



FACstracs

Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan Inc.

Winter 2003

Representing the livestock industry in advancing responsible animal care in agriculture

“Fence Lines to Corporate Board Rooms”

*The FACS 11th Annual General Meeting and Conference
January 9 and 10, 2003, Travelodge Hotel
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan*

Animal welfare continues to be one of the top issues for the livestock industry. In fact, public awareness of animal welfare issues is having a major impact on all levels of the value chain, from the producer, to grocery and restaurant chains, through to the consumer. Handling practices, management procedures and housing standards are all being re-examined from a humane standpoint. Many food companies have introduced animal welfare audits to their Quality Assurance protocols. The issues of food quality, food safety and animal welfare are closely linked.

The FACS 11th Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Conference, “Fence Lines to Corporate Board Rooms: Issues, Information and Action,” promises a host of prestigious speakers, all dealing with the latest issues surrounding animal welfare. Mark your calendars and plan to attend this important event, to take place at the Saskatoon Travelodge Hotel. The AGM is scheduled for Thursday January 9, 2003, at 7:00 p.m., and the Conference will take place on Friday January 10, 2003, with registration beginning at 8:00 a.m.

The agenda lineup includes:

- Dr. Rebecca Cooper, Director of Technical Training for Excel Corporation in Wichita, Kansas, speaking on “Why Animal Welfare is Paramount at Excel”
- Mr. Jim Reeves, President of the U.S. Beef Breeds Council, based out of Texas, discussing “The most important component of hUSbandry is still US”
- Dr. Anna Johnson, Director of Animal Welfare for the National Pork Board in Des Moines, Iowa, and Mr. Michael Katz, General Manager of The Saskatchewan Egg Producers in Regina, Saskatchewan, talking about “How Two Commodity Organizations are Addressing Animal Welfare in a Big Way”
- Ms. Toby Oswald, Vice President of Public Relations and Government Affairs for Canada Safeway Limited, Calgary, with the presentation, “New Pressures, New Expectations: Safeway’s Role and Commitment in an Ever Changing Market Place”

The FACS conference will highlight the *issues* . . . provide you with *information* and share with you successful *action* steps to sustain a leading, responsible industry. Come learn from the experts . . . learn from other industries . . . identify strategies . . . work together.

FACS will be hosting an auction during the conference. All of the proceeds raised will go directly to FACS programs. Please plan to support this event and give generously.

For more information on the FACS 11th Annual General Meeting and Conference, contact FACS at 306.249.3227 or check online at www.facs.sk.ca. To register, complete the form on page 7.

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FACS & SAFRR Working Together. . .

The Animal Care Award:

The Animal Care Award, a joint program of FACS and Saskatchewan Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization is entering it's second year.

The Animal Care Award is targeted at University students in the colleges of Agriculture, Veterinary Medicine and Education at the University of Saskatchewan.

To qualify for a \$1,000 award, students must develop and deliver a public presentation on key animal care issues and trends facing one of six livestock sectors (pork, beef, poultry, dairy, equine and game farmed animals).

Nine awards will be available for the 2002-2003 school year.

In the first year 19 applications were received and reviewed by a four-member judging panel, including Dr. John Patience, CEO of the Prairie Swine Centre and Vice chair of FACS, Dr. Murray Woodbury of the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, Marilyn Jonas of Saskatchewan Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization and Shannon Meyers of Elanco Animal Health. Topics presented by the students dealt with methods of increasing comfort for dairy cows, to humane castration techniques in the beef industry. For 2002-2003, we are very pleased to have a total of 46 applications; 41 are from the College of Agriculture, four are from the College of Veterinary Medicine and one is from the College of Education. Judging will take place in early January with the winners being profiled at the FACS annual general meeting.

The Animal Care Speakers Bureau:

The Animal Care Speakers Bureau, another joint program between FACS and Saskatchewan Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization is also in it's second year of operation.

The Animal Care Speakers Bureau was introduced for the benefit of producers. Through the Speakers Bureau, livestock commodity organizations are able to gain access to quality speakers at either no cost, or at a substantial reduction.

