

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Aurora Wind Feeds

Aurora Wind Feeds, the Canadian Distributor of Buckeye® Nutrition, has been growing in size since it first opened in October of 2000.

“At the beginning the store, was just a small 10 x 10 space,” noted owner Jo Woolsey. But now, not only has her local location north of Barwick grown, the business also includes around 80 sub dealers and dealers across Canada.

“Our first load of feed came in and it took us three-and-half months to sell and use what we had out of that one truck load of feed,” she recalled. “Sixteen years later, from three different warehouses, we sell probably three truck loads a week, so we’ve grown.”

The reason Woolsey began selling the premium feed came from a personal story. She owned an Arabian stallion who was starch intolerant and very skinny. They ended up making him crazy trying to put weight on him. In Michigan, she and her husband found a bag of feed and brought home a month’s worth to try and within two weeks the stallion had improved considerably.

Then one day she found him laying in the field. “I thought I had killed him,” she said. “[Then] I realized in all the time we had owned him, he had never been peaceful enough to sleep in a field in the sunshine.”

That’s when she decided she needed to bring the feed here to Canada.

It took them three-and-a-half years to get the registrations on the products to begin the business.

“It was an incredibly rocky start,” she admitted about the challenges and red tape it took to get all the clearances.

She also got assistance from the Rainy River Future Development Corp, who loaned her funds to build her larger building.

“Angela [Halvorsen] was very helpful,” she noted of the Business Investment Officer. “They got us started using the self-employment benefits program.”

Woolsey indicated there were also plenty of workshops offered by RRFDC that she and her staff took advantage of.

She noted after all these years, the feed she sells is still top of the line. “The feed uses Canadian grains which is pretty cool,” she expressed. “It’s all food-grade, not feed-grade concepts. “It’s almost a holistic approach,” she stressed. “The product has never not done what it promises to do. “In 16 years it has never let us down and Canada, so far, doesn’t make anything like it,” she added.

Woolsey now teaches equine nutrition. In fact, she was invited to teach the second- year vet students at Calgary University. She also works at Woodbine, and with some of Canada’s top Olympic riders in other disciplines.

“It’s pretty exciting,” she enthused. “It’s been a big build.”

Along with a warehouse and office, the Barwick location on McCulloch Road, also has a retail store carrying a variety of items for people to shop when they pick their feed up. Woolsey said she has about 70% of the horse feed business in the district and added she doesn’t take it for granted.

“The feed is so good and just does what it’s supposed to do,” she voiced.



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**Jo Woolsey
Aurora Wind Feeds**

**RAINY RIVER
FUTURE DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION**

**601 Mowat Avenue
Fort Frances, ON
P9A 1Z2**

**Phone: 807-274-3276
E-mail: info@rrfdc.on.ca
www.rrfdc.on.ca**



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DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**
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