

Frostfree Nosepumps continue to attract attention, awards for local innovators

Review staff

A Rimbey area-based company continued to receive accolades for their innovative design that allows cattle access to fresh drinking water no matter what the temperature may be outside.

Jackie and Jim Anderson, who developed Frostfree Nosepumps (FFNP), were recently presented with an innovation award as part of the recent Agri-Trade 2008 Show held a few weeks ago in Red Deer.

"We filled out an application when we registered to be in the show. Apparently the entries were blind judged by an impartial committee, and again by a group of specialists and farmers," said Jackie Anderson when asked about the award. "All of the results were tabulated to decide the winners. There were 12 finalists and six winners. We believe we were chosen because our product is innovative, proven, sustainable and environmentally sound."

In accepting the award, the Andersons said they were very happy to receive the recognition, especially after toiling for nearly a decade to bring the product to market.

"We were pleased. We have worked hard over the past 10 years to get the product to this point, and to show producers that it does work and works well," Anderson said speaking on behalf of her husband Jim. "To be recognized not only by the committee but also by our peers, was very heartening. The publicity can't hurt either."

The company was formed in 2001 following three years of fine tuning the product and using it themselves in their own operation. Currently, they have nearly 600 units in use with most of them in Canada from British Columbia to Newfoundland and another three-dozen or so in the United States. They even have one operating in France however their European invasion may be expanding as they've received some considerable interest from other countries such as the United Kingdom, Finland, Germany and even as far away as Australia.

"Our product does work well in cold climates, but it is not restricted to cold climates," she said. "It is ideal anywhere there is no power because it is reliable, requires little to no maintenance and of course, requires no electrical support or heat."

According to Anderson, the FFNP is a variation of the old hand

pumps that used to be common on the Canadian prairies however it has been adapted to allow cattle to pump water themselves by simply nudging a valve with their noses.

What gives the product a decided advantage is the fact that it can operate in all weather conditions including the coldest of winters because of the manner in which it is installed.

By accessing static water underground to depths of 30 feet or less, the pumps are located deeper than the frost line and have access to the natural heat of the earth to keep them operational all year long.

Anderson was quick to add that the pumps have other advantages as well including being very cost effective once installed with no costs for either power or replacement parts resulting in eliminating any need for constant checking and maintenance. On top of that, the pumps do not require sunlight or wind to operate and they also prevent contamination of the water source by not allowing water to drain back underground. The pumps are also very durable as the Andersons said they have yet to see or hear of a broken or bent part.

While they may be very advantageous to cattle or other large animal producers, the pumps do have a few drawbacks including the depths at which they'll operate. The devices are not intended to operate in very deep conditions however they have been told by one of their customers that even at 47 feet, they still work fine.

"We have had some innovative customers with very deep wells, some at 150 feet and deeper, who have come up with solutions to water with a FFNP. By pumping on the weekend with a gas powered pump into a large tank in the ground, which then allows the cattle to pump their own water all week from the tank," Anderson said. "Fortunately, most producers with deep wells have an alternative source of water such as a dugout, which is a perfect marriage with the pumps."

Currently in Regina for the annual Agribition, the nose pumps have taken the Andersons on quite the tour of western Canada to promote their product. In addition to the Queen City, they've also attended shows in Toronto, Brandon, Manitoba and Camrose, Lloydminster and Dawson Creek in the west however they mainly concentrate on shows in Red



– submitted photo

Jim and Jackie Anderson of Rimbey continue to garner awards and recognition for their innovative cattle-watering device, including being presented with an innovation award at the recent Agri-Trade Show in Red Deer.

Deer, Edmonton and of course, Regina and added that they still have a farm to take care of which has limited their ability to travel further.

It's at those particular ag-related shows however, where they receive to most feedback and positive responses to their product.

"We often have customers stop by and they are our best salespersons. Nothing is more helpful than someone asking about the pump and a former customer steps up and says, 'They work great for me.' Most people also love our display," Anderson said. "Jim made an electric cow (nicknamed El-C) who pumps water all day. We have seen steady growth and continuing acceptance of the pump. We seldom get the skepticism we used to receive. Now, customers have heard about the pump from others, seen their neighbour's pump working or have been referred to us by some government agency in Canada or the US."

As for the future, the Andersons

said as long as there are cattle and producers to raise them, there'll be a need for their product despite the fact that the operation has taken a toll in terms of time and commitment.

"We trust this growth will continue and increase. Canadian livestock producers have had tough times for a number of years. Prices are still far lower than they should be however, if producers own livestock, they have to water them and we don't believe there is a more cost effective and reliable way to water livestock than the Frostfree Nosepump," Anderson said.

"This business has been very time consuming and demanding, but we feel we have a product that will help producers solve water issues and that eventually it will give some payback to our company," she added. "Our best indicator of the success of the pumps in use is repeat customers. We have a number of customers who have ordered one, and then subsequently ordered two or three more."