AGRICOLA

FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF DALHOUSIE'S FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE

FALL 2018

FEEDING OUR COMMUNITY

OUR ALUMNI, HAVING AN IMPACT ON A DAILY BASIS

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FALL 2018

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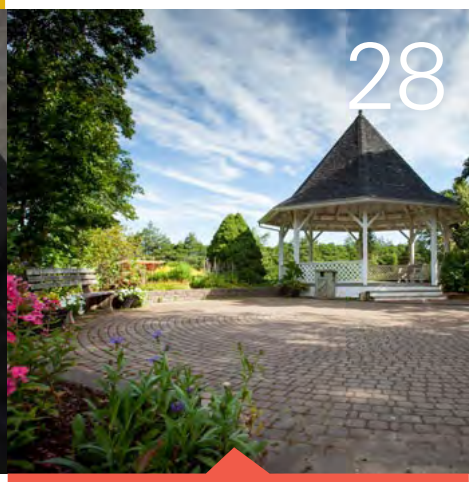

EVENTS AND REUNIONS

NOTABLE & AROUND AND ABOUT

AGRICOLA

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Editor, *AGRICOLA*
Alumni Relations, Dalhousie Agricultural Campus

One of my favourite aspects about my job is taking a road trip to visit alumni. In particular, I love visiting alumni farms and experiencing firsthand the hard work and family dynamics that all go in to producing the food we eat.

I don't think I've visited a farm yet where extended family members have not been involved, in someway or another. Whether it's lending a hand to hay, helping to repair a barn, caring for small children while parents milk the cows or volunteering to sell product at farmer's markets. Regardless of the size of the farm, it truly is a family affair. And an important one at that.

At each farm I visit, I'm amazed at the hard work and determination of alumni. Although it's not always blue skies and sunshine, our alumni farmers are devoted and passionate about what they do.

I'm particularly proud of this issue of the *Agricola* as it focuses on our alumni family farmers. We've featured many family farming profiles in the past, but this time we felt family farming deserved an issue all to itself.

The work our alumni family farmers do is so incredibly important. Our alumni are feeding our communities. We are so proud of the work you do and appreciate you sharing your stories with us.

Enjoy this issue!

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Dr. David Gray
Dean, Faculty of Agriculture
Principal, Dalhousie Agricultural Campus

Food is powerful

Food brings people together, shapes our memories and empowers our communities

Food is at the centre of our family gatherings and celebrations. It provides an opportunity to connect with those with whom we share our table and brings our communities and neighbours together.

Our community farmer's markets connect communities with their food in a very hands-on way while quietly educating visitors on where their food comes from.

Our faculty, staff, students and alumni at the Faculty of Agriculture are also passionate about food and strive to teach, research and innovate in an effort to feed a world population that is expected to hit nine billion people over the next 30 years!

In this issue of the *Agricola* we have featured several innovative alumni who bring unique perspectives to the kinds of food that appears on our tables.

Our own tables have been busy with several unique Aggies in the Community events, experiential events that help to educate our communities on where their food comes from. It's the Bees Knees (honey-themed) and Marvelous Mushrooms were both chef-curated events while course by course, attendees engaged with our researchers in an effort to connect them to the origins of their food. Keep posted for information on more of these events throughout the year on dal.ca/weareag

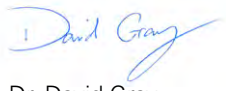
Feeding our community is also the theme of our Community Calendar, which will be distributed to members of our Bible Hill community once again this fall by our student athletes. The Agricultural Campus is proud to be part of the Bible Hill/Truro community and was reminded of this once again during the significant fire in Cox Institute this past June. The response from our community was and continues to be incredible. We are truly fortunate and thankful.

Although campus this fall may look a bit different, we will continue to provide the kind of educational experience I know our students are expecting and have come to rely on. A few timetable adjustments have been made but the majority of classes will remain on campus. We have secured leased space in the old Sears location of the Truro Mall to be used for additional teaching, research, graduate student space and office space for the 2018-19 academic year.

Tenders have been issued for the reconstruction of Old Cox with an aggressive date for completion by Aug. 1, 2019. The estimated cost to rebuild the interior of Old Cox is expected to be between $12 and $25 million, depending on the extent of the damage.

Our thanks are extended to each and every one of you who have extended your offers of support. I am truly proud to call myself an Aggie.

Sincerely,



Dr. David Gray

Aggies Strong

Moving Forward after Cox Fire

Fire crews battle the flames that caused significant damage to Cox Institute, June 20.

Although campus may look a bit different this fall, the Faculty of Agriculture continues to provide the kind of educational experience students have come to rely on after a significant fire on June 20th rendered the majority of one of its main academic buildings, Cox Institute, unusable.

"Cox Institute is one of our main campus academic buildings. Losing use of the facility meant we've had to be creative in how we have accommodated our students," explained Dean and Campus Principal Dr. David Gray. "But we've been determined to ensure the Faculty of Agriculture could continue to provide the exceptional educational experience students have come to rely on."

Much of the damage sustained to Cox Institute was located in part of the building dubbed "Old Cox" - from Enrolment Services east to the Banting Building. While the building itself was deemed structurally sound, Old Cox will need to be completely rebuilt on the inside. New Cox, which was also affected, has been extensively cleaned with teaching and learning spaces restored in time for the new academic term.

"While the fire had a real effect on our campus as a whole," said Dean Gray. "The tenacity and determination of our campus is what has driven our momentum over the summer and will keep us going through the rebuild of Cox. Without a doubt, it is our people that will see us through the rebuilding phase, and I couldn't be more proud of what we've accomplished together."

Old Cox reconstruction means a substantive upgrade to the building. Opened in 1968, and named in honour of Dr. Kenneth Cox, NSAC Principal from 1946 to 1964, the building is home to the A.E. Roland Herbarium, the A.D. Pickett Entomological Museum as well as many academic departments and service divisions. Since 1968 nearly every diploma and degree student has received at least a few lectures in Cox Institute.

"Every dark cloud has a silver lining and while challenging at the moment, we

have been provided a unique opportunity to consider how we utilize the space in Cox Institute and to reimagine how it may best work for us in the future," said Dean Gray.

Students are also fortunate to have access to a new space on campus that's focused on enhancing academic success. Recently vacated space above the MacRae Library is now home to the new state-of-the-art Student Learning Commons (SLC) officially opened September 27. Along with the Alumni Theatre and the Langille Athletic Centre, these three spaces will be used as classrooms.

Leased space in the Truro Mall is also being used to provide additional teaching, research, graduate student space and office space for the 2018-19 academic year.

The estimated cost to rebuild Old Cox is expected to be between $12 and $25 million – depending on the extent of the damage. It is expected the reconstruction to be complete in 2019.

Exterior views of Cox Institute after the fire.

In Memory

The Agricultural Campus and the Alumni Association acknowledge the passing of the following alumni. We extend our deepest sympathy to family and friends.

G. Fuller	**1936**
Winston Langille	**1940**
Bernard Parker	**1946**
Lawrence Parker	**1946**
Stewart Russell	**1950**
Donald Porter	**1954**
Donald MacDonald	**1960**
Allen Jess	**1961**
David Coombes	**1963**
Frances Bremner	**1965**
Claredon Robicheau	**1976**
Arnold Laureijs	**1982**
Scott Freeman	**1988**
Crystal Cavanagh	**2000**

Make a Memorial Gift

Honour a classmate or a friend with a memorial gift to the AC. Your thoughtful gift will be used to support student scholarships or bursaries, to improve campus, or to support an area that is of importance to you or your honouree. An acknowledgement of your gift will be sent to the family of the deceased. For additional information on memorial gifts, please contact Donor Relations at 902.893.6721. Make a gift online at dal.ca/giving.