In the first year the Speakers Bureau assisted with bringing in such world renowned speakers as:

- Dr. Temple Grandin, livestock behavior specialist at the Colorado State University,
- Dr. Jeff Goodwin, 4-H Youth Extension Officer, from Moscow, Idaho,
- Dr. David Fraser, animal welfare researcher at the University of British Columbia, and
- Dylan Biggs, low-stress animal handler, Coronation, Alberta

"Bringing in World Class experts, such as Dr. Temple Grandin, helps to not only support our industry, but provides leading information on current welfare techniques, research and trends," says Adele Buettner, Executive Director of FACS. □

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Studies On Broiler Chicken Transportation

Saskatchewan's transportation of broiler chickens is the best in Western Canada, says Dr. Henry Classen, a professor in the department of Animal and Poultry Science, University of Saskatchewan.

"At the same time, however, it does have some weaknesses, which were identified in our study. This is now complete and we are working with University of Saskatchewan engineers to find solutions to these weaknesses," he says.

The project, which was supported by the Agriculture Development Fund (ADF) and the Chicken Farmers of Saskatchewan, was carried out by professors from the University of Saskatchewan, as well as research scientists from Scotland and England. It looked at the transportation of broilers from farm to slaughtering plant under western Canadian climatic conditions.

A total of 31 trips was monitored, with ambient temperatures ranging from -27.2 C to 21.9 C. The length of the journeys varied from 140 minutes to 240 minutes. Data collection included evaluation of the barn environment and bird condition prior to loading, temperature and relative humidity on the trailer during transport, death during the trip, and bird condition upon arrival at the slaughtering plant.

One of Classen's first observations at the conclusion of the project concerned the lower-than-expected level of chicken mortality. He says this may be due to the well-managed barns included in the study and the birds that were obviously in good condition. He also offers some general trends apparent on most trips. Within a row of crates, for example, the middle crate was warmer than those on the sides of the trailer. Under cold conditions, temperatures at the floor and the back of the trailer were low, partly because tarps are difficult to seal in these areas.

It was found that high-temperature transportation provides acceptable on-board thermal conditions as long as the vehicle remains in motion.

The main conclusion of the report was that "winter transportation of broilers in Saskatchewan presents a considerable challenge in terms of protecting birds from the cold and yet providing adequate trailer ventilation." Recommendations to help the processing industry meet this challenge were included in the report. □

Thank You

. . . to the Sponsors of the FACS 11th Annual General Meeting and Conference:

- Canadian Cowboys Association
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- Veterinary Infectious Disease Organization

2003 Stock Person's School

FACS will be hosting the third annual Stock Person's School on May 8, 2003 at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine.

The Stock Person's School is a joint partnership of FACS and the University of Saskatchewan and is designed to address specific issues, relevant to pasture riders and stockgrowers, to improve their knowledge and performance level. This unique one-day school will provide interactive opportunities for participants to learn from experts in their industries. Attendees will benefit from a range of topics.

Keep posted for details and registration information.

Saskatchewan's Young Horse Development Project

The Saskatchewan Young Horse Development Program (YHDP) is off to an enthusiastic start. Nearly 100 4-H members and parents attended Foal Care clinics held in Saskatoon and Regina.

The clinic in Saskatoon was held on November 9 at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine. The program included presentations on:

- Conformation: Form to Function with Dr. Trish Dowling
- Safety and Handling of a Foal, Lorraine Gilchrist
- Herd Health and Vaccines, Dr. Trish Dowling
- Foot Care/Lameness/General First Aide, Dr. Erin Fierheller
- Foal Nutrition, Dr. Marie Lucie Gendron

Added to the day was a tour of the equine performance centre where participants seen first hand how an equine tread mill works!!



The Regina clinic was held on November 30, at Optimum Genetics, south of Regina, where presentations included:

- Conformation and Breeding, Jocelyn Kish
- An Overview of Nutrition and Herd Health, Dr. Nadia Cymbaluk
- Safety 101, Jim Pollock
- Foot Care, Lameness and General First Aide, Dr. Al Choquer

There are 40 participants enrolled in the program. Participants have purchased a foal from Saskatchewan equine ranchers and will present them on halter as yearlings in August 2003 (location to be determined) and under saddle as 2-year olds in August of 2004 (location also to be determined).

Participants are from all over Saskatchewan, from Hudson Bay to Carlyle. The program has been designed to teach young horse enthusiasts about the basics of starting a young horse. It will educate participants on care, feed and shelter as well as various training techniques. Participants will be under the supervision of a mentor throughout the term of the program.

The program will expand in 2003 to allow all young horse enthusiasts under the age of 21 the opportunity to participate in the Saskatchewan YHDP. There has been a lot of interest in the YHDP from other youth horse groups, such as Pony Clubs; youth breed association affiliates and recreational clubs. Certainly 4-H members will be encouraged to continue their participation in the program as it fits well with the 4-H light horse project.

