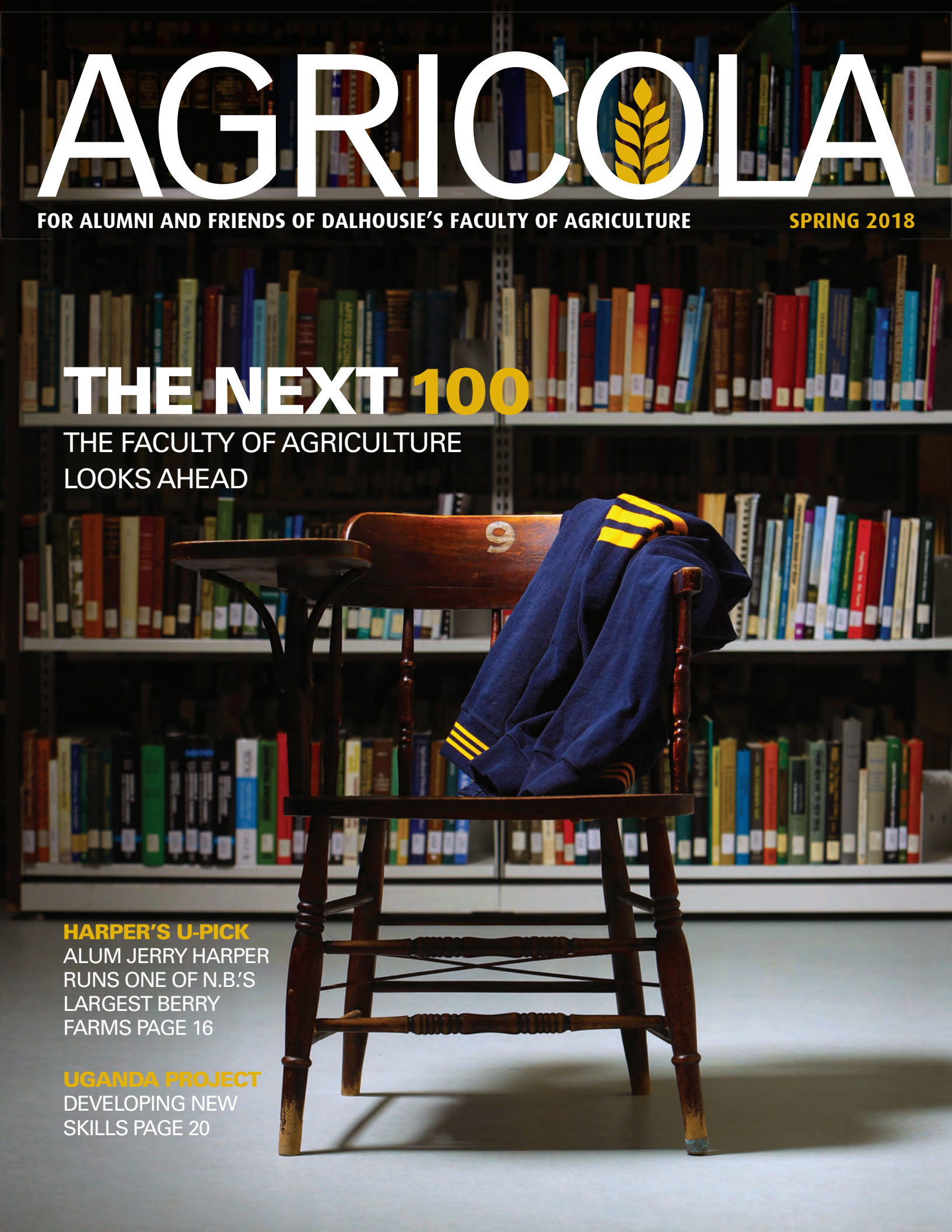
AGRICOLA

FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF DALHOUSIE'S FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE

SPRING 2018

THE NEXT 100

THE FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE LOOKS AHEAD



HARPER'S U-PICK
ALUM JERRY HARPER RUNS ONE OF N.B.'S LARGEST BERRY FARMS PAGE 16

UGANDA PROJECT
DEVELOPING NEW SKILLS PAGE 20

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SPRING 2018

CONTENTS

FEATURES

The Next 100 12
Harper's U-Pick 16
Dal AC to Offer PhD Program in Agriculture 18
New Skills Development Project in Uganda 20

EVENTS AND REUNIONS

Class of '07 & Class of '56 22
Aggie Night at the Bearcats 23
1000th Barley Ring 23
Blue & Gold Awards 24
Royal Agricultural Winter Fair 24
Distinguished Alumnus Award ... 25
Dean's Receptions 26
Homecoming 2017 26
Cmmunity Skate 26

Letter from the Editor 4
Dean's Message 5
IN THE NEWS
John Higgins Memorial Garden 6
In Memory 7
The Atlantic Agricultural Hall of Fame 8
We Love an Aggie Wedding 8
Founder's Day 2018 8
Opportunities in Canadian Agriculture: A Panel Discussion 8
LOOK WHO'S TALKING - Evans Estabrooks ('62) 10
RESEARCH - Dal AC Researcher Brings Expertise on Unique Soil Mapping System to Atlantic Canada 11
HOMECOMING 2018: Save the Date 31

AROUND AND ABOUT

Pursuing Her Passion
Julie Vermeer ('13) 27
A Worthwhile Journey
Nicole Cox ('12) 28
PEI Horse Farmers Recognized
Ken ('65) & Teresa ('66) Mellish ... 29
The Right Choice
Sam Bourgeois ('11) 30

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Alisha Johnson

Editor, *AGRICOLA*
Alumni Relations, Dalhousie Agricultural Campus

I'm excited to sign off on this edition of Agricola and share the issue with you. You may have noticed that the publication is later than normal landing in your mailbox. We've changed our cycle a bit, to better reflect what's happening on campus. Going forward, you will receive a new Agricola every March and September. We hope you continue to enjoy reading each issue.

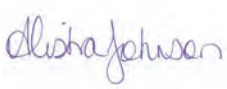
Dalhousie University is celebrating 200 years in 2018. While we at the Agricultural Campus were not part of Dalhousie's last 200 years, we are certainly part of the future together. It's also important to not forget Aggies have been earning Dalhousie degrees on the Agricultural Campus since 1986. With that in mind, there's lots planned, both by the central campus and the Agricultural Campus to celebrate this special 200th milestone. Agricultural Campus alumni and friends are encouraged and invited to participate in as many activities as possible, as we mark this occasion together. We have an exciting year ahead!