Student Learning Commons a unique addition to campus

New and returning students of Dalhousie University's Agricultural Campus were certainly in for a treat when they began classes in September

Students now have access to a new space on the campus that's focused on enhancing academic success. Recently vacated space above the MacRae Library is home to the new state-of-the-art Student Learning Commons (SLC), which opened to students in late August. The SLC is a mix of open spaces with a modern yet cozy atmosphere. Soft seating for reading, tables for working and bookable study rooms of varying sizes allow students to gather, relax and socialize. Bold colors stimulate creativity while the furniture is fresh and bright. The large windows allow natural lighting and a 14 foot living wall welcomes you in the vestibule as you enter. Local artist and Manager of Indigenous Students at Dal AC, Art Stevens, created a mural marking the history of the Mi'Kmaq, which has a large presence in the SLC and acknowledges the campus' student diversity.

"It is so rewarding to see a space like this come together to so perfectly meet the needs of our ever-changing student body," said Dean and Campus Principal, Dr. David Gray. "Our campus has long been in need of a central gathering space to help connect our campus community. This space is as beautiful as it is functional and would not have been possible without the generous support of our donors."

The SLC is designated as a place for relaxing, studying, socializing, and accommodating the many varying needs of Dalhousie Agricultural students. The self-serve Barley Café will provide students with the opportunity to refuel while studying, and a student meeting room, generously funded by Farm Credit Canada, is equipped with videoconferencing abilities. Large Program Rooms, which students are able to book, include integrated audio visual systems. A Quiet Room and The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Hub will also be located in the CIBC Multicultural Centre within the SLC. In the washroom adjacent to the Multicultural Centre is an ablution station for ritual purification before prayer, a space like no other on campus.

"The MacRae Library Services Desk will move to the Student Learning Commons, providing circulation and reference services from a new service point," says Associate University Librarian, Library Services, and Head of MacRae

Library, Elaine MacInnis, who played an instrumental part in the planning of the SLC. "The SLC focuses on students and is geared toward supporting their academic success."

The need for a space like the SLC was raised by the students and identified during a Campus Master Planning Process. The entire project was a team effort with input from various members of the campus including the dean, the university librarian, Dal Libraries staff, Dalhousie Agricultural Students' Association (DASA) and Student Success and Ancillary Services.

"Students need a place for informal learning outside of the classroom, particularly commuter students who spend long days on campus and need to complete their research and academic assignments between classes," MacInnis explains. "The SLC can be a gathering place...that complements time spent at home, work, and in the classroom."

The SLC will also be home to the DASA offices, a move DASA President Scott Withrow is extremely excited about.

"This is a great move for DASA because it allows us to be more centralized on campus so we can have more outreach to all of the students," Scott says. "The new location will also allow us the potential to host new events for the student body with the new expanded meeting spaces."

While the informal learning space is aimed at students, staff and faculty are welcome as well. The SLC offers a more casual setting than the classroom. At the request of students, there will not be a lot of computers available to use in the SLC. Students felt their computer needs would be met in other areas of the MacRae Library and the campus. The SLC is designed to be a social and collaborative space and, for this reason, is not expected to be a quiet space.

"I am very excited to see this project come to completion and I am really looking forward to observing how the students use the space," MacInnis says. "I don't believe there is a place on the Agricultural Campus that is quite like this."

Colette Wyllie (Class of '10)

Chair, Agricultural Campus Alumni Association

Colette Wyllie has been a director of the Dalhousie Agricultural Campus Alumni Association since 2013, and this summer took over as chair of the board. A proud Aggie, Colette graduated from NSAC with a degree in Environmental Sciences in 2010. She grew up on a small farm in Glenholme, N.S., and along with her undergrad, holds an advanced diploma in Public Relations from NSCC. Wyllie has worked with the N.S. wild blueberry and Christmas tree industries and has occupied several roles at the Dalhousie Agricultural Campus.

Currently, as Community Education Manager, Wyllie leads the Faculty of Agriculture's efforts to raise the profile of agriculture in schools and communities in the region. She proudly shares the good of agriculture as far and wide as possible. In addition to her role as chair of the Alumni Association, she also chairs the Dalhousie Agricultural Students' Association board of directors and is a member of the provincial Agricultural Awareness Committee.

The Agricultural Campus is a pretty special and unique place, as we hear over and over. What's your favourite characteristic of the Agricultural Campus?

My favourite physical characteristic would have to be the gardens. Our campus is exceptionally beautiful thanks to the hard work of our grounds crew, our horticulture students, and many dedicated volunteers. I feel very fortunate to be able to enjoy such beautiful spaces as an employee and an alumna, but it's when I introduce the gardens to others that I feel most proud. I have the distinct pleasure of welcoming people to our campus on a regular basis, and I always try to highlight our green spaces as part of that welcome. I'm thrilled that our campus received Botanical Garden status this summer. I want everyone to know how fantastic this place is!

What needs improving?

I have always felt we could improve upon the relationship we have with our surrounding community. Although we are basically on top of each other, it often seems we operate in silos, rather than collaboratively. The AC is a gem in central Nova Scotia and specifically the Truro-Bible Hill area, the facilities, the expertise, the employment and not to mention the influx of students to the area on an annual basis are great benefits to the community. Likewise, the surrounding community provides culture, entertainment, services and support to staff and students. I would like to see more fluidity between our two communities.

What do you think has been the most significant change, since you were a student?

It is undeniable that the most significant change to the AC since I was a student is the merger with Dalhousie. Although I graduated only two years before the merger took place, it was certainly not something I anticipated during my studies. Change is inevitable; although I am often nostalgic about NSAC, as an employee at the Faculty of Agriculture I am able to see many of the benefits that can be attributed to the merger. A prime example of this would be the new Student Learning Commons. This new hub for student life seemed like a pipe dream when I was a student, and as I understand it, for many decades before that as well. It's fantastic to see something that seemed so impossible (but so necessary) become a reality.

If you had a vision for the Agricultural Campus and how it would look 20 years from now, what would it look like and why?

This is a harder question to answer than it used to be. I was always rooting for a student centre for our campus, and now that we have one, I need to choose a new priority!

What I would like most would be for the Agricultural Campus to become a true leader and influencer in sustainable agriculture. We are facing some tough problems as a global community: food security, climate change, water shortage. We need solutions to these problems, and we need more people to help find the solutions. The AC could and should be a driver in finding the solutions, on a regional or a global scale, by sending the necessary expertise out into the world. I would love for our student population to grow and our reputation to shine because more people want to be part of finding the solutions for a sustainable food future.

This issue of the *Agricola* highlights family farming and the importance of their role in our community. Our alumni family farmers are feeding our community. When you stress the importance of this to your school groups, are students surprised to learn this? What is their reaction?

Students in our region actually seem to have a fairly good handle on the food system. They know that farmers produce food, and they almost always know some farmers personally. The local food movement and support from retailers has helped with that. I find the larger challenge to be helping students to recognize they play a role in the food system as consumers, and they can play a larger role if they desire. Whether we grow food or just eat it, we are all part of agriculture. It's fascinating (and rewarding) to watch a student make that connection and to start thinking about what role they want to play today and in the future.

Scholarship launched at Dal AC in memory of Arthur and Donald Porter

Those who knew the late brothers Arthur and Donald Porter, knew of their passion for their dairy farm and all things agriculture. It was this dedication to the dairy industry in N.S. that led Arthur's wife, Dawn, and daughter Sherry Porter to create a scholarship in their names at Dalhousie University Faculty of Agriculture to honour their memories.

"A few years after my dad died in 1997, my mother and I sometimes talked about creating something in dad's name at Dal AC, but at that time the stars were not aligned," says Sherry. "When my uncle passed away this spring, I knew it was the right time and even better to honour them as a team."

Valued at $3,000 each year, the Porter Brothers Dairy Award will be awarded to an undergraduate student studying a dairy-related program at Dal AC. The Porter family wants to encourage growth and research in the dairy industry as Arthur and Donald were always working to improve the industry in NS.

"We want this scholarship to be of interest to students who have a keen interest in the dairy industry, either back on the farm or through crop engineering or animal science research in the industry," Sherry explains. "We want it made available to students who have either a broad or specific interest in the industry. It is also important it be of significant value to make a difference to the student or students who are awarded the scholarship."

