

# Saskatchewan leaders look to the future of agriculture

## RECOLLECTIONS & REFLECTIONS



LINDA BRAUN

*Editor's Note: Recollections and Reflections is a new column celebrating prairie history and 50 years of the Saskatchewan Agricultural Hall of Fame. Linda Braun is writing the column as we look back on the history of agriculture during this important SAHF anniversary year.*

*The Saskatchewan Agricultural Hall of Fame, organized in 1971 and honouring its first inductees in 1972, continues to recognize and honour provincial agricultural leaders. More than 225 inductees grace the Hall of Fame. There is no better time than now to recollect, reflect and revisit these inductees of Saskatchewan agriculture as The Western Producer too begins to look back at its origins, beginning in 1923.*

Mike Raine, Editor

Saskatchewan agriculture is built on a solid foundation of exceptional leaders, who mobilize others to achieve shared aspirations. Exemplary leaders model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act and encourage the heart.

Adele Buettner, who was installed in the Saskatchewan Agricultural Hall of Fame in 2020, is a champion of agriculture and food and has provided leadership to a number of agriculture organizations, including Farm and Food

Care Saskatchewan.

Her extensive efforts in building public trust, education and marketing are well regarded by farmers and ranchers, chefs, culinary educators and consumers. Buettner served on the Canadian Western Agribition board during the same period as Audrey Horkoff, who entered the hall of fame in 2009.

Horkoff, a farmer, wife, mother and grandmother, was chair of Agribition in 1997 and co-chair of ACRE, the Action Committee on Rural Economy in 2000, providing recommendations for legislative and policy change in provincial agriculture.

She and her husband, Don, have maintained purebred Charolais and Hereford cattle and were active in purebred associations. Later they converted their land base into an organic operation.

Both women remain active today in the industry, Buettner with her marketing and communications firm, AgriBiz Communications in Saskatoon, and Horkoff on the farm at Kamsack, providing support for her son, who now runs that operation.

Although busy with work and family life, Buettner and Horkoff continue to challenge the process and enable others to act through volunteerism.

Buettner participates in community organizations such as the Canadian Women in Food Network, the North Saskatchewan Business Association and Women's Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan. She hosts a Monday morning executive group to support peers throughout the COVID-19 crisis.

Horkoff has, for numerous years, been involved and chairs the Assiniboine Valley Health and Wellness Foundation. Initially she assisted with fundraising and building the physical structure and



Adele Buettner is a champion of agriculture and food. | SUPPLIED PHOTOS

now chairs the foundation.

This brought four physicians and a dentist to the clinic and district hospital, providing emergency and essential health care to area communities. She is a long-serving member of Trackside gardens, lending her green thumb to beautify the community for its citizens as well as area tourists.

Family is important to these women. Buettner is thankful her daughter and extended family reside in the Saskatoon area. Horkoff's five adult children and their families meet to celebrate holidays and family gatherings at the farm, which she loves.

When asked where her drive for



Audrey Horkoff chaired the Canadian Western Agribition board in 1997 and the Action Committee on Rural Economy in 2000.

all things agriculture comes from, Buettner says, "it comes from my passion and enthusiasm for the industry coupled with the right mix of career fulfillment and professional challenge. It is also due in large part to the clever, dedicated, creative and genuine people I have worked with and for." Horkoff said she has always lived in an agriculture based community and initially farmed out of necessity after losing her first husband but continued "because the best people are agriculture people."

Buettner's advice to women in agriculture today is, "be respectful, build a meaningful network, enjoy what you do," while Horkoff sug-

gests, "if you truly want to be in agriculture, the door is open to all types of opportunities."

Regarding hopes for the future, Buettner said she can't imagine a better place to be situated for the future in this world.

"As a farmer's daughter, with roots deep in Saskatchewan soil, I look forward to our province continuing to be a world leader in food production, research and innovation. We produce healthy, nutritious food with a vested interest in building public trust and sustainability. I am proud of Saskatchewan's agricultural sector and hope that doors continue to open for farmers, ranchers, agronomists, researchers, ag business, processors and marketers."

As a long-time farmer, who maintains that there is no better place to raise a family, Horkoff has concerns about the growing size of operations.

While understanding why it is happening, she is concerned about the impact socially on the family and the farm community. Her hope for the next generation is that "there is a place for them and opportunities to enter the industry."

She ponders opportunities such as growing local, tracking food products and direct marketing that may open the door for new and smaller operations.

These two Agricultural Hall of Fame inductees have always and continue to live by the exemplary practices mentioned at the beginning of the column, and our world has benefitted from their contributions.

Linda Braun is president of Food Focus Saskatoon.

## Replacing just-in-time with just-in-case

Firms begin building more flexibility into their inventories as supply chains break down

BY ED WHITE  
WINNIPEG BUREAU

Processors and others reliant on agricultural products are building shock absorbers into their systems, says a U.S. supply chain expert.

"Firms are holding more inventory, so instead of holding one week's worth of inventory, they might hold one month's," said Heidi Schweizer, an economist at North Carolina State University.

"You might call it 'just-in-case' supply chains."

The shock of COVID-19 has combined with the world tightness in many crop stocks to scare users into taking their own stocks more seriously, now they've seen how low they can run when something unexpected happens.

That has undermined the decades-long drive for companies to slash inventory levels and rely

upon the steady and predictable flow of the products they need.

"I believe a lot of people are shifting away from just-in-time inventory management," said Schweizer during the Kansas City Federal Reserve Bank's annual agricultural economics conference.

However, Schweizer said that shift was already underway before the pandemic.

"Certainly, this past year has added an additional jump start to that."

Another response to the pandemic has been companies taking greater interest in their exposure to needed commodities and to ensure they are going to receive what they think they're lining up for.

"There's more communication between firm along the supply chain," said Schweizer.

"The pandemic has really resulted in a big push for that in particular."

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