In this issue, you will read about exciting things happening, specifically on the Agricultural Campus. And not just for the next year. The Agricultural Campus has big plans for the future. It's a very important and exciting time to be involved in agriculture!

We will soon be embarking on the Coast to Coast tour with Dalhousie, as part of the 200th celebrations. Alumni receptions will be held in every province, across Canada. We are really looking forward to seeing as many Aggies as possible in every city, starting in Vancouver in late April. Watch for your invitation for the city nearest you. We really hope to connect with you!

Read on to learn about all of our events, as well as what's happening with fellow Aggies and campus news. As I said, we have a lot going on! I hope you enjoy this issue and welcome any comments or feedback.

Hope to see you soon.



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Dr. David Gray

Dean, Faculty of Agriculture
Principal, Dalhousie Agricultural Campus

"Over a century ago, Canada's Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier said that the 20th century belongs to Canada. Well, I firmly believe that the 21st century will belong to agriculture."

The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture

Though we are Dalhousie's newest faculty, the Faculty of Agriculture has a long history—more than 100 years of world-class education and research that's intertwined not just with Dalhousie University, but Nova Scotia and the entire Atlantic region and we are proud to combine this history with Dalhousie as we celebrate 200 years in 2018 and enter the dawn of our third century together.

It has been said that in the next 50 years alone we will need to produce as much food as has been consumed over our entire human history! This is a stunning fact and one that drives home how important agricultural education and research is to the coming century.

With agriculture currently representing seven percent of Canada's gross domestic product, the need for high-level research of farming, food production and agricultural sustainability is at an all-time high.

To help address this challenge, the Faculty of Agriculture will be offering a new doctoral degree in Agriculture Sciences—the first degree of its kind in Atlantic Canada. This PhD program will allow students to pursue advanced-level knowledge in agriculture and undertake independent research to generate new knowledge, both of which are imperative to the future of sustainable farming.

The Faculty is also leading a new skills development project in Uganda. This exciting new collaboration with the Bukalasa Agricultural Training Institute (BAIT) the East African country's top agricultural college, will see the Faculty work closely with BAIT and industry partners to develop a new competency-based curriculum largely focused on practical skills. Another example of helping others to help themselves.

As we celebrate throughout 2018, we hope to elevate an understanding of the breadth and depth of agriculture within our community.

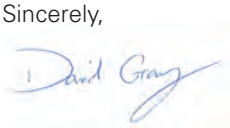
In 2018, we will highlight our contributions to teaching and research with the launch of a $25-million biomass energy plant and steam distribution system. This biomass co-generation project will set an example of best practices and embrace a sustainable source of energy as we continue to move toward carbon neutrality. This new facility aligns well with a number of our research areas in renewable energy and will provide opportunities for us to put research into practice.

In September renowned animal scientist, autism advocate and Dal honorary degree recipient Temple Grandin will return to campus. Dr. Grandin will be hosted by the Department of Extended Learning and will be speaking to students and the broader community on issues of animal welfare and behaviour.

We will also officially name our Botanical Garden in 2018. An essential part of the Faculty's teaching and learning and boasting more than 26 acres, the garden was the recent recipient of a "Canada 150 Garden Experience" designation. Our Botanical Garden is our largest classroom and we look forward to celebrating with our community on August 25th.

I hope to connect with many of our alumni during our Coast to Coast tour with stops in Vancouver, Calgary, Ottawa and many more. Keep posted for your personal invitation to connect with us in your home community over the next several months.

Sincerely,



Dr. David Gray

John Higgins Memorial Garden

John Higgins Memorial Garden
Inset: Commemorative plaque

After five years of planning and planting, a beautiful addition to the Agricultural Campus was opened in October 2017: the John Higgins Memorial Garden, located within the Alumni Gardens.

The space was previously designed by the late John Higgins, an instructor at the former NSAC and completed by Agricultural Campus staff, students and volunteers, in his honour. This tiered, paved space includes a decorative steel pergola, made possible by donations from the Class of '75. The steel structure replaced a wooden one, which was designed by John himself.

John Higgins was a familiar face on campus, as a professor of the Landscape Horticulture Technology Program from 1978 until 1998. The program drew students from all across Canada and further, training students through classroom theory and practical outdoor experience- sometimes in questionable weather. John was known to tell students, "This will toughen you up for the workplace!"

Former student, Jackalyn Darling agreed John's words paid-off, "He sure toughened me up. Good thing, because I worked for him for 14 years!"

Laziness and tardiness were not tolerated by John. Everyone was expected to work hard, regardless of the weather conditions. "I remember tree planting labs in a hailstorm, pruning labs in the rain and conducting a site analysis in a snow storm. We did not have time to wait for good weather- the curriculum couldn't wait," Jackalyn said.

John Higgins is remembered as one of those rare people who could use both sides of his brain simultaneously. He could design a complicated deck design, whizzing through deck joist span tables, draw a sketch of it and teach it all at the same time! He loved plants just as much as his hardscapes.

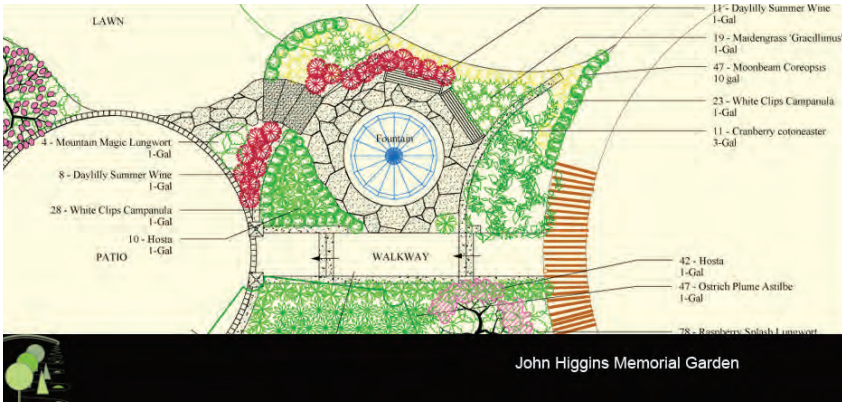
"He had a particular love of weeping trees, curved cedar hedges, sugar maples and fashioning herbs and fuchsias into standards," said Jackalyn.