Not only was the dairy industry important to the brothers, the Agricultural Campus held a special place in the hearts of Arthur and Donald. Both graduated from the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, Arthur in 1941 and Donald in 1954. It seems that passion for the small but mighty Agricultural Campus runs in the blood of their family members as well. Sherry, her brother Glen, brother-in-law Dale Townsend, Donald's children and now his grandchildren have all studied at Dal AC. With Sherry also on the Board of Governors and playing an integral role in the capital campaign that will see refurbishment of the campus dairy buildings, creating the scholarship through the Agricultural Campus was a no-brainer for Sherry and Dawn.

"Education was important to them both and they knew the value they received over the years from the many extension specialists who worked with them on various projects on the farm," Sherry explains. "My dad and uncle would be quietly thrilled with this decision and the fact that the scholarship will go on in perpetuity in their name. I say quietly thrilled as neither of them were one to blow their own horn!"

Although 10 years apart in age, Arthur and Donald were more than just brothers. They were friends and lifelong partners in farming. In 1955, after both graduating from the AC, the Porters purchased a farm in Fort Belcher, N.S. For 10 years, Arthur and his wife, Dawn, their three children, and Donald and his wife, Helen, and their five children shared the original double farmhouse. When the brothers purchased the farm next door, Arthur and Dawn moved their family into that farmhouse.

The Porter farm was a dairy operation that milked 80 cows and had more than 600 acres of farmland. In the early days, Arthur and Donald had chickens, pigs, and a strawberry crop but eventually shifted their focus to a purebred dairy operation.

"Having a high producing, well recognized purebred herd, known as Belcher Holsteins, was very important to them," Sherry says. "They maintained that high quality throughout, and offspring from the herd commanded a premium price in the market."

Although farming full time made for a busy schedule, Arthur and Donald both found the time to contribute to agriculture through participation in various provincial and national agricultural organizations. Both were active with the Dairy Farmers of Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture, Dairy Commission of Canada, National Livestock Feed Board, Provincial Exhibition Commission, Truro Raceway, Scotsburn Cooperative, and more. Both were also involved with the harness racing industry as well, raising brood mares, breeding horses, and even racing some over the years.

"While they were partners on every aspect of the farm, many would say Arthur loved the cows, Donald loved the horses," Sherry smiles.

Arthur and Donald impacted the lives of many, whether it be through their participation in various agricultural organizations, farming, or harness racing. Both were leaders on the farm and off. Their impact is evident by the growth of the scholarship alone, something Sherry and family are humbled about.

"Already the initial investment has grown with others contributing to it in memoriam to my father and uncle," Sherry says. "I am hopeful it will continue and at some point award more than one scholarship per year."

Today the farm is being operated by Alan Porter, Donald's youngest son.

"My father would be very pleased to see the farm is still in the family and hopefully one or more of Alan's children will also be involved," Sherry says.

While the memory of Arthur and Donald Porter certainly lives on at Belcher Holsteins, their families are extremely proud their legacy will continue to live on through Dal AC as well.

Our alumni feeding our community

Dalhousie University's Faculty of Agriculture is proud to be a leader in providing expertise and knowledge relating to agriculture, food and the environment, and even more proud of our alumni and the impact they are having on a daily basis. It is our alumni family farmers who are quietly managing our natural resources, protecting our environment and providing food security and nutrition for us all.

We are proud to shine the spotlight on several of our outstanding alumni families from across the Maritime Provinces and how, through their passion and their farm operations, they are feeding our community.

Armadale Farm Dairy Products

Hetty (Class of '01) and Ian Smyth

What began as a little taste of home is now a bustling business for one dairy farming family.

In 1986, the Duivenvooden family immigrated from the Netherlands to start farming in Canada. After settling on a dairy farm in N.B., the family found the traditional Gouda cheese they were used to in Holland was hard to come by on the East Coast of Canada. They began making their own cheese using fresh milk from their dairy cows.

"Soon the community caught on and before we knew it people were coming to the door to purchase our cheese!" Hetty Smyth (Class of '01) smiles.

Armadale Farm Dairy Products, located in Sussex, N.B., is home to 100 dairy cows whose fresh milk is used to make a variety of fresh artisan cheeses. While Hetty and her husband, Ian, oversee the dairy processing plant, Hetty's brother, Hubert Duivenvoorden, owns and oversees the dairy farm.

"The barn is set up as a free stall barn," Hetty explains. "We have fans and heaters for the varying degrees of weather. Our cows receive top notch care, as the saying goes "a healthy cow is a happy cow!"

It's those happy, healthy cows that produce such high quality dairy products for customers of Armadale Farm to enjoy. In 1990, not long after the family immigrated to Canada, the cheese plant came into existence. Although the plant opened in 1990, Hetty's family had been making cheese long before that. Upon settling in N.B., Hetty's father, a fifth generation cheesemaker, purchased some used equipment to begin making cheese in the basement of their farmhouse. Soon, the business began to grow, resulting in the construction of a full cheese plant.

"The dairy processing plant had been a part of our family farm for a long time when my parents decided to retire from it," Hetty says. "Not wanting to see a good thing come to an end, my husband and I took over the plant in 2006. My parents both came from farming families so farming is definitely a family gene."

Each morning, fresh, warm milk is pumped directly from the cows to the cheese vat and pasteurizer. From there, different varieties of cheese are produced through an intricate process. Each variety of cheese has a slightly different production process as each variety has different requirements and characteristics.

"Each morning, I have to be about an hour ahead of Hubert who is doing the milking," Ian says. "I have to sterilize my equipment and prepare the culture all before the fresh milk begins coming through the pipe."

A common product at Armadale Farm Dairy Products is traditional Dutch Gouda cheese. The process of making Gouda cheese begins by adding culture, which raises the acidity of milk by consuming the lactose, to the fresh milk. An enzyme called rennet is also added to help the milk curdle. The milk then sits for 45 minutes to allow for coagulation. The cheese curds are cut and some of the whey, the liquid remaining after milk has been curdled and strained, is removed. Next, hot water is added and the mixture is stirred for 20 minutes. This process is repeated twice to raise the temperature of the curds. The excess whey is drained, leaving the cheese curds in the vat. If necessary, spices are added.

"There is no holding time and no further transport for the fresh milk," Hetty explains. "Since the milk comes directly from

our own cows, we can ensure the milk we use is of the upmost quality and therefore our products will be of the same quality."

The final step in the cheese making process is to press the cheese. The curds are placed into molds and pressed evenly for three hours and then turned so that both sides are evenly pressed. Once pressed, the cheese sits overnight to bring the pH level down before the brining process. The cheese is put into a brine tank for two days where a salt brine adds flavour to the cheese.

"After two days, the cheese is taken out and allowed to air dry," Hetty explains. "Once it is dry, a breathable cheese coating is applied. From there, the aging process begins. Gouda cheese is usually aged two to three months for mild varieties and longer for medium and old. The cheese basically requires constant attention until it is shipped to market."

Although Gouda cheese is their specialty, the dairy processing plant offers an extensive selection of handmade, quality dairy products. Cheddar, Feta, Havarti, and Parmesan cheese, cheese curds, dips, quark, sour cream, yogurt and ice cream can be found at their on-site cheese shop, Fredericton Boyce Farmers Market, Dieppe Farmers Market as well as various country markets and stores in Southern New Brunswick.

Although their cheese making business is booming, it hasn't always been easy getting to where they are today. They faced challenges as any farming business would, especially the high costs of production and overhead costs as Armadale Farm is so small compared to large dairy processing plants.

"Every business has its ups and downs but the trick is to weather the storm and see it through," Hetty says. "Not every business is able to do that but so far we have been lucky."

Overcoming their challenges has certainly been worth it though. It's not hard to tell that farming is important to the Smyth family and they are proud of their dairy processing operation.

"Farming is the backbone to the economy," Hetty proudly explains. "It's where the food chain starts, be it dairy, vegetables, wheat and grain crops, the list goes on. There is very little that does not begin with a farmer's hand."

