



Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan Inc.

**For Immediate Release**

**December 15, 2008**

## **SPEAK FOR YOURSELVES**

As producers and industry representatives gathered in Saskatoon for FACS's 17th Annual General Meeting and 'Fence Lines to Corporate Board Rooms Conference' December 10 and 11, much of the discussion focused on how to share the realities of producing safe, affordable food with a consuming public far removed from agriculture.

Farmers and ranchers have a deeply rooted sense of values to their way of life.

"You can extend that good will by telling your story, sharing your story by making it personal," advised Daren Williams, Executive Director, Communications, with the Colorado-based National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

The annual FACS event presented international perspectives on advancements in livestock handling and animal welfare.

Dr. Temple Grandin, Professor at Colorado State University, outlined how animal welfare audits can improve economic returns for both producers and meat packers, noting "attention to details" is critical. Recognized globally for her livestock handling designs, Dr. Grandin has developed numerical scoring guidelines that ensure the humane handling of livestock and poultry. And, like Daren Williams, she urged the industry to tell its story.

"We need to make glass walls on everything. We need to be showing what we do," Dr. Grandin advised.

Charlie Lousignont, Executive Director, Procurement for DineEquity, the company that operates Applebee's and IHOP brands, explained the supply chain management system for the company's 3,300 full service restaurants.

"In the long run, we need strong successful companies vying for our business," he said, noting that the single most important thing is quality assurance.

Canadian Food Inspection Agency Senior Staff Veterinarian Dr. Anne Allen explained the process by which Meat Inspection Regulations governing animal welfare under the Health of Animals Act are being updated and consolidated. This includes a Manual of Procedures dedicated to animal welfare at slaughter and in transport, training materials and best practice standards.

"The challenge is for industry to take a proactive role in setting and sustaining uniformly high animal welfare standards," Dr. Allen said, adding that producers and others who handle animals at the farm intimately determine the quality of animal welfare.

Guided by current best practice standards and science, the new guidelines are being developed through consultations with industry and other stakeholders, including the Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan.

Speaking at the conclusion of the annual event, FACS Executive Director Adele Buettner said the tone of the presentations and the comments from participants reflect an ongoing dedication to enhancing animal welfare.

"FACS is the collective voice on animal welfare for Saskatchewan livestock and poultry producers, along with industry. This event demonstrates our commitment to promoting responsible animal management and how important it is to share that message with the public," Ms. Buettner said.

FACS has a 14-member Board of Directors, which comprises representatives from producer and veterinary associations, industry and government. Directors include the newly elected Chair, Tim Wiens, O & T Farms and Vice-Chair Mark Silzer, Saskatchewan Bison Association/Canadian Bison Association, Scott Brown, Dr. Murray Jelinski, Dr. Colin Palmer, Terry Knippel and Dr. Sandra Stephens. With six directors completing their two-year terms, members at the Annual General Meeting elected Gary Harris, Wes Cairns, Allen Patkau, Jim Teichrob, Harvey Wagner, Mark Silzer and Karla Hicks to the Board.

FACS expresses appreciation to 'Fence Lines to Corporate Board Rooms' sponsors:

- Agricultural Producers of Saskatchewan
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- Canadian Bison Association
- Canadian Western Agribition
- Chicken Farmers of Saskatchewan
- Consulate General of Canada, Denver
- Dairy Farmers of Saskatchewan
- Elanco Animal Health
- Farm Credit Canada
- Federated Cooperatives Ltd.
- Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce
- Heartland Livestock Services
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- New-Life Feeds, Division of Parrish & Heimbecker
- North American Equine Ranching Information Council
- O & T Farms
- Sask Pork
- Saskatchewan Association of Agricultural Societies and Exhibitions
- Saskatchewan Cattle Feeders Association
- Saskatchewan Egg Producers
- Saskatchewan Equine Ranching Association
- Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture
- Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association
- Saskatoon Prairieland Park Corporation
- Saskatoon Processing Co.
- SaskEnergy
- SGI
- SPI Marketing Group
- Star Egg Co.
- The Western Producer
- Warman Veterinary Service
- Western Beef Development Centre
- Westway Feed Products

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The Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan Inc. (FACS) is a membership-based, non-profit organization that represents the livestock industry in advancing responsible animal welfare, care and handling practices in agriculture. FACS endeavors to raise producer awareness of the economic and ethical benefits of animal welfare and help consumers achieve a greater understanding of animal care issues.