John's contributions to the landscape trade went beyond teaching. In 1996, John became a founding member of the Atlantic Association of Landscape Designers (AALD), whose membership includes practicing landscape designers and companies and anyone with an interest in landscape design and horticulture. John led the organization to develop one of the first Landscape Designer Certification programs in Canada. To date, the AALD remains very active and hosts regular workshops and garden tours.

AALD member and treasurer Peggy Wright, says John was a huge asset to their trade. "The influence John has had on elevating landscape design and promoting good design in the Atlantic Provinces during his career at NSAC and beyond, has been immeasurable."

When John retired from NSAC in 1998, he started his own landscape design and consulting company and oversaw the development of the beautiful Fox Harbour Golf Course and Spa in Wallace, NS. When that project was complete in 2001, he became the instructor of the Landscape Design and Maintenance Program at the New Brunswick Community College in Woodstock, New Brunswick.

John passed away in 2006. Several years later, the AALD began the process of designing a memorial to honour his achievements.



John Higgins Memorial Garden

"It was challenging to finalize a design with over a dozen creative minds and still end up with a cohesive design that represented what John stood for and loved," said Ellen Ruddick, AALD chair.

But design it they did. In the spring of 2014, the garden began its development on the site within the Alumni Gardens.

"I remember one Sunday in October planting bulbs in the pouring rain and saying John would be very proud of us," says Jackalyn.

The hardscape was installed first and over the next three years' shrubs, perennials and dozens of bulbs were planted–all varieties John favoured.

Pavers and plants were donated by generous individuals and garden centres across the Maritimes. Staff and students of the DAC assisted in between member visits.

The entire project was a true testament to John's ways. Countless people came together to work hard, donating time, product and money to create the beautiful space. The result, a unique place for visitors to enjoy, a backdrop for future weddings, graduations, special events and a place for people to come and remember John.

Written with excerpts provided by Jackalyn Darling

Class of '75 members Brian Crouse, Carol Versteeg and Darwin Carr attended the official John Higgins Memorial Garden opening. The Class of '75 raised funds to replace the former wooded pergola, designed by John, with a new steel version.

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.

Clarence Cox	**1940**
Allan MacKenzie	**1943**
Bernard Parker	**1946**
Angus Gillis	**1947**
David Johnston	**1948**
Frank Calder	**1950**
Vernon McCully	**1954**
Carl Levo	**1956**
Donald Bowlby	**1960**
John Chisholm	**1962**
Eric Georgeson	**1971**
Lawrence Marshall	**1972**
P Gilliatt	**1972**
John Taylor	**1975**
Sheilah Jones	**1978**
Debbi Levy-Kay	**1986**

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

2017 INDUCTEES L TO R: Keith Barrett, David Dickinson, Richard (Dick) Oram and Joseph Brennan

The Atlantic Agricultural Hall of Fame

Three of the 2017 Atlantic Agricultural Hall of Fame inductees were Agricultural Campus alumni:
Joseph Brennan ('74)—NB
David Dickinson ('63)—NS
Dick Oram ('78)—NL
Also inducted was Keith Barrett—PE

We love an Aggie wedding!

Chris and Kayla (Arsenault) Oram's wedding, in August 2017, seemed to have doubled as an Aggie reunion. The wedding took place on their farm, Mark's Market, in Wooddale, NL.

BACK ROW, L TO R: Brydon Cooper ('10), Thomas Teakles ('11), Chris ('11), Kyle MacRae ('10), Paul Dunphy ('76), Richard Oram ('78), Roger Jefford ('74) and Randy Holm ('02). MIDDLE ROW, L TO R: Jenn Eustace ('09), Ashley Bennett, Kayla ('11), Colette Wyllie ('10), Walter Arsenault ('71) and Amanda Stuckey ('02). FRONT ROW, L TO R: Becky Coates ('11), Michelle (Hickey) Dyment ('12).

L TO R: Dr. Garth Coffin ('60), NSAC campus principal 1997-03, Dr. David Gray, Dr. Richard Huggard ('56), former deputy minister of agriculture and Dr. Les Haley ('58), NSAC campus principal 1989-96.

Founder's Day 2018

We had some special guests join us to celebrate 113 years of agriculture on campus, February 14. All four of these gentleman have made significant contributions to campus, helping to shape the great place the AC is today.

Opportunities in Canadian Agriculture: A Panel Discussion

Dalhousie Agricultural Students' Association (DASA) hosted a dynamic panel discussion in January. The panel members, which included some of Atlantic Canada's top thought leaders in the field, discussed the future of Canadian agriculture.

L TO R: Immediately before the panel discussion began: Chair, Rural Caucus, Member of Parliament for Tobique-Mactaquac, TJ Harvey ('02), Member of Parliament for Sydney—Victoria and Chair of the Standing Committee on International Trade, Mark Eyking ('80), DASA President, Jeremy Stroud ('18), President and CEO, Bonnefield, Tom Eisenhauer and Campus Principal, Dr. David Gray.

Evans Estabrooks (Class of '62)

Evans Estabrooks grew up on a self-sustained farm with woodland, dairy, butter production and small fruit crops, including blueberries and strawberries. After graduating from the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, Evans completed his B.Sc.(Agr.) at Macdonald College and his M.Sc. at Guelph.

Evans worked in Horticulture Extension in ON and NB before moving to AAFC Fredericton Research Station to carry out fruit crop research. Retiring at an early age, Evans started an agricultural consulting business. The business specialized in horticultural crops production and pest management. He operated the business for more than 15 years.

Evans was president of the NSAC Alumni Association in the late 1990's and also held various offices with the New Brunswick Institute of Agrologists (NBIA) and the Agricultural Institute of Canada. He was awarded the Distinguished Services to New Brunswick Agriculture Award by the NBIA in 2003.

Since full time retirement, Evans has learned to play golf and the ukulele. He has also spent his time writing a book about the first ten years of his life growing up on a small farm, *Haydays.*

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?

The Agricultural Campus is an attractive, compact campus with small classes and a nice size student population. This was a desirable feature when I went to the AC and still continues. A low instructor to student ratio leads to more successful students, on a campus with diverse education and research programs. A good balance between theoretical and practical education continues to produce high in demand graduates. The AC continues to be welcoming for rural residents of Atlantic Canada and beyond.