And while Armadale Farm Dairy Products strives to provide fresh local products for their customers, their dedication to their community goes far beyond that.

"We want to impact our community by raising awareness of where food comes from, what it actually takes to make a block of cheese, the importance of nutrition and the absence of fillers and additives in food," Hetty says. "Supporting local is so important."

Bazel's Place

Meghan (Class of '01) and Aaron Spares

"It isn't simple to start a farm, but it is definitely possible."

With very little practical farming experience, Meghan (Class of '01) and Aaron Spares took a chance on the lifestyle they had always dreamed of. Not only are they first generation farmers, they are the only sheep dairy in N.S. And to top that, their farm has become home to the largest flock of purebred British Milksheep in North America, a rare breed of sheep originating from Great Britain.

Starting from scratch

Meghan and Aaron own and operate Bazel's Place in Avondale, Hants Co., specializing in milking sheep. The milk produced is mainly sold to *Blue Harbour Cheese* in Halifax, with some also going to *All Lathered Up Soap Company* in Windsor. This year, the farm will milk nearly 70 ewes.

"Our breed is really quite special," Meghan explains. "The British Milksheep was developed in the 1980s to provide crossing sires for commercial flocks to improve prolificacy without the burden of orphan lambs."

Living up to the breed's characteristics, Meghan and Aaron's flock have a lambing rate of 280 per cent. The breed produces enough milk to raise multiple lambs, which makes them suitable dairy sheep. Although their flock is thriving, Meghan explains the breed was essentially extirpated in Britain during a foot and mouth viral outbreak in 2001. Fortunately, semen and embryos of British Milksheep had been exported to Canada beforehand. These exported genetics became the foundation of the breed

"A farming lifestyle is very real; it's demanding and challenging, but even more fulfilling," says Meghan.

Farming for Meghan and Aaron truly is a family affair. Pictured here with their two sons, as well as Aaron's mother and step-dad, who are big assets on the farm.

in North America. Today, there is only one small flock of British Milksheep remaining in Britain.

After living in Britain for nearly a decade, Meghan returned to the Maritimes in 2013. Soon after, she met her now-husband Aaron, a nomadic biologist who had always loved animals. Looking to establish a permanent address and both possessing an undeniable passion for agriculture, the couple purchased their farm in 2014 when Meghan was expecting their first of two sons.

By September 2015, mere months after moving onto the property, Meghan and Aaron made the decision to buy some British Milksheep. They renovated old horse stalls to prepare for their new arrivals. Not knowing quite what to expect, the ambitious duo purchased five ewes and one ram to go through the lambing process and then decide if they wanted to continue with the adventure.

"It all just happened and I trusted it," Meghan explains. "Aaron and I chose to do this and when we started figuring it out, everything just fell into place."

After a successful first lambing, Meghan prepared a business plan for the sheep dairy. Not long after their decision to expand their flock, Megan and Aaron were contacted by Eric and Elisabeth Bzikot of Best Baa Farms in Ontario, the couple who they had purchased their original six sheep from. Eric and Elisabeth were downsizing and looking to sell most of their flock. By October 2016, Bazel's Place had added 32 ewes and two rams.

"The spring of 2017 was our first lambing on a larger scale and it was the first season we milked," Meghan explains. "In honesty, it was my goal to just keep animals alive and make sure they would, in fact, have milk. Being farmers was 100 per cent new to both me and my husband, so expectations were not too high!"

Now, with some practical experience under their belts, Meghan and Aaron have set their expectations a little higher. They aim to have a flock of 100 ewes by 2019.

"This year, I'm more focused on the numbers and improving production to make the business add up," Meghan laughs.

What's in a name

Upon purchasing the property and establishing their business plan, Meghan and Aaron were torn on what to call the place. After many rejected ideas, they realized that the farm's name had been staring them in the face the whole time.

"When we moved in, not being from the area, we were known as 'the couple who bought Bazel's place,'" Meghan says with a smile. "Bazel Roberts grew up on the farm and spent his entire life farming it. We realized that the farm is Bazel's place, so why change it?"

Meghan and Aaron were ecstatic when Bazel himself gave them permission to keep his name on the farm.

"It was obvious he was well loved in the community and took pride in his life on the farm," Meghan adds. "It was really hard for him to leave and I hope he felt it was left in good hands. He passed away this past January, but his farm and name will live on."

Determination and perseverance

In just four years, Meghan and Aaron completely uprooted their familiar suburban and nomadic lifestyles, respectively, and plunged headfirst into farming. While the overwhelming success of Bazel's Place is evident, Meghan and Aaron admit it was not easy.

"Become a farmer, lamb out 37 ewes, build a milking parlour, get a license, train the ewes to be milked while learning to use the milking equipment ourselves, put up 4,000 feet of fencing, keep 90+ lambs alive, overcome the fear of dealing with dead animals; our 'Things-To-Do' list seemed impossible!" Meghan laughs as she lists the things her and Aaron accomplished last spring.

But they did do it. One day at a time, with continuous commitment from family and help here and there from the local community when they needed it.

"As a sheep dairy in a cow dairy world, there are some challenges, as we must meet the same regulations as a cow dairy and access the same services," Meghan explains. "However, we have the support necessary to work through these potential barriers, so I'm staying positive that we continue to find our place in the grand scheme."

A privilege to live this life

Ask any farmer, the farming lifestyle is demanding and challenging. But any farmer will tell you it's even more fulfilling. Meghan and Aaron are no different.

"I cannot think of a better way to raise my children and grow ourselves," Meghan explains. "I'm so proud to see my boys embrace farming. When they walk into a pen of lambs and start clapping their hands to get the sheep up, you can't help feel there is something so right about this life."

As for Meghan and Aaron, success is not only measured in the growth of their farm. Success is measured in the growth of themselves, and overcoming challenges beyond what they ever thought they could handle. Success is supporting each other, despite imperfections and challenges.

"A farming lifestyle is very real; it's demanding and challenging, but even more fulfilling," Meghan admits. "It's truly a privilege to live this life and share it with my family."

Dickinson Bros. Farm

David (Class of '63) and Karen Dickinson

As the old adage goes, 'don't put all of your eggs in one basket.'

For David and Karen Dickinson of Dickinson Bros. Farm, perhaps their mantra can be 'don't put all of your blueberries in one basket.'

A fifth generation farmer, David Dickinson has been farming on Dickinson Bros. Farm in West Brook, N.S. for more than 50 years. David admits the secret to the farm's unwavering success has been diversity. Although predominantly a wild blueberry and maple operation, Dickinson Bros. has seen a variety of commodities over the years including maple, wild blueberries, strawberries, beef cattle, logging, and grain. While they've done away with their beef cattle operation, they currently have 200 acres of wild blueberries, 19,000 tapped maple trees, 120 acres of grain, five acres of strawberries, and a 2,000 acre woodlot. David believes it's this diverse mix of commodities that has ensured the farm's prolonged success.

"Mixed farming has been good for us in that it all balances out," David explains. "You don't have the highs and lows others do because they all don't go up or down at once."

Growing up on the family farm, David always knew he would one day return to take over. David attended the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, completing the first two years in 1963 for the degree program, then going on to MacDonald College in Montreal for his BSc Agriculture, graduating in 1965. After graduating, David didn't hesitate to return to the family farm.

Today, Dickinson Bros. Farm employs four full-time and seasonal workers, in addition to David himself, David's wife Karen, and their sons and grandchildren who pitch in during peak maple season.

"I always knew I'd be a farmer's wife!" Karen, David's wife of 50 years, laughs.

Although there are still a variety of commodities on the farm today, it is their maple and wild blueberry operation that is most prominent. Each spring, David, his family, and the farm's dedicated employees, spend countless hours collecting, trucking, boiling, and packaging sap to meet the demand of their consumers.

"Maple season is David's most favorite time of year," Karen explains. "He takes great pride in his product and it shows!"