A unique feature of the Saskatchewan YHDP is the public speaking component and its link to animal welfare issues. Participants enrolled in the program are required to select a topic from the six animal welfare topics given and make a 2-5 minute presentation at both the yearling and two year old showcases.

The Saskatchewan YHDP is a partnership program offered by the Saskatchewan Equine Ranching Association (SERA) and the North American Equine Ranching Information Council Inc. (NAERIC). The Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan Inc. (FACS) with the financial support of Fort Dodge, Masterfeeds, The Barn Supply Co. Ltd and United Molasses facilitates the program.

If you are interested in joining the Saskatchewan YHDP or would like more information on the program, contact: Adele Buettner, Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan Inc., 502 45th Street West, Saskatoon, SK, S7L 6H2, Fax: (306) 244-4497, Phone: (306) 249-3227. □

Cattle FACS: Calving

The basics of a cow-calf enterprise is a healthy cow with a healthy nursing calf. Knowing when and how to help is an important part of responsible calving management.

1. *A cow or heifer is having difficulty when:*
 - the cow actively strains for 40 minutes with no progress
 - 90 minutes have passed since the waterbag first appeared
 - legs emerge with the surface of the hooves pointing up
 - only the head or tail emerges
 - an uncalved cow is mothering another calf
 - a cow has demonstrated greater than 5-6 hours of anxiety, e.g. walking about, tail extended, apparently looking for something
2. *To examine a cow having difficulty:*
 - restrain the cow either in a chute or in a safe and humane manner
 - wash all manure away from around rectum and vulva
 - soap your arm or use the plastic sleeves with soap; hairy arms can bruise the birth canal
 - explore the problem
3. *Calves should only be pulled if:*
 - two front legs and a nose OR two hind legs and the tail head can be guided into the bony part of the birth canal (NOTE: to distinguish front and back legs, feel the joint above one nearest the hoof; if it bends the same direction as the lower joint it is a knee - front leg; if it bends the opposite direction it is a hock - back leg)
4. *If the calf is malpositioned:*
Gently position the legs and head correctly. Gently push the calf back a little way to get some working room. Do not push against the cow's contractions - work with her, not against her. Cover the teeth and feet with your hand as you move them to reduce injury to the cow.

NOTE: If the position is too difficult to correct in 20 minutes, or two strong people cannot pull the calf - call your veterinarian or an experienced cattle producer.

Attach loops of soft nylon rope or surgical chain to the legs. By convention, place a loop above the fetlock joint as well as a half hitch below. A loop may also be placed around the head - over the poll behind the ears and under the mouth. NEVER attach a loop to the lower jaw. Pull back and down on the ropes for a head-first calf, straight back for a tail-first calf. Pull alternately on either

leg to angle the shoulders through the pelvis. Two strong people (pulling force of 250lbs. max.) should be able to pull a calf into the birth canal.

Use calf pullers with caution. Remember to release tension periodically. Allow cow to push calf out.

Providing Assistance at Calving

5. *When should you present a heifer or cow to a veterinarian for caesarian section?*
 - a) *If the calf is too big! This is measured by the following:*
 - if the front feet fill the pelvis and you can't get your hand beside them
 - if with gentle pulling, you cannot get the head and feet into the pelvis at the same time; two people using body weight only (e.g. 250 lbs.)
 - if the heifer/cow has been actively straining for 30-40 minutes and hasn't been able to push the head and feet (or the tail head if coming backwards) into the bony part of the birth canal
 - b) *If there are other complications, like:*
 - incomplete opening of soft tissues of the birth canal
 - twisted uterus
 - misshapen pelvis
 - fetal monster
6. *The most common post-calving complications:*
 - a) *Prolapsed Uterus*
If the cow is straining badly and the uterus is very flaccid, she may push the uterus out through the birth canal, inside-out. This large solid mass of tissue with 2-3 inch long "buttons" on the surface where the membranes attach is the uterus "inside-out." Action indicated:
 - restrain the cow; the uterus is less likely to be damaged and is easier to be replaced in cows that are down
 - if there is a delay, cover the uterus with a wet towel or blanket to keep moist and protect from cold keep other animals, including cows, away; they may eat or damage the uterus
 - call your veterinarian
 - b) *Retained Placenta*
Normally the afterbirth will come away by 24 hours. There is no concern unless the cow is sick; example, with a high temperature and "off feed." Action indicated:
 - daily antibiotic injections as directed by your veterinarian; if there is no response in three days, call your veterinarian