What needs improving?

Updates to education and research facilities would be great. Despite a high level of support for students through scholarships and bursaries and a good level of support from industry, the AC should push for even higher levels of support. There are still many deserving students who need financial help. As a small contribution to improve this situation, our family established the Estabrooks Family Scholarship, this past year, to reward scholarly efforts while considering financial need.

When you returned to campus for Homecoming in 2017, what did you notice as the most significant change?

I would say the most significant change is the new environmentally friendly heating plant, which heats most of the present faculties on campus. Although it is not the most obvious change (mostly buried underground), but could be the most significant to help keep overhead costs lower now and into the future.

That being said, I would say the most obvious change to the landscape is the removal of the feed storage silos down at the Ruminant Animal Centre.

As a horticulturalist I also must mention the improvements that I saw in the various beautiful gardens. Campus gardens are food for the eyes and are healthy for the students, staff and visitors.

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?

Twenty years from now we will see upgrades to education and research facilities, as well as other Dalhousie faculties using our facilities and grounds. Some Dalhousie faculties that are very cramped for space in Halifax may be compatible with the AC. Proper planning must make sure that all of the open space and research plots are not removed from our campus. Future buildings may have to go higher rather than out, to avoid using valuable open space. Satellite research and teaching facilities should be secured now for future needs.

Dalhousie University is proudly celebrating 200 years in 2018. Although Aggies can't relate to the whole history, we are certainly part of the future. Do you have any comments?

While Dalhousie celebrates 200 years, The AC will celebrate more than 100 years in support of agriculture in Atlantic Canada and beyond. Both Dal and AC have a great history of achievement, but they cannot rest on past achievements alone. Past achievements can open doors of support from the community, but our society has many problematic issues requiring answers both in the short and long term.

Celebrate, but plan for the future education and research needs.

The Estabrooks Family Scholarship

The Estabrooks Family Scholarship was established by Evans and Lois Estabrooks, in 2014, to support students with financial need attending the Faculty of Agriculture. Earnings from the Estabrooks Family Scholarship endowment supports one or more students enrolled in the Faculty of Agriculture on a full-time basis in the Bachelor of Science (Agriculture) program, majoring in Plant Science. The recipient must have attended high school in Atlantic Canada, have a demonstrated financial need and have achieved a GPA of 3.00 in the previous year of study.

Dal AC researcher brings expertise on unique soil mapping system to Atlantic Canada

As a unique soil mapping system consistently gains popularity across Canada, a new researcher at Dalhousie University Faculty of Agriculture is thrilled to be able to bring his expertise on the subject to Atlantic Canada. With the ever-growing need to better understand the world's soil resources, the field of digital soil mapping (DSM) is rapidly increasing. Dr. Brandon Heung, an assistant professor in geospatial informatics, primarily focuses his research on digital soil mapping and is excited for the field to become more widely recognized across Canada.

"Although the field of digital soil mapping has been very active around the world over the last 25 years or so, it has really started to emerge in Canada over the last 10 years," Brandon explains. "I think that there are many opportunities to do digital soil mapping research in Canada and the upcoming years are going to be very exciting."

A soil map is a geographical representation of soil types and properties, such as textures, organic matter, and depths of horizons. There are a number of uses but soil maps are used largely by farmers, land users and policy makers. Digital soil mapping is essentially a method of creating soil maps using a number of computerized methods to better understand the characteristics and variability of soils. A combination of soil science, statistics and geographical information systems (GIS), a computer system that calculates data related to positions on the Earth's surface, is used to create DSM's. These precise calculations generate accurate DSM's that can be used for land evaluation, spatial planning, agricultural extension, environmental protection and much more.

"Maps of soil types and their attributes can be used for a whole host of different applications such as precision agriculture, forest resource inventory, carbon monitoring, soil assessments and so forth," Brandon says.

Conventional methods of soil mapping saw soil scientists taking aerial photos of land and using a number of manual tools in the field to create a soil survey. Now, these time-consuming methods have been replaced with digital methods, making soil mapping much more time-efficient and accurate.

"DSM takes advantage of the advances in computing power, GIS software, statistics and the availability of digital datasets like satellite imagery, drone-acquired data, climate models and more," Brandon says. "I honestly think that in the next five to seven years Canadians should start to see national soil mapping products. Those maps will be crucial inputs for hydrologic, climate and land-use models in the future."

Born and raised in Vancouver, Brandon began his academic journey at Simon Fraser University. He completed his B.Sc (Hons.) in 2011 and later received his PhD in April 2017. Since the completion of his PhD, Brandon has been working as a post-doctoral fellow with Natural Resources Canada at the Great Lakes Forestry Centre in Ontario.

Although now conducting his research at Dal AC, Brandon has many ongoing projects across the country under the broad theme "Digital Soil Mapping Across Scales." At the farm level, Brandon is involved with a precision agriculture project with the University of Saskatchewan. This project uses drone-acquired Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) data, a surveying method using pulsed laser lights to create 3-D image maps.

