

# Preface

When the Western Canadian Dairy Seminar was established in 1983, as the Alberta Dairy Seminar, its goal was to provide a forum for presenting the latest dairy production science and technology to a broad audience including dairy farmers, industry stakeholders and academics. Now, some 30 years later, three “take-home messages” are very clear: 1st, that targeting such a broad audience was a tremendous challenge that has rarely been successful in other conferences – and yet, thanks to the foresight and dedication of a core group of supporters, it is probably the chief reason for the resounding success of the WCDS and gives it a uniquely attractive position among dairy conferences worldwide; 2nd, that the Seminar has prospered due to outstanding leadership from its Advisory Committee, which includes representatives from each segment of the target audience and from each of the provinces of western Canada; and 3rd, that the consistent lineup of outstanding, internationally recognized expert speakers, ranging from farmers to academics to industry representatives, is the key attraction of the Seminar and to delivering value to attendees. After 30 years it is also quite clear that the WCDS continues to have a significant impact on the success of the dairy industry and has become a “can’t-miss” event for its intended audience.

With those thoughts in mind, there is much to celebrate on our 30th anniversary, and we do so here by publishing the text of the papers presented at the 2012 Seminar, held on March 6th to 9th in Red Deer, Alberta. Appropriate to this anniversary, the theme of this year’s conference is “30 Years of Advancing Dairy Knowledge.” The program is focused into seven subthemes that span the following timely topics:

WCDS and Dairying: A 30 Year Perspective; Dairy Reproduction: Finance, Management & Economics; Management: Calves to Cows: Dairy Nutrition; Dairy Health; Dairy Production and the Environment.

The dairy industry continues to face a variety of old and new challenges to its present and future profitability. And yet, this industry has consistently been a leader in developing and adopting new strategies and technologies to meet such challenges. We hope this program instills optimism by reflecting on how far we have come as an industry and by looking ahead to the fascinating opportunities of the future. We also encourage all speakers and attendees to engage in the lively exchange of ideas that is our core purpose, both during and after the Seminar.

In closing, we extend our appreciation to our speakers for their presentations and papers. We would also like to thank all of those who have contributed their time and efforts to making this an outstanding conference. Finally, we wish especially to recognize our sponsors for their continued commitment and growing generosity in support of the WCDS. Happy reading!

Thomas B. McFadden

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