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Humboldt, SK

Immediate Release

Western Beef's Bart Lardner wins extension and public service award

Humboldt, SK – Dr. H.A. (Bart) Lardner, senior research scientist at the Western Beef Development Centre (WBDC), received the Canadian Animal Industries Award in Extension and Public Service at the Canadian Society of Animal Science annual general meeting and conference in Banff, Alberta June 18-20.

Lardner was selected by the CSAS Awards and Honours Committee as the 2013 recipient and nominated for the award by Dr. Phil Thacker, Professor in the Department of Animal and Poultry Science, University of Saskatchewan and WBDC vice-president Dr. Paul Jefferson due to his ability to relate to beef and forage producers. Lardner's down-to-earth style connects with those on the farm and his focus has always been to, not only report research results, but help producers apply knowledge gained by research to improve their own operations. Producers have reported that they enjoy the practical perspective on highly-technical information that he brings to his presentations.

"Whenever Bart speaks to producers, you can tell he connects with them, those in the beef and cow-calf industry in particular. He has a background working in the industry, which gives him a perspective a lot of producers appreciate. He has a Ph.D, but he truly understands what farmers want and need to know to effectively run their operations. He gets it!" Jefferson said. "The award absolutely fits him."

The award Lardner received is open to all those involved in the animal industry – beef, pork, poultry, and dairy sectors, as well as others. The fact that Lardner was chosen over those nominated from these other fields is a real feather in his cap, Jefferson feels.

"I'm truly honoured, given that this is an award presented by my peers," Lardner said.

Lardner has been working as a researcher in the agricultural industry for the past 15 years, and he's passionate about the cow-calf industry in Canada. He also strongly believes in providing extension to producers, and helping them resolve issues on their own ranches.

He grew up on a ranch, he noted, and worked in the cattle industry for 12 years before completing his university degree. Growing up in the industry and knowing what it takes to run a cattle operation have given him that ability to relate to producers, he noted. He understands the real issues producers are facing, and the decisions they have to make to manage their resources, their cattle and pastures, as well as the common difficulties they meet.

"My rural roots are with me," Lardner said. "I think like a producer first, and a scientist second."

Lardner speaks regularly to producers about his research projects. So far, he has given 166 extension talks across Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. His presentations about cow-calf nutrition, grazing management, forage and pasture managements, economics, and profitability are regularly scored the best, or among the best, at each workshop he attends. He has also

published or co-published 35 fact sheets and contributed to 87 popular press articles since 1998, and since 2010, has appeared in seven YouTube videos discussing his research results. He is regularly interviewed by journalists from all over North America, and has been contacted by Australian, Chinese, Mongolian, and Finnish beef researchers to get more information about water quality for cattle, low-cost grazing systems, or winter grazing systems that might have application in their countries. He has also published 40 peer-reviewed scientific publications to date.

Lardner, who is also an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Animal and Poultry Science at the University of Saskatchewan and has taught over 1200 undergraduate and graduate students in six different plant, range, and animal sciences courses, and advised 40 undergraduate and 22 graduate students, says producers have both supported and resisted the research results he has reported over the years.

“I’ve had very good conversations over the years,” Lardner said. “People don’t always think the way you do.”

Those conversations have made him rethink how he approaches certain objectives and, many times, have resulted in additional research studies.

Lardner’s goal has always been to put the WBDC on the map and have the research coming out of the facility be a match for any coming out of universities or other research centres. And he has done that. The collaborative work the WBDC has conducted with those centres shows the WBDC’s research is current, viable, and doing good work for the industry.

While at the Canadian Society of Animal Science conference, Lardner also presented an invited paper on “Forage and Water Management in Cow-Calf Systems.”

The WBDC is a division of the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute (PAMI). It is based at the Termuende Research Ranch near Lanigan.

Cutline for photo: Dr. Bart Lardner speaks with producers at the Western Beef Development Centre Summer Field Day on June 25, 2013.

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