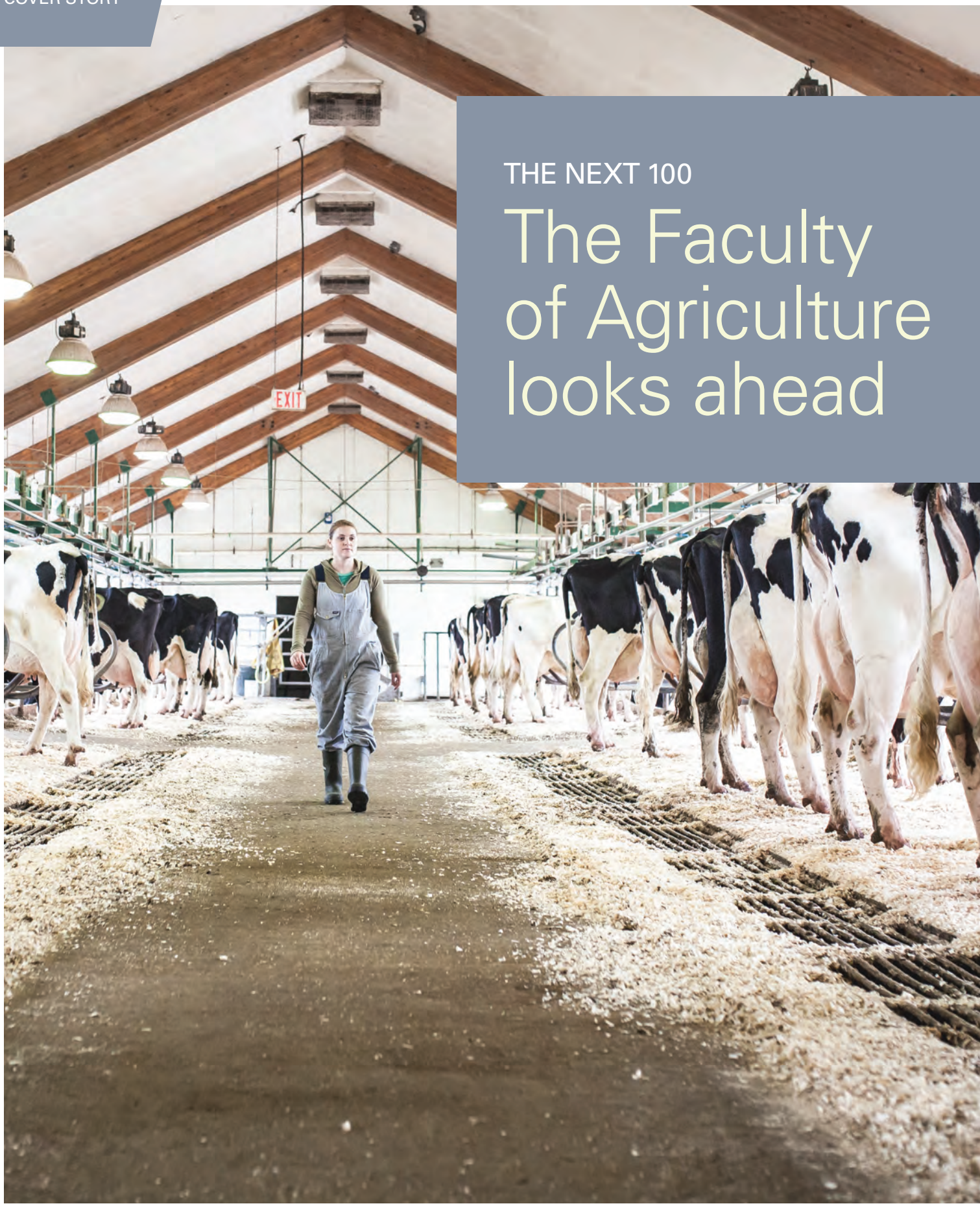
Brandon also has ongoing projects in BC (Simon Fraser University and BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations) where he works with colleagues to develop and test various mapping approaches for provincial-scale mapping of soils. They recently completed maps of soil classes and organic carbon stocks and are hoping to transfer some of these methodologies to Atlantic Canada in the near future. Additionally, Brandon contributes to the forested sector through the Great Lakes Forestry Centre and Natural Resources Canada to develop DSM techniques for forestry activity inventories in Ontario. Finally, he works closely with the Canadian Digital Soil Mapping Working Group, a network of mappers from various federal and provincial agencies in partnership with researchers across a number of academic institutions, on a national-scale DSM initiative.

"Through my educational background, I've gained a real interest in the diverse landscape that Canada has to offer and having an appreciation for how the climate, geology, vegetation, and soil all interact together," Brandon says.

With his extensive knowledge and experience, Brandon looks to expand DSM within Atlantic Canada by beginning to refine all the soil surveys using DSM techniques. He also hopes to continue developing ways of producing DSM's for agricultural and forested landscapes. As for his new position at Dal AC, Brandon is excited to share his passion with students and faculty on campus.

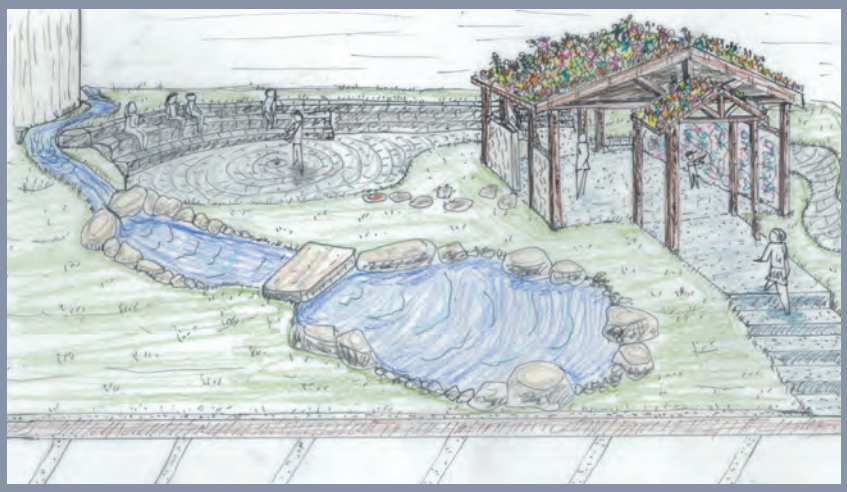
"I really enjoy collaborating with others in developing projects and also having the academic freedom that allows me to pursue my own interests," Brandon says. "I am also very excited to have the opportunity to supervise graduate students and help guide them through their research projects."

Brandon hopes that DSM will become even more popular among students, he hopes to help happen. "Given the demand for people that know how to use GIS for DSM and other environmental modelling applications, I am looking forward to the opportunity of developing academics programs to that regard."



THE NEXT 100

The Faculty of Agriculture looks ahead



Construction is underway for campus' new outdoor classroom – a tiered, outdoor teaching space for student from all disciplines, carved into the centre of campus.

When Ashley (Shepard) Coffin ('07) was a student at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, one of the things she cherished was the intimate small-campus atmosphere, and the close bonds among students. After earning her degree in Animal Science, Ashley got a job on campus, then left to work in industry, taking a position with Shur-Gain in Sussex, NB.

When Ashley came back in 2015 as a program manager in Extended Learning, NSAC had become the Dalhousie University Faculty of Agriculture – and Ashley was thrilled to find how strong those bonds remained. "I really felt that connection with the campus and the people here," she says. "Campus still very much feels the same as always: the same friendly, small community, family feel. It was like I never left."

In fact, she says the sense of collegiality may be even greater, since it now extends to her Dalhousie colleagues as well. "Dal's been great to us. My colleagues on the Halifax campus have been fantastic."