Dog Cruelty Case in Ontario Carries Serious Implications for Livestock Industries

*By Joseph M. Stookey and Derek Haley,
Department of Large Animal Clinical Science,
University of Saskatchewan*

A recent court case in Ontario has caught the attention of the media ("Woman guilty of cruelty for castrating pet dog", The Kingston Whig-Standard, November 8, 2002) and has serious implications for the livestock industries. The defendant in this case was found guilty of willfully causing unnecessary pain and suffering to an animal after she castrated a dog with an elastrator ring. What makes this case most interesting is that elastrator rings, which restrict blood flow and cause testes to die and eventually drop off, are an accepted and very common method of castrating some of our farmed animal species (cattle and sheep in particular). The defendant's lawyer argued his client could not be guilty if the equipment and procedure is standard within the livestock industries. The judge presiding, Mr. Justice Paul Megginson, called the practice "abominable", stating "This case is not about whether the procedure is OK, it clearly isn't and should be banned."

The case raises important questions about the acceptability of certain animal husbandry practices to the general public and whether disparity exists between what is considered acceptable treatment for food animals versus companion animals. The judge's remarks in this case are quite likely the tip of the iceberg in terms of unspoken public sentiment regarding animal welfare. It is reasonable to assume virtually no one (aside from producers) would openly and knowingly tolerate the intentional infliction of pain on any animals under human care, especially where it can be avoided. The practices of

dehorning and castration are two examples where producers could be viewed as intentionally and unnecessarily inflicting pain on animals when they do the procedure without trying to mitigate the pain.

It is a matter of scientific fact that some routine livestock procedures (e.g., branding, castration, dehorning, tail-docking, etc.) cause physical pain. Although it may not have been the case years ago, today many of these sources of pain are avoidable (for example the use of polled bulls) or in some cases the pain could be controlled. In recent decades the veterinary profession has refined agents to alleviate the pain that animals experience both during and after surgical procedures. No truly insurmountable obstacles exist, aside from lack of will, to prevent the use of such agents to alleviate pain, where necessary, for farm animals. At the very least the procedures should be done within the first week of life when the healing process is quickest.

One industry, which has set a precedent in dealing with a known painful procedure, is the elk industry. From the start, the elk industry acknowledged that there was pain associated with antler removal during the velvet stage. At the onset producers were committed to mitigating this pain, for the welfare and safety of the animals. There was certainly debate about what method should be used to mitigate pain, but there was no question in their minds that it needed to be done. Their attitude in this area should be commended! In Alberta, the elk industry together with veterinarians developed a training and certification program for producers, to ensure their competence at effectively blocking pain prior to antler removal. With this arrangement it is no longer necessary for producers to have veterinarians perform the procedure and it gives producers access to relatively cheap products to relieve pain.

Livestock industries face many contentious issues, such as biosecurity, food safety, environmental stewardship and animal welfare. Addressing consumer concerns is the best way to ensure the sustainability of livestock industries. While certain welfare matters may be more arguable than others, practices that we know cause pain are largely indefensible. Court cases such as the one described above are likely to be more prevalent in future. We may argue the alternatives are too expensive, too time consuming and too impractical, but a judge may not see it that way.

Livestock commodity groups need to carefully examine how these issues apply to their production systems and be proactive. Only high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution can solve these contentious issues. They will not go away on their own, or be solved by accident!

The FACS Reference Library

FACS has developed a library of print and video resources, including information on animal rights, animal welfare and general agriculture.

FACS members may borrow from the library at no charge.

Contact FACS for more information.

