

BC Farm Writers' Association (BCFWA), info for potential new members

BCFWA is one of six provincial organizations affiliated with a national organization, the Canadian Farm Writers' Federation (CFWF) and an international organization, the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ). Your one membership fee (\$75 annually), collected by calendar year, gains membership and access to the opportunities of all these groups.

BCFWA has reporters, writers, editors, journalists and communicators who work primarily in the agriculture sector. As you know, it is a large sector and can be quite specialized in knowledge and vocabulary. BCFWA has over 30 members, CFWF about 300 and IFAJ about 5,500 in about 60 countries. BCFWA has long-time and new members ranging in age from 20-something to over 70.

We have a BCFWA website, but, since we are a totally voluntary organization at the provincial level, the board knows it needs updating. Websites are below. We have a FB page that is more up to date with content if you'd like to follow.

Typically, there are two in-person events a year - the AGM, with a guest speaker, held at the same time as the Pacific Ag Show at the end of January in Abbotsford. AGM is typically BCFWA paid for supper, followed by speaker, followed by a short AGM.

The other in-person is typically a spring/summer event. The location depends on who is organizing. Typically, that involves some kind of professional development through a site visit. We had our first Okanagan-based gathering in July 2024 when we had an in-depth tour of Frind Winery and viticulture. There have been behind the scenes tours at the PNE and farm site visits in the lower mainland, as examples. The rest of our events/PD are over zoom - both ours and national events are open to all CFWF members.

In summary, the benefits of membership are:

--Online pd, social or news events during the year - BC's plus access to those from CFWF or other provincial/regional farm writer associations, or IFAJ.

--Typically, a spring BC professional development in person farm tour

--Access to bursaries through BCFWA and CFWF to attend CFWF or IFAJ gatherings. (In Canada, we gather in person for an annual conference usually at the end of September, beginning of Oct. 2025 is in Winnipeg. 2024 was in Halifax. The conference focuses on networking and professional development and agriculture tours.) IFAJ also holds an annual gathering. In 2024, in Switzerland. In 2025, Nairobi, Kenya. October 14-18. The cost of travel is the responsibility of each participant, as is the cost of the conferences. However, for what we pay, it is THE best conference value. Generous sponsors help make it that way.

--Listing of member bio and contact info on our webpage, if desired

--Access to CFWF professional development and IFAJ professional development sessions and development opportunities such as the CFWF PD fund, IFAJ bursary, Young Leaders program, IFAJ awards and a mentorship program

--CFWF national awards program (writing {News and Comms} and photography)

--Access to a national and global network of fellow journalists, writers, communicators and photographers

--Leadership opportunities - such as adjudicating BC Board meetings or becoming a member of a committee or the executive

--BCFWA newsletter sent to your inbox

--Networking opportunities

As a member you are not obliged to participate in anything, but it's like with most things one belongs to: "You tend to get out as much or more than you put in."

I hope this gives you a bit of an overview and that you will consider joining!

<http://www.bcfwa.ca>

<https://cfwf.ca>

<https://www.ifaj.org/>