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the founding of Dalhousie University, a milestone few Canadian universities have reached. One of the themes for the celebrations is "The Year of Belonging" – emphasizing diversity within the university and Dal's connections to its communities.

It's an apt slogan for the Faculty of Agriculture too. It may not have been part of Dalhousie for the university's first 200 years, but it's a key part of its future, looking ahead to a third century in an era in which agriculture will be increasingly important.

The five years since the Dalhousie-NSAC merger have seen significant investments on campus and have provided an opportunity for the two formerly separate institutions to share the best each has to offer.

"People often say, 'Well it's five years since Dal took over the Agricultural College,' and I'm very quick to clearly respond, 'No, it's five years since NSAC and Dalhousie merged,'" says Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and Campus Principal, Dr. David Gray. "A takeover only goes one way, whereas a merger allows the flow and sharing of information in two directions. It's like pouring two liquids into a beaker and watching them mix."

That mixing has produced a new doctoral program (currently accepting students who will begin their studies in fall 2018), increased opportunities for multi-disciplinary research, and a wave of exciting campus improvements, some specifically tied to the Dalhousie bicentennial.

Dalhousie's AVP, Communications and Marketing, Catherine Bagnell Styles, says the bicentennial is an opportunity "to say a huge thank you to the people who have helped you along the way: the community, the alumni and to lay out the welcome mat so people feel the celebration is happening with the community." The university asked each faculty to produce its own plans for bicentennial projects. "We gave them some funding and helped them with tools to build their plans and they are as unique as the faculties themselves. We've had a tremendous amount of engagement," she says.

In terms of dollars, the biggest infrastructure program at the Faculty of Agriculture this year is the construction of the campus's new biomass heating plant. The $24-million project will see the replacement of the aging wood-fired boiler with a co-generation system will burn a wider range of biomass products, and will include a turbine to produce electricity at the same time. In addition to producing clean energy and a more reliable source of heat, Dr. Gray says the plant is a major step towards "our aspirations for this campus to be completely carbon neutral."

A new feed barn, replacing the one lost to fire in 2015, is also in the works, with construction scheduled to begin this spring. Instead of simply replacing the old barn, Dr. Gray says the

The existing biomass facility on campus, soon to be replaced thanks to a substantial project worth $24.2 million.

new feed centre will "incorporate a new space: an agriculture interpretive centre. Local groups, school groups—pretty much anyone will be able to come onto our campus and learn what agriculture in Atlantic Canada is. There are many misconceptions. Many people have no idea of the skills, the high tech tools, or the diversity of sectors that exist within agriculture in Atlantic Canada. It's going to be a very hands-on centre and allows us the opportunity to fulfill our responsibility to do community education."

Once the feed centre is done, Dr. Gray says the next phase, still a few years away, will be a new dairy facility.

While the biomass plant may be the most expensive current project on campus, it won't be as visible in students' daily lives as a couple of other new projects: the long-awaited learning commons and a new outdoor classroom, to be inaugurated as part of the Dalhousie Bicentennial Botanical Gardens. The commons provides an area for students to study and socialize in an informal environment. "Students are really looking forward to having that space on campus," says Ashley, who, in addition to her role in extended education is also a faculty champion for the bicentennial, and a residence life don. "They can gather in a common location, work on projects, or just relax. It's going to provide more of a sense of involvement outside the classroom atmosphere."

When it comes to the Bicentennial Garden, Dr. Gray says, "We have beautiful gardens across the campus, but we made the decision the they really need to be viewed and branded as a botanical garden." An outdoor classroom right in the centre of the campus, behind the Collins Building, and an alpine house featuring a unique environment for the study of rare plants are being added to the garden this year.

The gardens and outdoor classroom won't just benefit students and faculty, but also the community at large, says Dr. Gray. "We are seeing ourselves as a destination. Over the last five years we've seen more tourists visiting our campus, and we encourage the community to visit, we are an open campus."

As Ashley lists off some of the key events for the coming year [such as a September visit from Dr. Temple Grandin, including a public talk, student forum, and meet and greet] she keeps returning to the theme of welcoming alumni and community members to the celebrations. "We encourage alumni to be a part of all of the events and to join all festivities, whether in Truro or Halifax," she says.

Beyond the bicentennial, Dr. Gray says he's been pleased with the way Dalhousie has adopted some former NSAC practices and incorporated them across the university. "Dal looked at NSAC, identified good practices and adopted and implemented them across the university. And that made a big difference. We were being seen as an asset to the Dalhousie family." He points to two very different initiatives as examples—one academic and one social. On the social side, Dr. Gray says, "The president picked up on our strawberry social and adopted it for the whole university. It's good fun, and a great opportunity to get together as a campus, reflect on the hard work that's been done, thank people, and be together as a group." He adds that, from an academic perspective, "We had an academic grading scale NSAC had used for many years. Not long after the merger, Dalhousie wanted to review the grading scales across the university as a whole, looked at them all, and adopted ours."

Catherine says she is impressed by the range of faculty bicentennial projects and how they ensure "we are really inclusive across campus."

After the January kick-off for bicentennial events in Halifax (the university offered free transport for those in Truro who wanted to attend), Catherine says the message she heard repeatedly was, "I feel proud."

That's the key message Catherine wants everyone to take away from the bicentennial. Not just pride in the school, she says, but "I want people to feel proud of their association with the school. And that remains true for all, whether or not a faculty has been part of Dalhousie for five years or for decades."

HARPER'S U-PICK

Gerry Harper (Class of '57)

When Gerry Harper ('57) talks about his small raspberry farm that has been in the family since 1915, a smile spreads across his face. The twinkle in his eyes in unmistakable. Gerry truly loves what he does.

Gerry is the owner and operator of Harper's U-Pick, one of the largest raspberry farms in Southeastern New Brunswick. Located along the Petitcodiac River, Harper's U-Pick proudly cultivates a variety of fruits for public picking. Although predominantly a raspberry U-pick, Harper's offers gooseberries, elderberries, black currents, and more.

"We added a few rows of raspberries in the early '90's" Gerry explains. "I became more interested in raspberries and kept expanding. We added irrigation and then kept adding a few more rows. We got a bit carried away there!"

While the farm has changed dramatically over the years, it has been operating on the same area of land since 1915 when the Harper family moved there. George Harper, Gerry's grandfather, originally purchased part of the land where he operated a small farm market. He sold cucumbers, summer savory, and cabbage, which he processed to sauerkraut.

