores, cow weights and cow condition scores (Goonewardene et al., 1999b). To date, there is no scientific evidence that polled animals are inferior. Dehorning beef cattle via genetics using polled sires is the logical and welfare appropriate practice that the beef industry should embrace and promote.

Since the Expert Committee met in June, additional information has been obtained. It already appears that the trend towards using polled beef bulls may be increasing, regardless of the welfare issues, due to the increase in popularity of some of the polled breeds sought for their calving ease, color or carcass traits. Exotic beef breeds in North America that were bred up from foundation stock are reporting a gradual increase toward the number of polled animals. For example, in 1989 the number of polled Limousins registered by the Canadian Limousin Association represented only 18% of the new registrations. In 1999 the number of Limousins registered as polled had increased to 49%. The same trend has occurred in the Simmental breed with 14% of the registrations in 1989 reported as polled, while 32% of the animals registered in 1999 were reported to be naturally polled. The Charolais breed in Canada is moving, perhaps the fastest of any exotic breeds, towards the polled animal. The frequency of polled animals registered between 1988-1990 was already 38% and by 1998-2000 polled Charolais animals represented 65.5% of the Association's registrations. Fortunately, the presence or absence of horns is not thought to be representative of superior or inferior animals for many of the exotic beef breeds, in the sense that breeders or

buyers would avoid buying a polled bull. Instead selection for polled animals in exotic breeds seems to be the current trend. It is interesting to note that some breeders in North America have begun exporting semen and animals with the polled condition back to the country where the breed originated and where polled animals are not readily available.

Horned Hereford breeders seem to be the exception to the trend and in some ways have used the horns as indicators or "advertisements" of their tradition and selection for specific traits. Many horned Hereford breeders would resist switching to polled bulls simply to address the issue of dehorning, because at the same time they would have to give up tradition, possible clientele and years of selection following specific lines. It is an extremely sensitive debate for many horned Hereford breeders to consider, but the pain and welfare issues concerning the practice of dehorning will not subside as long as beef calves are being sired by horned bulls and no analgesics are being used to dehorn them.

Complete references for this article are available upon request.

Stock Persons' School

Plan now to attend a one-day Stock Persons' School on April 24, 2001, in Saskatoon. The objective of this school is to address specific issues relevant to pasture riders, which will improve their knowledge and performance level. Topics to be covered include reproductive diseases, selecting a ranch horse, animal behavior, sudden death, managing lameness, responsible pharmaceuticals and public attitudes. This project is a joint initiative between FACS and the University of Saskatchewan. Watch upcoming issues of *FACStracs* for more details.

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NEWS MAKERS

... A controversial billboard depicting God urging people not to kill animals for food won't be seen in Saskatchewan. On Wednesday July 19, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) launched a religious-themed advertising campaign that was to eventually be on display in eight communities across Canada. But the company placing the ads, Pattison Outdoors, decided not to run the campaign on the Prairies, PETA spokesperson Bruce Friedrich said. "It was declined in Regina and Saskatoon and three other cities," Friedrich said. "They thought it was inappropriate." Edmonton, Calgary and Winnipeg were the other three cities that refused to post the campaign. Friedrich said the animal rights organization wants to get across the message that slaughtering and eating animals is inconsistent with principles of mercy and compassion espoused in the Bible. "We're asking people to extend the Sixth Commandment (Thou Shalt Not Kill) to animals by adopting a vegetarian diet," he said. However, while PETA says its billboard was "too controversial for Saskatchewan," one of the billboard companies that sells in Saskatchewan said it was never approached. "We weren't asked to post this particular campaign," said Kim Warburton, spokesperson for MediaCom Inc. "They didn't ask anybody in our company." Warburton added MediaCom had rejected an earlier campaign by PETA -- one that used a picture of a suggestively dressed young woman to argue that men who eat meat are impotent. This latest ad isn't as controversial, although PETA appears to be using the same strategy of trying to attract free media attention, Warburton said. PETA's billboard shows a bearded figure in flowing robes and outstretched arms holding carrots in one hand and asparagus in the other. PETA conducted a similar campaign in the United States with the slogan, "Jesus was a vegetarian." Friedrich said the Bible contains several messages that could be interpreted as supporting vegetarianism. (Source: *The Saskatoon StarPhoenix*, July 21, 2000)

... According to People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), the organization's "Lettuce Ladies," wearing nothing but strategically placed lettuce leaves, raise eyebrows and open minds as they travel the country, educating people about vegetarianism and serving up veggie food. PETA says the leafy lovelies have been greeted by crowds everywhere from the World Pork Expo in Des Moines, Iowa, to the halls of Congress in Washington, D.C. Crisscrossing the country, the Lettuce Ladies have "brought their pro-veg message to parades and festivals, served up veggie burgers outside of

McDonalds' around the country, perked up tired passengers at airports, and even hosted an all-veggie party for legislators on Capitol Hill." (Source: *The Internet*, www.lettuceladies.com, November 2000)

... According to People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), this year more than 40 million turkeys will have their beaks and claws cut off without anesthesia for holiday dinners. PETA says factory farmers cram tens of thousands of turkeys into single warehouses, where disease, smothering, and heart attacks are common. The organization says turkeys have their throats slit while they are still conscious at the packing house, and those who miss the automated knife go into the scalding tank fully conscious. PETA encourages consumers to go turkey-free by eating soy-based Tofurky and Unturkey roasts, "as a kind alternatives to eating real turkeys." (Source: *The Internet*, www.peta-online.org, November 2000)

... *Chickens are People Too* is "documentary black comedy about the secret war between the chicken industry and animal rights activists," explains director, John Kastner, who confesses he enjoys nothing better than a chicken dinner. On one side is Karen Davis, a leading chicken rights activist who unearths one dark chicken secret after another - all intended to turn us off chickens, as food, forever. On the other is "Bruce," a chicken farmer who allowed a portion of the documentary, which aired November 14 on CBC, to be filmed in his barn. CBC characterizes Davis as a "flamboyant eccentric living alone on an estate in Virginia with her companion-chickens who have the run of her house." Davis believes human life is not necessarily more important than that of a chicken and calls people in the industry "Nazis," comparing chicken farms to concentration camps. (Source: *The Internet*; www.tv.cbc.ca/witness/index.htm, November 2000)

FACStracs is a quarterly publication of the Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan Inc. (FACS). The primary function of FACS is to promote the responsible care and use of animals in the livestock industry. The material in this publication may be used with proper acknowledgment to the source. All information contained herein is deemed to be reliable and accurate to the best of the publisher's knowledge. The authors of submitted and reprinted articles are solely responsible for the contents and accuracy of the information.

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