With the ever-changing and unpredictable Nova Scotia weather, David explains that maple season seems to be arriving earlier with each passing year. Back in the 1960s, a typical maple season would run from the end of March until the end of April. This past season, David was tapping trees in mid-February and bottling syrup before the end of the month. Despite the changing season, the high quality of the sap remains constant.

"This year, we produced 10,206 litres of maple syrup," David explains.

Over the years, the Dickinson family has made many changes to their maple operation to make the process more efficient. With the addition of an oil-fired evaporator and other improved technologies, David rarely has to spend tiresome nights boiling sap. The resulting products are used year-round to fill orders for markets, custom orders, and other retail stores.

During maple season, 80 miles of pipelines bring sap from the tapped trees to several storage tanks around the mountain. From there, the sap is pumped into a 1,000 gallon tank and trucked to their processing building, which is located six kilometers from the sugar woods. The sap is then processed using reverse osmosis, a technique that pumps the sap under high pressure to remove the majority of the water and increase the sugar content.

Although their sugar woods is located six kilometers from their processing building and may seem like poor planning to some, David explains that a lot of thought went into the placement of the building.

"It's a prime location for us as it's accessible and road-side," David explains. "We built it in the early 1970s. It's also a great spot for visitors to stop in."

When the sap is done flowing each spring, David's attention is shifted to his wild blueberry crop. Dickinson Bros. Farm cultivates more than 200 acres of wild blueberries, with some fields producing wild blueberries since 1927.

Not only is he a passionate farmer, David has been a valuable advocate for the wild blueberry industry in Nova Scotia for more than 50 years. In the early years, David provided test plots for research to improve berry quality and yield. He was also among the first producers to implement a double-cropping system, a two-year harvest cycle that eliminates the production costs of weed control, making it cost-effective and highly productive. Among his own increased wild blueberry production, David was also one of the founding organizers of the Wild Blueberry Producers Association of Nova Scotia, the organization that oversees the production and marketing of wild blueberries in Nova Scotia.

Although wild blueberry production in Nova Scotia has been at an all-time high for the last number of years, the success of this year's harvest remains uncertain. Many blueberry farmers across the region suffered extensive loss after a late spring frost swept the region in early June. Despite their hard work over the winter and early spring preparation to maintain their wild blueberry fields and produce a high yield, David admits this year the wild blueberry yield is questionable. Some farmers suffered widespread frost damage to their wild blueberry fields while others lost entire fields completely.

"It's a hard time of year right now," David said, during a visit to the field in June. "We can't quite tell what kind of loss we may be facing. Damage will start to show in the coming weeks. We're fertilizing the crops whether it's worth it or not."

It's during times like these that David is most satisfied with his mixed farming operation. While the blueberry yield may not be as high as he would like, the other commodities on his farm are thriving, keeping the farm balanced and operable. As for the future of the Dickinson Bros. Farm, that is still undecided.

"David thinks he's going to live forever so we don't know what the future will hold!" Karen laughs.

Despite what the future brings, Dickinson Bros. Farms is sure to thrive with its diverse farming operation and a family as passionate and as dedicated as the Dickinsons.

Did you know...

Agriculture employs more than 2.3 million Canadians on farms and in processing plants, boardrooms, laboratories and beyond.

97 per cent of Canadian farms are family farms.

Canada produces about 10 billion pounds of potatoes every year.

Canada produces 85 per cent of the world's maple syrup.

We produce more than 700 varieties of cheese in Canada.

Sources: *The Real Dirt on Farming*, 2014
Canadian Dairy Information Centre
An Overview of the Canadian Agriculture & Agri-Food System, 2016

Jeff & Janet take a lot of pride in growing their own crops for wine production, or buying from local farmers.

Magnetic Hill Winery

Jeff (Class of '81) and Janet (Class of '80) Everett

Your taste buds are certainly in for a treat when wine tasting at Magnetic Hill Winery.

Located in Moncton, N.B., Magnetic Hill Winery has found a unique alternative to producing traditional grape wines. Instead, Jeff (Class of '81) and Janet (Class of '80) Everett focus on producing wines using a variety of fruits, something wine tasters are often a bit skeptical of.

"To most consumers, the thought of fruit wine causes a bit of a negative thought," Janet explains. "Most people think fruit wine is too sweet. When we do tastings, we don't mention the ingredients and see what people think. We're working hard to educate consumers that fruit wines are acceptable table wines."

Magnetic Hill Winery opened its doors in 2005, initially partnering with Belliveau Orchards to produce three wines. In their first year, their goal was to produce 5,000 litres of fruit wine. Today, the popular winery produces more than 100,000 litres of fruit wine each year. They offer 16 different wines made from rhubarb, cranberries, strawberries, raspberries, and most popular, wild blueberries.

"We also have five acres of grapes that we grow and offer select grape wines," Janet explains. "We can't have a winery without a grape vineyard!"

Although Magnetic Hill Winery offers a few traditional grape wines, 70 per cent of their sales are fruit wines. In order to keep production running smoothly, Jeff and Janet strive to keep one years' worth of frozen fruit onsite. What they don't grow themselves is purchased from local farmers. In fact, last year, Magnetic Hill Winery spent more than $300,000 on local fruit.

"Everything is local," Janet says. "All the fruit used in our wine comes from within 45 minutes of Moncton. We take a lot of pride in saying our product is grown and made here."

With business thriving, Jeff and Janet admit they didn't always plan to be winemakers. Jeff grew up on a strawberry farm in Perth Andover, N.B. and Janet on a dairy farm in N.S. The pair followed Jeff's career and settled in Moncton after both graduating from Nova Scotia Agricultural College. There they purchased a farm property and specialized in growing raspberries and strawberries. Their small fruit farming operation, called Utopia U-Pick, turned out to be a bit more unstable than they had anticipated.

"We were constantly battling the 'Four Too's'," Jeff explains.

"It was either too hot, too cold, too wet, or too dry!"

In the late 1990s, Jeff and Janet began searching for ways to add value and a more stable income to their farming operation. Shortly after they began exploring their options, the provincial government in N.B. opened the doors to farm-based cottage wineries. The Everett's decided to seize this opportunity and began using the fruit produced at Utopia U-pick to develop a variety of fruit-based wines.

Although some of their fruit is still produced at Utopia U-Pick, the winery is not located on the original farm property. Located five minutes from Utopia U-Pick, the current property of Magnetic Hill Winery is an 1867 heritage site. Jeff and Janet purchased the property in 2003 and renovated and restored the original barn and house. They added a wine production and storefront under the main floor of the house and restored the barn to host events. In addition to their living quarters in the restored house, Jeff and Janet offer a two-bedroom Bed and Breakfast, open from May until December. If that's not enough, the pair are currently working to add a new building that will house a new wine production facility, a store and additional event space. The new building is set to open next year.

"In our new building, we will also be offering year-round activities with some unique approaches," Jeff says.

For Jeff and Janet, Magnetic Hill Winery is their life. They pour their heart and soul into their operation and pride themselves on doing most of the work themselves, with the help of their small staff. They've done all of the building restorations, landscaping, and tending to crops. They bottle the wine by hand, four times each year, using a mobile corker and a small crew of six. Their hard work extends well beyond the typical manual labour of a farm, as well. The pair conducts research on traffic passing the winery to better understand which marketing tactics would work best. They do their own branding and marketing for the winery. There is even a story behind every wine name at Magnetic Hill Winery and the label of their red wine, Benchmark, features a hand-sketch done by Jeff.

"We know our market well and work hard maintaining it and fine tuning the areas that are successful," Jeff explains.

With such a fine-tuned and successful operation, Jeff and Janet are excited to be able to pass the reins to their son Zach. Over the years, Zach has spent countless summers working on the farm alongside his parents learning the ropes. He's experienced first-hand the hard work and dedication that goes into their operation and shares the same passion for agriculture. Zach, who has spent time travelling and learning about wine and wine production to help grow the family business, will someday take over the operation.