"He had a few cows on the farm as well," Gerry explains. "The farm was something I got attached to. I spent all of my summers there with him. I have a lot of memories there."

Gerry took over the farm 18 years ago. Over the years, it has expanded and production has been steadily increasing. The greatest challenge, Gerry notes, was the high water levels on the property. The land sits on a number of natural springs which made farming the land difficulty. With careful planning and proper drainage installed, raspberries began to thrive.

"Some people told me I was crazy," Gerry laughs. "But after a couple of years they took off. We've added some elderberries but they haven't really taken off yet."

Although the farm today operates primarily as a U-pick, some berries are harvested and sold to wineries. Others are sold to vendors at the Farmer's Market. The rest are left for picking. People from near and far enjoy the picking season at Harper's U-Pick.

"We're located in a predominantly English speaking area," Gerry explains. "About 60% of our pickers are Acadian people. It's a big tradition with them for making desserts. We get a lot of Newfoundlanders as well, people who visit every year on holidays and staying with relatives. I meet quite a few interesting people!"

> "Some people have their cottages, some people have their boats or their yachts—this is my cottage, this is my yacht"

Gerry Harper's raspberry u-pick attracts families year after year.

While the hobby farm hosts a variety of berries, it's the experience that they offer to pickers that Harper's U-Pick prides itself on. With a small store on the property decorated with interesting antiques, shaded picnic tables, a grapevine-covered gazebo, and multiple beds of beautifully kept flowers, Harper's U-Pick ensures that their property brings a smile to the faces of those who visit.

"What gives me the most pride is having people come in and enjoy their experience," Gerry explains. "Seeing them come in smiling. My daughter works hard tending to the flower beds. We try to make the place look attractive and want to give customers a good experience."

Harper's U-Pick is Gerry's pride and joy, although it was not always his primary career. After earning a diploma in engineering at NSAC in 1957, Gerry worked for Farm Credit Canada for 30 years as the district manager for NB and NL. His farm was simply a pastime. Now well into his retirement, Gerry works on the farm full time, not to make a living but simply because he enjoys it.

"Some people have their cottages, some people have their boats or their yachts- this is my cottage, this is my yacht," Gerry smiles. "I just really enjoy it. The pickers are sort of like a family, seeing them again every year."

It's not just the pickers though who Gerry considers family. Gerry operates Harper's U-Pick alongside his good friend Frank. Frank, also retired, has become a staple on the farm overseeing the store, the scales, and helping out where her can. During the summer in peak season, Gerry will hire one other employee to help out around the farm. During the off season, while there are no plants to tend to, Gerry admits there is still lots to do.

"We don't work on the farm every day, we'll take a few weeks off here and there," Gerry explains. "There's always something to fix. We go down to the store and pick away at things. Frank always has the coffee going in the morning and two or three guys will come in and we'll sit and chat for a while over coffee. It's like our own Tim Hortons, we've got everything except the donuts!"

Looking towards the future of the U-Pick, Gerry admits he isn't sure what will happen. His kids are not directly involved with the small hobby farm and Gerry isn't exactly sold on the idea of selling the farm.

"There's general wear and tear on some things," Gerry says. "The posts are getting old and will soon need to be replaced. I don't really want to sell to anyone because they would be facing a pretty big job. I know it's not good planning but we'll keep it up the way we are right now. I'm not sure, maybe we'll just wind it down someday."

For now though, pickers can look forward to visiting Harper's U-Pick during the summer months. Plants have been ordered for next year and Gerry looks forward to seeing the returning pickers and hopefully some new faces. Along with his passion for his small family hobby farm, it's all part of what makes Gerry's job so enjoyable.

For season open dates and recipes using Harper's U-Pick products, visit harpersupick.com

Dal AC to offer PhD program in Agricultural Sciences, first of its kind in Atlantic Canada

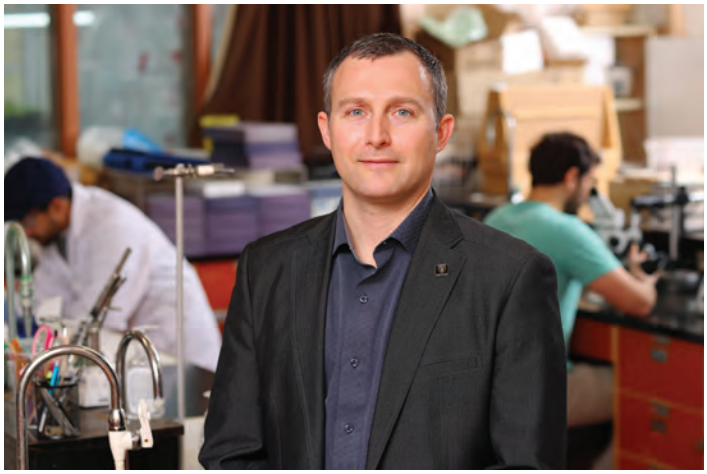
Dalhousie University's Faculty of Agriculture will soon be offering a doctoral degree in Agriculture Sciences—the first degree of its kind in Atlantic Canada. A program of this nature is expected to create many opportunities for Dal AC and its students and is ambitiously aiming to start accepting students as early as May.

Department of Plant, Food, and Environmental Sciences Professor and Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies, Dr. Chris Cutler, played a part in developing the program and is thrilled over what this program will mean for Dal AC.

"Production of PhD students is a key metric in terms of measuring the quality and output of any university," Dr. Cutler explains. "This is a tremendous opportunity that will enhance the teaching and research at Dal AC."

The PhD program will allow students to pursue advanced-level knowledge in agriculture and undertake independent research to generate new knowledge, both of which are imperative to the future of sustainable farming. With agriculture currently representing seven percent of Canada's gross domestic product, the need for high-level research of farming, food production, and agricultural sustainability is at an all-time high.

"Feeding the planet is going to be a massive challenge in the years to come," Cutler explains. "The provincial and federal



Dr. Chris Cutler with masters student, Alexandre Loureiro and lab manager, Deney Augustine Joseph.

governments have both recognized that agriculture is a critical component of the Canadian economy, with great potential for growth from coast to coast. Introduction of a PhD program in agriculture at Dalhousie will help ensure our region stays at the forefront of delivery of top-notch agricultural knowledge, innovation, and personnel."