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Fence Lines to Corporate Board Rooms

FACS 2003 Annual General Meeting Registration Form

- Full payment must accompany registration.
- Make cheques payable to: Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan Inc.
- Mail registration and payment to: FACS, 502 - 45th Street West - 2nd Floor, Saskatoon, SK S7L 6H2

NAME _____

ORGANIZATION _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/TOWN _____

PROVINCE _____

POSTAL CODE _____

PHONE _____

FAX _____

EMAIL _____

I am (please check one):

- a producer (livestock raised: _____)
- a processor
- a veterinarian
- a marketer
- a student
- other (describe: _____)

Registration Information:

- Includes continental breakfast and lunch
 - **Early Bird:** \$85.60 (including GST) and \$37.45 (including GST) for students by January 4, 2003
 - After January 4, 2003, \$112.35 (including GST) for everyone.
 - FACS' 11th Annual General Meeting will be held at the Saskatoon Travelodge Hotel on Thursday January 9, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. Complimentary Wine and Cheese to follow for those who pre-register.
- Will you be attending? yes no

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 contributions 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 complete the form to the right and return it with your contribution to:

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502-45th Street West, 2nd Floor, Saskatoon, SK S7L 6H2

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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

NEWS MAKERS

... Few cheap publicity stunts have, according to this editorial, eluded the brain trust at People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) over the years. The multinational vegetarian lobby has tried everything to generate publicity for its cause – from using scantily clad models to promote a link between beef consumption and impotence, to attempting to convert mass-murderer Timothy McVeigh to veganism. None of the group's sophomoric hijinks are, the editorial says, quite so off-putting, however, as PETA's plan to compare the fate of women allegedly killed by Robert Pickton on a B.C. farm to that of the pigs who are normally butchered on the same premises. PETA has tried to place newspaper ads making the link, and a PETA spokesman said the group plans to have activists outside the Pickton courthouse showing a video on "the daily human violence of meat eating." Few will take such statements seriously, except in recognizing them as seriously and grossly offensive. The editorial says that the great tragedy of the animal rights movement is that, hiding beneath the groups' extreme rhetoric, is a valid point: The treatment of animals on factory farms is appalling. Chickens, for instance, are often packed in cages so tiny they cannot properly stretch their wings – the equivalent of making humans spend their lives in a space the size of a refrigerator. Such horror stories were the subject of a recent cover story in *The New York Times Magazine*. They are also discussed with great clarity and force in a potentially influential new book, *Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals and the Call to Mercy*, by Matthew Scully. The author recognizes that animals' best claim to decent treatment lies not in a bogus appeal to "rights" – a construct that falsely equates the duties owed humans and animals -- but in an appeal to the human duty of compassion. But rather than emphasize all the ways we can make factory farming more humane, PETA and other militant animal-rights groups noisily insist the farms should be closed down entirely. Meat consumption, they claim, is a horrible crime in and of itself. Such a campaign is doomed to failure, for it is based on the naive hope that all of society might someday be converted to veganism, or, at least, vegetarianism. The chance of this happening is zero. Humans are biologically wired to process and crave animal proteins – meat especially. True, vegans are able to subsist without consuming any animal product. But they often suffer chronic nutritional deficiencies, and even medical problems, as a result. This is why only about 4% of the population is vegetarian; and only 0.4% is vegan. The editorial goes on to conclude that thankfully, a new thinking is beginning to emerge – one that takes proper account of both animal suffering and the

fact that humans are – and always will be – meat eaters. This new thinking is championed by groups such as the US-based Humane Farming Association (hfa.org), which seeks to outlaw animal abuse on farms and works to uphold anti-cruelty laws. Their goal is to restore the good and old-fashioned notion of animal husbandry in place of the nightmarish cruelties that afflict much of today's animal agriculture sector. That should be our society's goal as well. (*Source: National Post, November 22, 2002, as quoted in AnimalNet, November 22, 2002*)

... Several animal rights groups are using the holiday giving season to draw attention to their campaigns against the use of research animals. Not surprisingly, both PETA and its shadow, the misleadingly-named Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, are continuing their campaigns against health charities. Both groups are seeking to divert contributions intended for major health charities that fund animal-based biomedical research. A four-page letter from PCRM president Neal Barnard cites his group's work against the Red Cross, American Cancer Society, Shriners Hospitals for Children, the March of Dimes and other groups and concludes with an appeal for a "generous membership gift to PCRM." PETA's Ingrid Newkirk, in the group's most recent online and print membership magazine, *Animal Times*, wrote: "You must have a target if you want to score . . . Few people will ever see inside a laboratory or be able to influence the government to cut off the research welfare tap." The website version links to the online PETA guide to health charities, which features the actress Dame Judy Dench on its cover, and to a recorded telephone appeal by former actress Sally Struthers. Other animal rights groups, such as the Humane Society of the United States and the Doris Day Animal League, have gone the more traditional route and offered cards, labels and calendars featuring cuddly animals as end-of-the-year "gifts" designed to draw donations. (*Source: Americans for Medical Progress News Service, November 21, 2002*)

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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