

Women In Agriculture 2015

Editors note: In addition to the profiles in this year's Women in Ag salute, we brought together four women, speakers at the Advancing Women in Agriculture Conference recently held in Calgary, and gave each questions related to the challenges and opportunities that exist today in agriculture. Diversity of experiences, education, drive and focus and a passion for agriculture are just some of the ingredients attributed to their successes.



TRISH JORDAN

Public & Industry Affairs Director
Monsanto Canada

Trish Jordan is passionate about agriculture, farmers and enhancing agricultural awareness with the non-farming public.

In her current role as Public and Industry Affairs Director with Monsanto Canada – part of the larger, global multinational, Monsanto Company - she sits on Monsanto's Canadian Leadership

Team and is responsible for media relations, issues management and providing strategic communications support to core business activities. Trish also manages Monsanto Canada's Grower Advisory Council as well as the company's recent efforts to engage with consumer audiences to share the Monsanto story.

Q.

With big schedules of meetings, appointments and travelling, plus the desk work needed, how do you prioritize your time?

A.

This is not easy but I am a big believer in making "To Do" lists. I typically do this the night prior to heading to work or first thing in the morning. On Sunday nights, I like to take some time to take a look at my upcoming week and map out what I want to accomplish. I don't get to all items on my list every day and new items are sometimes added that I don't expect. The key is not to panic or feel overwhelmed by the length of your list. I find being organized, carving out "me" time, and closing the door if I don't have time to be interrupted all help.

Q.

What is the one thing that has most influenced your career development over the last 5-10 years?

A.

Having the confidence to take on new roles and being willing to take roles with different organizations really helped me learn and grow. I left organizations I loved and moved for opportunities. I also think being actively engaged in the agricultural sector outside of my place of work helped me in making connections and building relationships. You can learn so much from other people's experiences and tapping into that knowledge base. It is what opened the door to every job I have had in agriculture. When the door opened, I stepped through it.

Q.

Did you have a mentor/ mentors on your professional journey? What advice would you give to other women about the importance of mentorship?

A.

You bet. I don't think anyone can be truly successful without learning from others. One of the managers I had early

on in my career set an outstanding example for being a good mentor. He was a fantastic listener, let me tackle projects I likely wasn't ready to tackle, supported me when I had questions and comforted me when I made mistakes. My advice to women about the importance of mentorship is to be sure to have at least one, but more is better! Don't be afraid to ask someone to coach you. Just have the conversation. Tell them what you want to work on and ask them for advice. Most people are willing to help you grow



WYNNE CHISHOLM
BA, CMC, CHRP

Wynne is a seasoned executive, entrepreneur and rancher who brings a high level of energy and strategic thinking to all challenges.

Wynne is President & CEO of W. A. Ranches Ltd., a highly respected cow-calf operation. With her husband, Dad and staff, they raise grass and select crops on +-18,000 acres to nurture their herd of 900 Angus X mother cows and an annual "crop" of calves for the feeder and replacement heifer markets. FCC recognized Wynne's accomplishments in 2011 with a Rosemary Davis

Q.
With big schedules of meetings,

appointments and travelling, plus the desk work needed, how do you prioritize your time?

A.

I am continually prioritizing against our vision and goals. I use a variety of tools such as 3 - 5 year plans, operational plans, project plans, daily plans and extensive use of electronic calendars. As anyone with cattle and crops knows, your plans may have to be agile and flexible to accommodate unexpected external forces like the changing weather and the neighbour's bull that just jumped your fence.

Q.

What is the one thing that has most influenced your career development over the last 5-10 years?

A.

Love of learning, a keen interest in applying "best practices", lots of networking and a desire to have the best commercial cow calf operation possible.

Q.

Did you have a mentor/ mentors on your professional journey? What advice would you give to other women about the importance of mentorship?

A.

I've been fortunate to have worked with many talented people over the years. I've learned lots from my Dad, my husband (Bob), our great staff, research papers, relationships with university and colleges, suppliers, friends and thinking catalysts. I'm a big sponge for "data" and actively seek out opportunities to learn both within and external to our industry in North America and across the world.

Advice: share your knowledge freely with others; mentorship isn't one size fits all - you may want to seek out different mentors for different parts of your life; establish face to face relationships first, then connect through social media; be willing to listen, your mentor or mentee may see you differently than you see yourself - be open to new ideas; build in

time for yourself and family everyday and appreciate your life and those around you. Celebrate, and acknowledge the small and big moments in your lives - time really does fly by.



