

# Canadian Blonde d'Aquitaine Association

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## BREEDER PROFILE

The Canadian Blonde d'Aquitaine Association is pleased to offer this space to profile our breeder members. If your operation has been featured in a magazine or newspaper, please contact Myrna Flesch at [westwind@telusplanet.net](mailto:westwind@telusplanet.net)

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### KAM BLONDES

#### Pulling together on the Family Farm

*Written by Myrna Flesch*

Like me, when you first heard of a place called "Charlie Lake, British Columbia", you said "where can that place be?" Well, it is a place for KAM Blondes to pick up their mail, but more than that there is a pub, store, church, public school, many acreages and homes.

KAM Blondes is actually located in the area called Upper Cache Creek which is an hour northwest of Fort St. John, British Columbia. It is here where you will find Karl and Ann Musgrove, the ranch pair who own and operate KAM Blondes. Ann has taught primary school part-time in Charlie Lake for the past 20 years.

But, I am getting ahead of myself here.

Karl Musgrove was born and raised in northeastern Montana near Nashua. He moved with his family to the Peace River Country in 1964 when he was 16 years old. He lived with his parents, had a few cows of his own and worked for the neighbours. In 1972, he bought his first land.

Ann was a city gal, who grew up in Victoria, British Columbia and always had a passion to be in the countryside. She graduated from high school in 1970 and headed straight for the University of Victoria to get her teaching certificate. She made friends at university with a gal from the Fort St. John area. On her way to a summer job in the Yukon, she stopped to see her friend. The friend introduced her to Karl, and the rest is sort of history - they were married in April 1974.

Karl and Ann have two grown children - Heather and Ross. Ross works for Finning Canada in Fort St. John as a sales representative, and Heather attended university and is married to Brad. She is currently teaching and working on her Masters in Psychology Counseling. Ross' son Tyler, loves to visit his grandparents at the ranch.

Lynn Bovee, who also lives at Upper Cache Creek, was artificially inseminating his commercial cows with Blonde semen in the late 70s and the early 80s. Karl and Ann saw the results, liked what they saw and the next thing Ann knew, they were buying a Blonde bull named Markwood Joels Promoter from Ross Young of Markwood Blondes near Cochrane, Alberta.

Karl and Ann have ranched in the Upper Cache Creek area since they were married. They have 130 cows at the present time and own 960 acres of land with hills and a creek running through it. They raise their own hay and have some fields planted for greenfeed each year. They graze their cattle on crown land.



The majority of their cow herd is commercial but they have about 30 registered purebred blondes. Their purebred animals have been purchased in Alberta, Saskatchewan and from a former breeder in their area, Lynn Bovee of Bovee Ranching Ltd. Their pedigrees currently include animals from Cutbank Blondes, Harcon Stock Farm, Paulgaard's Cattle Company Ltd., Roseneath Blondes, Westlane Farms and West Wind Blondes in Alberta and from Willow Creek Farms in Saskatchewan. For the most part, they raise their own Blonde bulls for their commercial herd and manage to sell three or four each year to commercial ranchers in their area. One of their favourite outings has been their "bull buying" trips together, looking for outcross pedigrees to use in their purebred herd.



It has been the practice of KAM Blondes to keep their own heifers for replacements and therefore their commercial herd, although not registered, is  $\frac{3}{4}$  Blonde or higher. They have crossed back with Red Angus on their commercial cows to gain hybrid vigor. They run their commercial and purebred herds in separate pastures but ultimately both herds are handled the same way for health protocols.

They are strong believers in the On Farm Food Safety Program and their operation is reviewed by North Peace Veterinary Service out of Fort St. John on a yearly basis.

For the last two years, they have belonged to a group called "Peace Premium Beef". They retain ownership of the cattle until they are slaughtered. The animals are fed following a strict protocol, which includes how they are handled and what medications can be used. This beef is marketed in the east as "Traditional Beef". They market their older cows and bulls through the Grande Prairie Auction Market.

Approximately a year ago now, their lives changed dramatically - Karl suffered a stroke and spent several months in rehab in Vancouver. Heather and her husband moved from Edmonton to assist at the ranch. Brad took on the job of tending the cattle and says he is going to pen a book - "Ranching for Dummies". Brad has joined those who work off farm and is now working in the oil patch. Ross moved to the Ranch this past Christmas and is helping to manage the farm while working fulltime.

Karl has always had a passion for art and has a natural ability along these lines. He did most of his work in oils, has carved on antlers, done pencil drawings and worked with chalk pastels. It had been his dream to teach art groups in town prior to his stroke. He has now had to switch to his left hand and overcome the loss of peripheral vision in both eyes on the right side, but he spends many hours working on pencil drawings. He does cartoons and wildlife but finds the most enjoyment in ranch scenes with horses and cattle in them.



Both Ann and Karl enjoy music and can be found dancing in the kitchen when a good song comes on the radio. Karl has played the guitar for several years and was the lead singer, playing with his nephew for local social functions- community bonfires, brandings, coffee visits, suppers and sing songs. One of the most upsetting things for Karl has been his loss of speech - Ann says he has limited speech thus hampering his singing talents.

Karl has been an active member of the local Cattlemen's Association serving as President, Vice-President or Director until this past year. He has served on the Problem Wildlife Committee for the

Regional District for several years and was a Director on the Alberta Blonde Association for several years. For many years, Karl was a 4-H Leader in their area.

Karl has a very strong sense of humour, an attribute that has served him well and perhaps made this past year a more bearable challenge on life's highway.

The future of KAM Blondes is not a certainty but hopefully Ross will be able to carry on in his father's footsteps and benefit from his advice. Meanwhile, Karl enjoys driving through the cattle and watching the calves grow. Karl and Ann both indicated that the cattle have always been close to their hearts.

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*A Note from the Directors of the Canadian Blonde d'Aquitaine Association: We wish Karl continued success in his rehabilitative efforts.*