

YUKON AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION (YAA)

January 2003 PLOWBOY NEWSLETTER

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President's Message

By Bill Drury

Happy New Year to everyone!

There is a lot going on with agriculture even though its still winter.

It's good to have Debbie Throssell in the office. I'd like to thank our executive members Dave Andrew, Susie Rogan, and Doug Craig for organising the advertising and interviewing of all the applicants for the position of office manager/executive director.

We've had a meeting with the new Minister of Agriculture Mr. Lang. We discussed our agriculture policy review which took place in 1999 but failed to make it to cabinet under the last government. It was apparently seen by some in the previous government as too controversial. Imagine, if you can, thinking agriculture is so 'controversial' that the new policy for the industry should be put on hold indefinitely. Producing healthy, wholesome food for public consumption has always been a goal worth striving for. I always thought it almost 'foreign' to think that we in the Yukon should rely on 'outside' sources for our food and not try to produce any for ourselves. Mr. Lang agreed to find out where the policy is now and further to involve our industry in decisions being made that affect our industry.

We discussed the Agriculture Policy Framework Agreement (APFA) and how we see our fit nationally and locally. The APF interim fund that has been given to the Yukon to help our transition to the new APFA was also discussed.

This is the policy that will be used to direct and support agriculture for the next 5 to 10 years. He agreed that agriculture will be involved in the decision making process on both the APF Agreement funds and the Interim Agreement funds.

We discussed the farming of elk and bison and how he sees the fit of this aspect of the agriculture industry in the Yukon.

We discussed infrastructure and this part of our meeting focused on the abattoir, bulk fertilizer storage and vegetable storage.

As you would expect the fact that the government has no money for capital projects was brought up so we felt good that our industry is bringing with it over \$300,000 annually of new funds for our industry due to the APFA! Mr. Lang has agreed to meet with us on a regular (monthly) basis and we will try to convey your concerns.

On that note I'd like to say that we the directors of YAA have a lot of our own opinions on how best to serve Yukon's agriculture interests and if we don't hear from you the members on what your concerns are we'll continue to pursue the interests we feel are important.

Included with this edition of the newsletter will be membership applications. Wayne Grove has agreed to head a YAA committee to oversee the 'new and improved for 2003 and beyond YAA membership drive'. With Debbie in the office we look forward to streamlining this process and creating better ways to get your ideas to us.

New office hours for the YAA:

Monday through Friday
10 am to 4 pm

Welcome to New Executive Director!

The Yukon Agricultural Association has a new Executive Director! Debbie Throssell was hired in December 2002 to be the new ED for the Association, working out of the Whitehorse office. Her appointment was a joint decision by the Klondike Valley, Stewart Valley and Whitehorse chapters. She is working 30 hours per week, Monday through Friday, 10 am. to 4 pm.

Drop by the YAA office and meet Debbie!

She and her husband Dan came to the Yukon in 1997 from Quesnel, B.C. They were looking for a small acreage and ended up finding a suitable location in Mendenhall. They plan on having an organic garden there.

They also do custom land clearing, specializing in leaving top soil intact.

Debbie is also a member of the Yukon Amateur Radio Association, a group dedicated to emergency preparedness for the Yukon.

We are very happy to have Debbie "on board", and look forward to her organizational skills being put to good use in managing YAA affairs.

Conference in Winnipeg

Debbie Throssell will be representing the YAA at an upcoming conference in Winnipeg, Manitoba from January 30 – February 1, 2003. Sponsored by the Canadian Farm Business Management Council, the theme of the conference is "**Managing Excellence in Agriculture**", and it promises to be an exciting and worthwhile event. Debbie plans on taking in such topics as : "Communication: an Indispensable link to Family Business", "Co-op

and Family Farms in the Global Economy", and "Access to Capital", as well as many other excellent sounding workshops. Debbie will provide a synopsis of her experience at the February 19th General Meeting in Whitehorse, 7:30 pm in the TC Richards boardroom.

Plan on attending and learning about new and exciting developments in agriculture across Canada!

Note: Due to Debbie's attendance at the conference, the office will be closed Wednesday, January 29, through Friday, January 31. The office will be open as usual on February 3, 2003 at 10 am.

Upcoming Elections

It is very important that all YAA members take note of the following dates and deadlines for the upcoming YAA nominations and elections for the new slate of 2003 officers.

The whole membership of the YAA throughout the Yukon will vote on the overall YAA executive, President, Vice-President and Secretary-Treasurer.

Call for nominations for this executive should be in by February 7th, 2003. Send your nomination to the YAA office in Whitehorse .

The election will be done by mail-out. The ballots will be sent out to the membership, and will need to be back and counted by March 14th, 2003. Results will be announced in the next newsletter.

YAA General Executive for all Yukon (elected by entire membership of Yukon – all chapters)
President
Vice-President
Secretary-Treasurer
February 7 th deadline for nominations

Mail back ballots by March 9th
Ballots counted and tallied by March 14th

After the General Executive has been elected, each chapter, (the Klondike, Stewart Valley, and Whitehorse), will have its own election for three directors for their area. It will be up to each chapter when they want to call their election.

