

Dave Wreford - MFWBA Life Member

In April, Dave Wreford was awarded a Life Membership by the Manitoba Farm Writers and Broadcasters Association. Colleague Jay Whetter was invited to speak about Dave's dedication to farm journalism in Manitoba.

Dave's career alone is enough to justify this lifetime membership award. He first came to Manitoba in 1967 while working with Southam business publications. He was based in Ontario at the time but came west to cover certain events. In 1968, he was made editor of Southam's western farm papers and moved to Winnipeg. The papers were *Good Farming* and *Canadian Farm Equipment Dealer*.

He joined *Country Guide* in 1973 as eastern field editor, which took him back to Ontario. Then in 1975, *Country Guide* editor Don Baron left to join CBC. Dave got the job as editor, which brought him back to Winnipeg, where he has been

ever since. He was *Country Guide* editor for 30 years before retiring in 2005.

When the co-op minded people back in my neck of the woods probed me about working with Dave ("He's so right wing" one woman said while gripping my arm in fear), I said honestly that he has been an excellent mentor for me — and the other younger editors in our office. Yes, he does have strong views. But he also has a big heart, with a small part set aside for farm writers. He was part of the executive many years ago. "When you're younger you get talked into these things, then you get wiser," he says. But as long as I've been in the business, Dave has gone to pretty much every Farm Writers' luncheon and on most of the tours. A few years ago when I organized the fall BBQ at Allan Dawson's farm, thinking farm writers wouldn't mind a drive in the country at harvest time, Dave and his wife, Diane,



Photo: Ed White

Dave Wreford, newest MFWBA life member

were the only two there besides me and my wife, and Allan and his.

As editor of Canada's No.1 farm publication (I'm biased) for 30 years and as a dedicated farm writer, if Dave doesn't deserve a lifetime membership, nobody does. - by Jay Whetter

Farm animal care issues explored at April meeting

The April MFWBA luncheon, held at the historic Dalnavert Museum, featured guest speaker Shynyn Silinski.

The executive director of the Manitoba Farm Animal Council (MFAC), Shynyn serves as a passionate advocate on behalf of the livestock industry, and a provider of education to the industry and the general public.

She described several of the programs that MFAC has initiated in concert with other animal care councils in Canada.

For the past two years, they have conducted livestock emergency response courses (LERC) for first responders, police officers and others that may have to deal with traffic accidents involving



Photo: Ed White

Shynyn Silinski, MFAC

livestock. They will be holding the next LERC in Labroquerie on May 28.

As well, the new Farm Animal Welfare Speakers Bureau will help groups across Canada access qualified speakers for conferences and seminars on topics related to farm animal welfare and responsible animal management.

CFWF Awards 2007

Important dates to note:

May 22 - Entry forms will be posted on CFWF website (www.cfwf.ca)

June 22 - Postmark deadline for submitting entries (June 1, 2006 - May 31, 2007 are the eligible entry dates)

September 27-30 - CFWF Conference 2007 in Belleville, ON

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AGM 2007: "Local food economy" moves from niche to metaphor

by Helena Marak, MFWBA member

The MFWBA Annual General Meeting, held January 31 at InFerno's Bistro, was a truly gastronomical affair. The fine meal was accompanied by food for thought from guest speaker, Dr. Michael Heasman.

Based in Winnipeg, Dr. Heasman is a researcher, writer, and opinion leader on the global food industry and food policy, specializing in food and health and corporate social responsibility. He is the founder and editor of *Food for Good* (www.foodforgood.com), the independent business newsletter committed to researching, analyzing, and reporting on the companies and issues making a difference to the business of food, and has recently agreed to evaluate the progress of the MB Food Charter.

Dr. Heasman shared his insights on the emergence of the "local food economy", that is, public interest in consuming food within the vicinity of where it was produced. On one end, local food is represented by the specialities offered at high-end consumer establishments. At the other end of the spectrum is food security where local food is considered a means by which individuals and communities can access healthy food on a regular

basis—a real issue considering the use of Canada's 649 food banks increased by 99.3% since 1989 (Hunger Count, 2006, Canadian Association of Food Banks)

Dr. Heasman stated that the relationship between the consumer and farmer is being redefined. An IPSOS survey of consumer attitudes for local food showed Canadians saw benefits of local food in terms of it being tastier, cheaper and supportive of local farmers. To allow this situation to thrive, the local food economy needs to think outside of the box regarding policies and pathways.

Local food is becoming more than a market niche; it now has environmental and societal symbolic meaning. Driven by advocate groups, the local food economy is a metaphor for the political struggle to rebalance the power of commercial food companies. Social and environmental drivers have become equally as important as economic drivers. Dr. Heasman stressed that future local food development will need to take all three into account.

A part of the local food economy, the organic movement is viewed as important from a sustainability perspective, and concerns about



Photo: Ed White

Dr. Michael Heasman speaks at the AGM as MFWBA President Val Ominski looks on

emerging industrial vs small scale organic production exist. Dr. Heasman commented that organic is symbolic of the critique of mass production and added consumer demand is pushing this into the major markets while governments do not play a large role.