DIANNA EMPERINGHAM

Born and raised in rural Saskatchewan, Dianna has been connected to Agriculture for her entire life.

Dianna has been with Bayer for almost 25 years. For the first 16 years Dianna was part of the Canadian operations team holding a variety of roles in both the Animal Health and Crop Science organizations, her last role in Canada was Purchasing Manager for Bayer CropScience Canada.

In January 2006 she moved to Monheim, Germany to take on a newly created role as the Global Procurement Manager for Research and Development for Bayer CropScience and then in April 2008 Dianna moved again, this time to the UK Bayer office - located in Newbury, Berkshire - where she has spent two years building and heading up Regional Procurement for the UK and Ireland.

Q.

With big schedules of meetings, appointments and travelling, plus the desk work needed, how do you prioritize your time?

A.

I have a good idea of my travel schedule well in advance, so I use those commitments as a starting point for scheduling my time. Once I have that penciled in, I organize recurring meetings ie: Team meetings for the year. I generally sit down for an hour on a Sunday to review the coming week, make any necessary adjustments to the schedule and prioritize project/desk work that needs to be done for the week. I try to maintain some flexibility to be able to manage changing business requirements. It is also very important to keep your personal life in mind – family, hobbies, health and fitness – I make sure that I have time “booked” in my calendar so that I maintain balance.

Q.

What is the one thing that has most influenced your career development over the last 5-10 years?

A.

I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to travel and work in both Germany and England. Not only was this a great opportunity to experience different cultures but also different work environments. I learned that Leadership is key to well performing Teams no matter where you are, and that really helped me to focus on my passion and commitment for Leading people.

Q.

Did you have a mentor/ mentors on your professional journey? What advice would you give to other women about the importance of mentorship?

A.

I have had many mentors over the years! Having mentors has been very important to me and throughout different roles and levels it required that I looked to different people for guidance along the way. Having a mentor does not need to be a “formal” program. It’s simply a matter of engaging with people you respect and can seek advice from, and subject matter experts that you can learn from. Be open to new ideas, accept advice and be prepared to make change. Most

importantly, you will find that you have built a strong network of colleagues and friends along the way!



SUSAN BLAIR

Executive Director
Animal Health Division
Boehringer Ingelheim (Canada) Ltd.

Susan Blair has a Degree in Agriculture from the University of Saskatchewan. Susan first joined SmithKline (later acquired by Pfizer) as a Territory Manager in Ontario.

She became Product Manager for Pfizer’s Pet portfolio, before joining Boehringer Ingelheim (Canada) Ltd. where she held positions including National Sales Manager, Business Unit Manager, and lead the acquisition and integration of the Wyeth/Fort Dodge portfolio for Canada.

Susan is currently the Executive Director for Boehringer Ingelheim’s Canadian Animal Health Business.

Q.

With big schedules of meetings, appointments and travelling, plus the desk work needed, how do you prioritize your time?

A.

Communication plays a major role in helping me set priorities and manage my

time. I start with a big picture perspective and use that to map out my priorities for the year. I meet with my supervisor and team members to set clear expectations about what we will accomplish, and manage to those expectations throughout the year. Frequent updates are important, and of course, there are always things that come up that we didn’t expect. There are a lot of demands on everyone’s time, including meetings, business trips and appointments so it is important to find a system to keep yourself organized. I maintain a very detailed calendar that provides me with good visibility into the activities that will require my time and allows me to plan for them in advance.

Q.

What is the one thing that has most influenced your career development over the last 5-10 years?

A.

Passion for my work and the desire to do it well. Surrounding myself with the great people, which includes building a team with the right people and understanding that success is a collective (team) achievement. That is more than one thing... but it’s tough to limit it to one.

Q.

Did you have a mentor/ mentors on your professional journey? What advice would you give to other women about the importance of mentorship?

A.

I have had many different mentors, even before I knew what a mentor was -- there were people in my life who I looked to with admiration because they had skills and qualities I wanted to develop within myself. I would call them up, or meet them and discuss “what’s the best approach?” or “how did you develop or overcome this?” or “what areas do you see me overlooking?” Then I would put that learning to use. The advice I would give is that mentorship can be valuable and comes in all forms, choose those who have a style that works for you. ■