"Zach was responsible for introducing our wines to over 70 new locations throughout New Brunswick, including Sobeys, Superstore, Co-ops, NB Liquor store, and many independent retailers," Jeff says proudly. "We are proud to have Zach work alongside us and one day, take over the winery, growing and expanding it."

Marshdale Farms

Megan (Class of '10 & '13) and Erik Balodis

Beef farming and specialty cut flowers are two completely different industries yet one farm in Hopewell, N.S. specializes in both. It may seem like a bit of an odd farming combination but Marshdale Farms appreciates the best of both worlds.

"We use the tagline 'Beef and Blooms, Raised in Pictou County,' Megan Balodis says with a smile. "This is something people comment on quite a bit, and I think how we market the combination is what makes us unique."

Megan and Erik Balodis are the hard working hands behind the beef and bloom operation. The third generation on the farm, Megan and Erik admit that although they farm together as a couple, their respective responsibilities on the farm are quite different.

"I look after the flowers and Erik oversees the beef cattle," Megan explains. "Of course we still work together as a team and have lots of help from our family."

Growing up on the family farm, Erik took ownership from his dad in 2014. With several hundred acres of mixed cropland and woodland, the farm has certainly evolved with the generations. When Erik was young, the farm was a dairy operation. By the time Erik was a teenager, his father transitioned it to beef cattle. Erik and Megan continue to run it as a beef farming operation, with the addition of specialty cut flowers three years ago.

"The farm itself has been operated by Erik's family since the '50s and it's been in our hands for almost five years now," Megan explains. "We're proud we are continuing the legacy that's been entrusted to us."

Marshdale Farms appreciates the best of both worlds, the beef and the blooms.

Although Megan and Erik are the only full-time employees on the farm, they can't overlook the help from the rest of their family. Erik's parents, Marcis and Mara Balodis, are always keeping a close eye on the farm and lending a hand as needed. As well, Emma, Erik's younger sister, and husband Jaret often help out with cattle and haying season.

At Marshdale Farms, the beef cattle, which Erik oversees, are raised and finished on forage. This means they graze on pasture for part of the year, and are fed hay and haylage for the rest of the year rather than grain.

"Nova Scotia's climate is well suited to this type of beef production, and we believe in taking full advantage by working with what nature provided," Megan says. "We closely monitor the health of our animals, and regularly work with a veterinarian to make sure our animals receive the best care we can give them. Our beef is tender and flavourful, and we may be biased, but we believe it is some of the best you can buy!"

As for the blooms, that's Megan's department. Graduating from Dalhousie University Faculty of Agriculture with a degree in Plant Science and a Master's in Agriculture, Megan's passion for plants is undeniable. The farm offers a wide variety of specialty cut flowers, such as amaranth cosmos, peonies, and allium, with peak growing season typically running from May to early October.

"We strive to grow gorgeous flowers in an environmentally-conscious manner," Megan explains. "This means we do our absolute best to build soil health, foster beneficial insects, and use crop inputs responsibly. We grow unique varieties you may not find elsewhere."

In addition to cultivating the flowers, Megan offers floral services in the form of bulk flowers, custom floral arrangements, floral design, and botanical jewelry.

"I've been expanding the flower plots and one of our goals is to be able to get to a point where I can provide at least some part-time employment on the flower end," she says.

Although their primary responsibilities differ, Erik and Megan certainly work as a synchronized team. It's their passion for farming, in particular farming together with their family, that keeps their unique operation running smoothly.

"We are very lucky to have some of our family very close by and willing to lend a hand," Megan says. "The experience that Erik's

parents have in business, farming, and family is truly invaluable."

Through their farming lifestyle, Megan and Erik strive to make meaningful connections with their customers. For them, it's important their customers trust them as farmers and it's that connection that makes farming so special to them.

"Farming, and family farming, is important because it fosters that connection to nature and our 'food system,'" Megan says. "It is incredibly easy to distrust something you aren't directly involved in, but connecting with farming and farm families can help demystify it."

Through their farming operation, Megan and Erik aim to have a positive impact on their customers and their community as well.

"I hope we make a positive impact, both economically and emotionally," Megan says. "To provide a service or product that people love, but also a story that makes their faces light up because they helped us get to where we are. We all us the phrase 'thank a farmer' but we couldn't be here without wider community support."

The Barley Arch welcomes guests to the Alumni Gardens, off the Student Learning Commons entrance

Dalhousie Agricultural Campus home to new Barley Arch

At Dalhousie University Faculty of Agriculture, barley is more than just a grain. It symbolizes excellence in academics, leadership, research and innovation. It's an emblem of hands-on learning, new friendships and partnerships. It represents a beautiful campus where you can make a difference. As Dalhousie University celebrates its 200th year, the Faculty of Agriculture excitedly unveiled a new symbolic barley addition to its campus: the Barley arch.

"The Barley arch is symbolic on so many different fronts, especially this year, our 200th anniversary," explains Dean David Gray. "The shape of the arch mimics the sunrise in our 200th logo while the leaves of barley represent the integrity and commitment of what it means to be an Aggie," he adds.

The Barley arch is a 10-foot-tall arch that will frame the entrance to the Alumni Gardens, just off of the MacRae Library parking lot. The arch, which mirrors the design of the ever-popular Barley ring, was unveiled with a celebratory ceremony on May 10. The beautiful hand-crafted arch is a gift to campus from the Agricultural Campus Alumni Association.

"With Dalhousie University celebrating its 200th year, it was important for the Agricultural Campus Alumni Association to do something to celebrate the occasion, but would also resonate within our Agricultural Campus," says Audrie Jo McConkey, past chair of the Agricultural Campus Alumni Association. "The construction of a Barley arch is so fitting. The location of the new arch means it will be viewed and enjoyed by students, staff, alumni and visitors to campus. The Alumni Association is so proud to support this exciting project."

The Dalhousie Agricultural Students' Association (DASA) also contributed to the new arch.

The significant addition to campus was custom made by Ruben Irons, an artist blacksmith from Pictou, N.S. who has been creating and sculpting for more than 20 years. Ruben also constructed the arch framing the main entrance to the Alumni Gardens, a generous gift from the Class of '54 in 2009.

"I cut out all the leaves and pieces for the arch first," says Ruben. "I then hammer all the leaves hot on the anvil. Once everything is forged I weld it all together and grind it smooth. The last step is having it all sandblasted and painted."

In total, Ruben spent approximately 150 hours working on the Barley arch.

The arch arrived on campus in multiple pieces. The arch itself was in one piece with the leaves arriving as six separate pieces. The arch was welded to the footers and then the leaves were screwed onto the arch. The result is a beautiful 10 foot, hand-crafted design welcoming visitors to the Alumni Gardens.

Ariel view of the 63-foot blue whale at the Agricultural Campus.

Up close with the largest animal on Earth

It's certainly sad when learning of a whale's death, given they are some of the ocean's most majestic mammals. While no doubt tragic, researchers on Dalhousie's Agricultural Campus are looking for the silver lining.

Over a year after a 63-foot female blue whale, the largest animal species on Earth, was sighted floating off the coast of N.S., Dal's Dr. Gordon Price, Chris Harvey-Clark, Christopher Nelson and a team of volunteers are working to turn the loss into a learning opportunity.

With the help of a small army of eager volunteers, Price (associate professor) and Prof. Nelson (senior lecturer, Department of Engineering) of Dal's Faculty of Agriculture have been working tirelessly to preserve and degrease the bones of the blue whale to create a display that will be mounted at the university in a location to be determined.

Not only will the bones act as a public education piece, but the ultimate goal of the project is to develop a better understanding of the pathology of these creatures. The team is looking to better understand the conditions that may have led to the whale's death.

"Volunteers from across the region initially worked on the beach on the South Shore to conduct a necropsy and de-flesh the bones," says Price. "Coordinating with members of the Marine Animal Rescue Society and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the bones were transported to my field research site in Truro, the Bio-Environmental Engineering Centre, for composting."