The Whitehorse chapter will hold their election for officers at the March 19th general meeting at 7:30 pm in the T.C. Richards boardroom downstairs.

Klondike (elected by chapter members)	Stewart (elected by chapter members)	Whitehorse (elected by chapter members) March 19/03
Director	Director	Director
Director	Director	Director
Director	Director	Director

Remember : if you want change, do something! If you think yourself or someone you know would be a good President, Vice-President or Secretary-Treasurer, nominate them! The YAA is YOUR association...make your voice heard!

Klondyke Harvest Fair

By Barbara Drury

You think it's too early to be talking about the Klondyke Harvest Fair? Nope! To have a really good fair, planning has to start now.

Last year we didn't have enough locally raised produce for sale at the fair, and locals and tourists kept asking, "Where can I buy farm fresh veggies? Eggs? Carrots? Potatoes? Dairy products? Meats? Honey?"

If you raise any of the above, consider growing, planting or producing extra to sell at the fair.

There is no trouble selling your stuff! People come in droves to buy it. The few producers we had all sold out.

Another benefit : All members of the YAA who sell produce do not have to pay any booth or table rental! Now that's a deal!

We're trying to get an idea well ahead of time on what kind of local grower participation we can expect, so please phone 668-6864 and tell Debbie what farm produce you plan on selling at the fair!

This year we're going to hold the fair two weeks earlier in August, on the August 9-10 weekend. This will eliminate the worry about frost that plagues many gardeners. We have heard repeatedly throughout the years that the last weekend in August is just too late for many flowers and vegetables.

Game Growers Update

The Yukon Game Growers Association is looking forward to welcoming Serge Buy, Executive Director of the Canadian Cervid Council (CCC), during the week of February 25th -27th . He is looking forward to meeting with the members of the Yukon association, and bringing them up to speed on the latest developments with the elk industry.

Organic Farmers Group?

I've heard rumours that there is growing interest out there in starting an organic farmers association. It's a good idea, and for all of you who are interested, consider using this newsletter to gather support for your cause.

This newsletter is produced bi-monthly. The deadline for submissions is the 7 th of each publishing month, (Jan.-March-May, etc.) The Editor is Barbara Drury. Please address correspondence to drury@yt.sympatico.ca or phone 668-1045.
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Letters to the Editor

Barb, we'd like to express our appreciation for your time and effort in producing the YAA Newsletter. We find it informative, comprehensive and interesting. It is a valuable service to the members of YAA indeed! Thanks to you and Bill both for your representation and support of Yukon farmers. Best Wishes for a happy, healthy and successful 2003!
Cheers! Debbie and Fred Last
Hot Springs Road, Whitehorse

Many thanks Debbie and Fred for those kind words!

News from Mayo

By Jack Smith

Happy New Year to everyone in the Yukon! Mayo has had a very warm fall and winter so far. Like everyone else we have little snow left on the fields and lots of ice from two melts. Now the weather is getting colder, -25 to -30C and so I wonder about winter kill. I am planning on re-seeding my hay fields. This brings another dilemma. Where to get good seed? With so much drought in the south this is not the year to be buying seed, but what is the alternative? Two years ago we had a good three day melt in December and I lost half of my field. I let it come back on its own and it took 2 years to fill back in. This also gives the weeds a good chance to come back as well. On the good side of things, the warm fall and no significant amount of snow, proved beneficial for grazing the fields off well.

Good luck to everyone this summer and fall!

News from Dawson City

By John Lenart

Hi folks, hope the New Year is going well. The unusually mild "fall" of 2002 ended with a good snowfall that has provided sufficient insulation for perennial crops. The ground is well saturated after the wet fall so moisture in

the coming spring should not be an issue. The coming year will see the usual producers maintaining production or in a few cases expanding existing projects. A few new initiatives are being developed or will be launched this year. The old Haydorff farm has changed hands and more land was broken in the Yukon and Klondike Valleys this year and this will provide increased opportunities. New members are being sought to invigorate the local association and share in the upcoming opportunities. This is indeed an exciting time to invest in Yukon Agriculture!

On a personal note my trip to the northwest U.S.A. was really helpful and productive. As a result I will be carrying a much wider selection of ornamental trees in the coming years as I import or propagate material that has come to my attention as a result of my tour.

Joke of the Month

A Texan farmer goes to Australia for a vacation. There he meets an Aussie farmer and gets talking. The Aussie shows off his big wheat field and the Texan says, "Oh! We have wheat fields that are at least twice as large."

Then they walk around the ranch a little and the Aussie shows off his herd of cattle. The Texan immediately says, "We have longhorns that are at least twice as large as your cows."

The conversation has almost died when the Texan sees a herd of kangaroos hopping through the field. He asks, "And what are those?"

The Aussie asks with an incredulous look, "Don't you have any grasshoppers in Texas?"

Don't forget to renew your membership in the YAA! It enables you to vote in the upcoming elections, and continue to get this great newsletter!