Use of local food in the provision for emergency preparedness (ie self sufficiently especially in emergency situations) is also an emerging issue.

The Manitoba-made campaign (MB Food Charter) was created in the hopes to fill the gap between low and high-end consumers. It is the first province-wide food charter movement aiming to inform and engage communities, governments and businesses to make decisions on food security. The MB Food Charter has defined three main issues: accessibility to food, accessibility to nutritious food, and addressing the disconnect between urban and rural communities.

A changing of the guard

Those of you who were at our AGM in January may remember that I discussed a presidency-sharing arrangement between Crystal Jorgenson and me – where I would continue at the helm of MFWBA until spring and then she would take up the cause.

Well spring is here, and I'm stepping aside to let Crystal very ably take over the navigation wheel!

It's been a great 18 months – we've hosted the national conference and we're in a really good financial space as a result. We've had some really unique and fun events, and we're in the process of setting up an award to recognize those that further an understanding of the agri-food industry (stay tuned!).

Thank you to the executive who have worked tirelessly for MFWBA

– including Crystal, Ed White, Helena Marak, Bonnie Baltessen, Lyndsey Smith, Rhea Yates, and Dwayne Marling. (We've had joy, we've had fun, we've had seasons in the sun!)

Congratulations Crystal, for accepting this well-paying job (NOT), and best of luck in taking MFWBA to new heights!

Val Ominski

MFWBA members win honours

Congratulations to MFWBA executive member **Ed White**, reporter for the *Western Producer*, who cleaned up recently at the North American Agricultural Journalists annual writing contest. He received second place in the Columns/Analysis category for “Silence breeds suspicion, no matter the motive”, third place in the Series category for “Commodity Exchanges”, and honorable mentions in the Features category for “Hutterite Isolation” and the Special Projects category for “The end of the Crow, 11 years later”. Ed was unable to participate in the awards ceremony, which was held in conjunction with the annual meeting April 15 to 17 in Washington D.C. However, MFWBA member and former NAAJ president **Laura Rance** attended the meeting where she made an invited presentation on the recent merger of *Farmers Independent Weekly* and the *Manitoba Co-operator*. Laura is the editor of the *Manitoba Co-operator*.

Congratulations also to MFWBA member and *Manitoba Co-operator* reporter **Karli Flinta-Murphy**, who is bound for Japan in September as one of four winners worldwide of a professional development award for young agricultural journalists. The International Federation of Agricultural Journalists’ Young Leaders in Agriculture Journalism award — sponsored by Alltech, a U.S. biotech firm specializing in animal nutrition — pays 1,250 Euros (about \$1,900 Cdn.) toward the cost of attending the IFAJ’s 2007 congress in Japan September 17 to 23. The other three recipients come from Serbia, Britain and the Czech Republic, according to Janet Kanters, president of the Canadian Farm Writers’ Federation, which put Flinta-Murphy forward as its nominee. A panel of IFAJ judges from three countries chose the recipients from among nominated applicants under age 35.

In other MFWBA news...

Helena Marak, Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council, stepped down from the MFWBA executive board. She ably served in role as program chair for the past year.

New to the MFWBA executive are **Rhea Yates**, Agri-Food Research and Development Initiative, and **Dwayne Marling**, Manitoba Pork Council. Rhea will assist with program and serve as secretary. Also, **Lyndsey Smith**, Farm Business Communications, takes on the dual roles of membership chair and treasurer.

Richard Phillips, current member of the Eastern Canada Farm Writers Association and former executive member of MFWBA, was recently appointed Executive Director of the Grain Growers of Canada. Drop him a hello at (613) 233-9954 or phillips@ggc-pgc.ca.

And welcome aboard to our newest MFWBA members since our last newsletter - **Colleen Armstrong**, Armstrong’s Wordshoppe, and **Tracey Bryksa**, Manitoba Pork Council.

Join us for the MFWBA Annual Tour

Explore Eastern Manitoba
Thursday, May 31

Our tour will take us to:

- Spectrum Scientific where nifty high-speed optics identify wheat kernels as healthy or fusarium-infected
- Acsion Industries, where fusarium-infected distillers dried grains and solubles are treated with an electron beam to reduce DON content
- Beautiful Seven Sisters Falls for a fine dining treat at Jennifer’s Dining Room
- Pat Klapat’s farm to hear about her new quick breads and her recent Great Manitoba Food Fight win
- Wild Eyes Wild Boar farm – we guarantee it won’t be “boring”

Vans will be leaving at 8:30 am SHARP from the Kelsey’s Restaurant (Polo Park) parking lot. Cost of the tour will be **only \$30** (includes lunch).

We plan to cap the day off with post-tour refreshments at Kelsey’s Restaurant.

**RSVP by Friday, May 25 to
bonnieb@fbcpublishing.com**

Cancellations must be made 24 hours in advance of event. If you do not cancel prior to the deadline, you will be invoiced.

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