Composting the bones

The researchers composted the whale bones to remove the grease, tissue and oils that are deeply embedded in the whale's skeletal structure so the bones can then be properly mounted and displayed. In addition to the thorough cleanse, the bones are being weighed, catalogued and archived digitally. The process of composting the whale bones is expected to take anywhere from two to three years.

Typically, this degreasing is done with toxic and harmful solvents that can impact human health through direct exposure or contaminate the environment. Price has developed a mix of feedstock materials to act as an effective biological mechanism to remove a large proportion of grease. In doing this, the compost that is left over can be used to benefit other agricultural practices.

"The whole point of the process is that once you are done with the degreasing stages of the bones, the remaining compost material is a nutrient rich stable amendment that can be used in agricultural soils as a soil conditioner or source of fertility," says Price. "The goal is any waste or leftover material is now converted into a valuable organic resource."

A second specimen

While Price and his team were working to preserve the blue whale bones, another whale carcass was made available to their research. The team received a North American Right Whale carcass as part of an initiative by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. The idea is to repeat the process on these

bones so they can be used at Moncton's Science Enterprise Centre.

"We are looking to develop a public education campaign related to the impacts that people have on the ocean environment," Price explains. "This starts with having students participate in activities preserving the remains and educating them about the life cycles and conditions of these creatures."

The three Dalhousie researchers also hope to develop a program to help communities deal with deceased whales.

"We hope to develop a composting protocol for communities where marine animals may wash up on the beaches. This could be part of a process to preserve the remains," says Price. "We also look to build displays within these communities as an educational centrepiece and local attraction."

Educating far and wide

With so many complex parts, the composting process for whale bones is certainly no small task. Looking to have as much help as possible and wanting to extend the educational aspect as far as they could, the researchers invited high school students from Cobequid Educational Centre's (CEC) Biology and Oceans classes to join in the process of removing the bones from the compost and identifying them.

So while a washed up whale carcass may seem like a heart-wrenching loss to some, the educational opportunity is not lost. Price and his team of volunteers will continue to work diligently to better understand how human activities are impacting these ocean creatures and educate the public to ensure life underwater remains viable for years to come.

Small ring with a big heart

Wide, yellow gold Barley ring.

It's not necessarily Convocation that students look forward to at the end of each academic year. While many students are saddened to move away from the Agricultural Campus, all look forward to one thing that will ensure they are a part of the Aggie family forever: the long anticipated presentation of the Barley rings at the Barley Party.

The Barley Party is an annual celebration for students who have purchased a Barley ring, the Agricultural Campus' widely recognized graduation ring. Wide, narrow, gold, stainless, ring finger, middle finger, no matter the style, the Barley ring symbolizes the end of an era and a welcome into the Agricultural Campus' alumni family.

While the Barley Party is most popular among graduating students, the tradition is becoming increasingly popular with past alumni as well, particularly those who have a child graduating. This past spring, classmates Ella Wood and Rebecca MacSwain received their rings alongside their mothers, Carolyn (MacQuarrie) Wood and Lynda (Ramsay) MacSwain, who were classmates in 1989.

"Something mom and I definitely have in common is our passion and our love for agriculture," explains Rebecca. "The Barley rings are something we will always have to show for that, and we were so excited to have the opportunity to receive them at the same time."

"My mom has been a very influential person in my life and she is the reason I decided to pursue a career in agriculture and

TOP LEFT: Edward (Class of '84) and Mollie (Class of '18) Pickard. BOTTOM LEFT: Lynda (Class of '89) MacSwain, Dr. Derek Anderson, honourary ring recipient and Rebecca (Class of '18) MacSwain. ABOVE: A very special moment for Carolyn (Class of '59) and Ella (Class of '18) Wood, as they open their ring boxes together.

study at the AC," adds Ella. "I am honoured to have shared this experience with her."

Mollie Pickard and father, Edward Pickard (Class of '84) also received their Barley rings together at the Barley Party.

While students look forward to the Barley Party the most, the rest of campus can't help but feel the excitement. Each year, the Alumni Association allows for an honourary ring to be presented. Honourary rings are awarded to individuals who do not meet the criteria to be eligible for a Barley Ring but who are extremely deserving of the honour. These individuals are ambassadors and supporters of the institution. They have made outstanding contributions to the Dal AC community and truly depict the characteristics of an AC alumnus. This year, the honourary ring was presented to Dr. Derek Anderson, adjunct professor, Department of Animal Science and Aquaculture, Dalhousie University.

Outsiders may see it as 'just a ring' but to Aggies, it's a small token to remind them of the memories and opportunities that came of their time spent at Dal AC. It's been recognized in countries all around the world and while it may just be a small ring, it certainly has a big heart.

Aggies in the Community

Honey was the highlight of our second chef-curated event, It's the Bees Knees, featuring the sweet nectar of local honey. Guests joined us in June, enjoying an exciting three-course culinary journey, as we tasted and experienced where our food comes from.

For recipes from the dinner and details on future Aggies in the Community events, visit dal.c/weareag

Campus Principal, Dr. David Gray with guest speakers from the dinner, Dr. Chris Cutler, Chef Ted, Dr. Bruce Rathgeber and Dr. Jim Duston.

Community Day 2018

Blue skies, hot sun and lots of smiles were ordered for Community Day in July. And they were delivered. It was another successful day for this annual event on the Agricultural Campus. Hundreds of visitors stopped by for four hours of fun and hands-on experiences all focused on agriculture.

Aggies in Calgary

A group of Aggies filled our infield suite during the chuckwagon races at the Calgary Stampede in July. It was an exciting evening and a great opportunity to reconnect.

Aggies at the Stampede

Class of '59 Reunion

Members of the Class of '59 celebrated their 59th reunion in July. The group took part in the campus' annual Community Day, enjoyed lunch in Jenkins and a tour of the Antique Farm Museum. The Class of '59 was the first class to experience life in residence at NSAC. Trueman House opened in the fall of 1957, as this group began their studies.

The Atlantic Agricultural Hall of Fame

Celebrating 50 years
1968-2018

The Atlantic Agricultural Hall of Fame celebrates the contributions of four individuals to the agriculture industry in Atlantic Canada. Producers, innovators, volunteers, scientists and business professionals are honoured for their role in shaping and influencing agriculture, with the impact of their contributions being felt locally, nationally and internationally.

Join us on
Thursday, October 18 at 1 p.m.
as we celebrate the 2018 inductees:

Robert Bourgeois, NB - Class of '81
David Coombes (1941-2018), NS - Class of '63
David (Allan) Ling (1946-2018), PE
Ron Taylor, NL

Induction ceremony to take place in the Alumni Theatre, Cumming Hall

Open House

Do you have friends or family members who are thinking about university? Encourage them to visit the Agricultural Campus on **Oct. 27** to get an inside look during our annual Open House.

Visit Dal.ca/connect for more information on our annual signature recruitment event!

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE

Alumni Pub

Nov. 10, 2018

For the second year, alumni and guests are invited to return to The Barn, for a night of dancing and socializing. The Barn will be open only for alumni and one guest each.

Dalhousie Agricultural Campus' Bicentennial Botanical Garden

Connecting communities

A single Black Ash was planted to commemorate the launch of Dalhousie University's Bicentennial Botanical Garden, Aug. 25, on Dalhousie's Agricultural Campus.

The Black Ash or 'Wisqoq' in Mi'kmaq, was designated as threatened under the Nova Scotia Endangered Species Act in 2013 and the Faculty of Agriculture has been working in partnership with Mi'kmawey Forestry as part of their conservation efforts.

Black Ash has always been important to the Mi'kmaw community who use the tree to make baskets, snowshoes, canoes and axe handles, and 2000 black ash seedlings are being housed in greenhouses on the Agricultural Campus.

"This is just one example of what makes our gardens so special," explained Dean and Campus Principal Dr. David Gray. "Specialist plant collections and unique features such as this Black Ash provide educational opportunities for our students and community members alike."

The Bicentennial Botanical Garden comprises 11 hectares of unique and diverse features including wide-ranging plant collections as well as the largest Rock Garden east of Montreal. Shade, herb and bulb gardens, a butterfly meadow, an apple orchard and more beautify the busy campus.

Named in honour of Dalhousie's 200th anniversary in 2018, the Bicentennial Botanical Garden is known as the Faculty of Agriculture's largest classroom providing many hands-on learning opportunities for students and researchers alike.

"It truly is our largest classroom, a living laboratory," explained Gray. "Our Plant Science, Horticulture and Landscape Architecture students are all provided hands-on learning and research opportunities in the garden as well as our Engineering students who provide hardscapes and other features that enhance our gardens and community spaces."

A testing ground for new plants, the Bicentennial Garden is a repository for more than 3,000 types of trees, shrubs and plants, many of them unique to this region. In the spring, more than 70 varieties of tulips will blossom.

"Our entire campus environment becomes a classroom of learning, conserving, sharing, growing and socializing," added Gray.

The Bicentennial Botanical garden received a Canada 150 Garden Experience designation last year in celebration of Canada's 150th birthday and is featured on the Nova Scotia Provincial Garden road trip.

To receive a Botanical Garden designation, the Faculty of Agriculture must be an Institutional member of the American Public Gardens Association and follow best practices in the management of its Botanical Garden, maintaining collections of plants for the purposes of public education and enjoyment, in addition to research, conservation and higher learning.

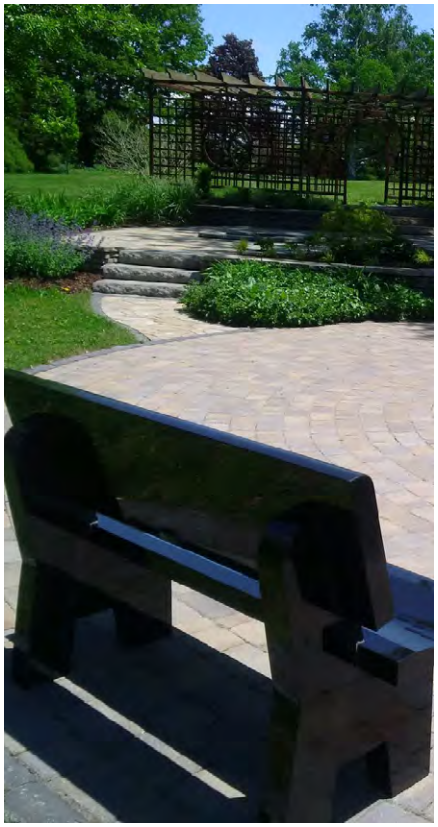
The Bicentennial Botanical Garden is open to the public and is staffed and maintained by professionals trained in their given areas of expertise while maintaining active plant records systems.

The Botanical Garden is at its peak throughout spring and summer and into the fall and visitors can identify plants through labels, guide maps and other interpretive materials.

Thank You From the Class of 1956

Class of '56 members have always credited the Agricultural Campus for not only jump-starting their careers, but also forging the strong bond they have maintained as a class over the years. Each year, the class gathers for a reunion to re-connect and reminisce, spending two to three days laughing about their memories from campus. At their 2017 reunion, the Class of '56 agreed to find a way to show their appreciation to the Agricultural Campus.

The result is a custom granite bench, generously donated by the class members. The bench is a special gift to campus and was installed in the Alumni Gardens during the summer of 2018.



Mélicious Chocolat

Mélanie Leclerc (Class of '04)

One could say Mélanie Leclerc has a bit of a sweet tooth, one that led her down the path of entrepreneurship. It was Leclerc's taste for high quality chocolate and her desire to do something different that led her to develop Mélicious Chocolat, a business venture she otherwise may not have pursued.

"The idea for Mélicious Chocolat came up quite a few years after completing my Master's degree at Dal AC," Leclerc explains. "I wanted to do something different."

Mélicious Chocolat is a small business based out of Leclerc's home in Truro that prides itself on being able to offer chocolate lovers a different chocolate experience. From smooth caramels to crispy pralines, Mélicious Chocolat proudly offers a variety of high-quality chocolate products using locally-sourced ingredients whenever possible. Bonbons and truffles are handcrafted in small batches using the highest quality of ingredients. Flavoured centres are enrobed in premium French dark and milk chocolate, bringing to life the tastebuds of those who are lucky enough to try it.

"People seem to like my chocolate," Leclerc smiles. "I find it so rewarding to see people's faces when they bite into one of my chocolates and they really enjoy it."

Leclerc grew up just outside of Quebec City. At the age of 16, she began her first summer job working at a small artisan chocolate boutique. It was there that she developed a taste for high quality chocolate. Following her passion for decadent treats, she attended classes at the Chocolate Academy in Montreal, a teaching and training academy that offers professionals and artisans the opportunity to improve their skills working with chocolate, explore trends and techniques, and discover new recipes.

"The courses at the Chocolate Academy were one or two-day courses," Leclerc explains, "I've taken six of them over the past few years. I learned about the chocolate crystalizing process, different techniques to temper chocolate as well as molding, framing, enrobing and decorating techniques. I learned how to make the centres, some of which I can reproduce in my kitchen, some I can't as they require ingredients or equipment I currently don't have."

While her time spent at the Chocolate Academy expanded her knowledge of chocolate, Leclerc also pursued a science degree at Université Laval in Quebec. It was after completing her Bachelor of Science in agriculture and plant science that she set her sights on Nova Scotia. After making the move to the East Coast, Leclerc enrolled in Dalhousie University's Faculty of Agriculture where she pursued a Master's degree in plant science, graduating in 2004.

"My first interest in coming to Nova Scotia was to work with seaweed and to improve my English," Leclerc explains. "Things didn't turn out exactly as I hoped but it was still a good experience."

While she didn't end up on the path she'd expected, Leclerc's time at Dal AC taught her the importance of critical thinking and problem solving. With those skills and many more, she now works as a research associate at Perennia, a government agency that works to help farmers, fishers and food processors be prosperous and profitable.

Although Leclerc's position at Perennia is full-time, she couldn't ignore her passion for creating quality chocolate. Wanting to be able to offer delicious specialty chocolates to her friends and family, she started Mélicious Chocolat after she completed her Master's degree. To build on her business skills, she has taken classes at the Community Business Development Corporation (CBDC) to expand her knowledge on basic business, accounting, marketing concepts, and more.

"I started to make chocolate for special occasions like Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, Mother's Day, and to sell to colleagues and friends," Leclerc explains. "It just kind of went from there."

While Mélicious Chocolat is still very small, Leclerc attends the Truro Farmers Market occasionally to sell her products. She also supplies chocolate to special events, most recently Dal AC's scholarship banquet last November.

"I've had my chocolates in Women's Day celebrations, weddings, and other special events," Leclerc says. "For Dal AC's Scholarship Banquet I prepared packages of two chocolates filled with flavoured centres, smooth caramels, creamy ganaches, crispy pralines, and more."

Looking towards the future, Leclerc would like to create a space for Mélicious Chocolat that is solely dedicated to her chocolate production. While this is her goal for the future of her business, she recognizes the challenges of operating such a small business. Expanding would require significant capital investment, which can be risky for a small business.

"I would love to have a space where I can create new recipes and work more efficiently," Leclerc says. "A lot of time goes into recipe and product development. I try different things, see what people buy, and then I adjust. Right now the business is home-based and expansion would require significant capital investment. The challenge is to develop a realistic business model that could support the investments needed to take the business to the next level."

For now though, Leclerc will continue making chocolate, simply because it's what she loves to do.

BLUE & GOLD AWARDS 2018

Join us as we honour deserving alumni
at our annual awards dinner.

November 1
6:30 p.m. Jenkins Hall

Young Alumni Achievement award
Mr. Christopher Oram (Class of ’11)

Volunteer of the Year award
Ms. Rayanne Frizzell (Class of ’03)

Distinguished Alumni award
Mr. John Tait (Class of ’66)

Space is limited, so register early.
Contact Alisha.johnson@dal.ca / 902.893.6022

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