One of the ultimate goals of the PhD program is to attract and train high quality students. Dal AC hopes to build upon its current graduate program and draw PhD students who are looking to dig deep and address more complex issues around the environment and sustainability, food systems production, economics, or policy development. The program will focus on advanced studies in Animal Science, Plant Science, Soil Science, Agricultural Economics, Agribusiness, Agricultural Technology, and Food and Environment. Along with producing high quality students, the PhD program will enhance the reputation of the university.

"The development of this program is a natural part of the evolution of our faculty," Cutler explains. "Dal AC is widely recognized for our Bachelor, Diploma, and Masters programs, and this is a natural step to the next level of expertise. Establishment of a PhD program at Dal-AC will strengthen the reputation of the Faculty of Agriculture, which will in turn should help with attracting and retaining research dollars and high calibre faculty members and students."

Although it is a new program to Dal AC, the Faculty of Agriculture is no stranger to hosting PhD students. Faculty members have been serving as senior advisors for PhD students for over two decades. There are currently 15–20 PhD students on campus registered through other departments, and even other universities, but Dal-AC serves as their "home" and core training facility. With a beautiful, functional, modern campus, Dal AC and its facilities are well-equipped for PhD student research. By way of the new PhD program, Dal AC hopes to attract 50 or so PhD students and see the overall number of graduate students on campus double to around 150 within the next ten years.

"We want to attract the best in the world," Cutler explains. "We have a lot of excellent students already studying at Dal AC, but we hope that our PhD program, which is unique to the region, will really make exceptional students from far and wide take notice and consider our campus for their doctoral degree."

Although program implementation is on the horizon, the journey to developing the program was a long one. The process began a few years ago with the notion to finally offer a PhD program unique to the Faculty of Agriculture. Individuals from different departments and disciplines across Dalhousie University came together to form various committees to see the project through. Substantial documents had to be created, then refined, trimmed, revised, and reviewed. Cutler notes that while it was important to assure there would be adequate instruction, demand, expertise, and funding for the program, they also had to ensure that there would be no competition within Dalhousie's other faculties.

"Agriculture is a multifaceted discipline so we had to look at the risk of taking away from other faculties," he explains. "Agriculture covers so many areas- engineering, biology, environment, public policy, so we looked to create a program that focuses on our strengths in agricultural sciences."

With the program approved by both the Senate and the Board of Governors, the last and final step is approval from the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission. It is the hopes that this final approval will be received this semester and the program can begin accepting students in May.

From Truro to Bukalasa

Faculty of Agriculture leads new skills development project in Uganda

It's been nearly a week since she came back from Uganda and Suzanne Johnson is still jet-lagged. Suzanne was there as part of a team laying the groundwork for an exciting new international collaboration with Bukalasa Agricultural College, the East African country's top Agricultural Technical Vocational Education and Training Institute.

Over the next three and a half years, the Faculty of Agriculture will work closely with BAC and industry partners to develop new competency-based curriculum focused on practical skills. The effort is part of the five-year, $100 million US Uganda Skills Development Project, funded by the World Bank, to overhaul education and deliver training programs geared to meeting the needs of industries, including agriculture. The funding is in the form of a World Bank loan administered through the country's Ministry of Education and Sport.

"It's a wonderful project. Dalhousie is a partner in building tomorrow's Uganda," says distinguished humanitarian Narinder Sharma, who was hired by the Faculty of Agriculture to oversee an advance team preparing for the launch of the project. Sharma, who spent decades working for UNICEF (including five years in Uganda), says agricultural education "has always been a challenge" there. The population of 40 million is mostly rural, with subsistence farmers making up most of the workforce.

"It really is a transformational process," Johnson says. "Bukalasa will become the leading agricultural college, and the intention is for them to develop the skills and capacity to train others, so smaller colleges and vocational technical institutes will come to them to learn."

Between the 1970s and 1990s, Uganda established a network of colleges and farmer training centres. One of the goals was to increase food security. But over the last two decades, an increased focus on university education saw many of these colleges converted to universities. Uganda went from seven agricultural colleges to just two. Graduates of the universities were interested in white-collar jobs and had little appetite for going out into the fields. Meanwhile, food security remains a challenge in a country where more than 70% of the population are small-scale farmers.

Photos taken during a recent visit to Bukalasa Agricultural College in Uganda.

"Now we're finding there's this labour shortage. There's a gap in a lot of industries where they don't have youth that actually have the skills to facilitate the work that's needed within the farming industry," Johnson says. To meet that need, the country is refocusing on Technical Vocational Education and Training Education.

And that's where Dalhousie comes in.

A team currently in Uganda includes Faculty of Agriculture members Lana Bos of Extended Learning and Joy Galloway-Jones, who manages co-op and internship programs. The Uganda Skills Development Program is meant to address real-world needs. So before creating curriculum, the Dal team needs to thoroughly understand those needs. So far, their research has been well-received. Speaking in late February, Johnson says, "This week we are in the process of meeting a lot of different stakeholders in the country and doing a labour market consultation process. We're looking to evaluate what industry believes is most critical, and where there's the greatest opportunity for growth. We think probably there's going to be one program in plant science, one in animal science, and another in food production."

The project is multi-faceted though, extending far beyond curriculum, to operations and physical assets too, helping BAC become a Centre Of Excellence.

"We will be looking at developing greater leadership, reviewing their operations and business plans, looking at their strategic initiatives and aligning them to the larger national strategic objectives and regional objectives, especially within the East African corridor and with the African Union," Johnson says. "We're also responsible for providing guidance in engineering, materials and equipment because in support of the new curriculum the institution itself will be revitalized."

The plan is to build several new buildings (plans for possible new library, laboratories, and an information technology and communications centre are in the works), buy new equipment, and develop new farming units. "The farm will be updated with new, modern equipment in those areas that will mirror industry requirements, and we will look at ways in which we can also bring industry into the classroom or field." Johnson says.

In addition, the Dal team will be setting up a small business incubator modelled on the Cultiv8 program in Truro, which is funded by Dal and the provincial government.

Once the new curriculum has been developed, a core team of 15 instructors from Bukalasa will come to Truro to update their skills. Then they'll be able to train others to deliver the educational program more widely. Ultimately, 1,500 of the 2,000 students at Bukalasa annually should "directly benefit from the new program, whether that be through one of the diploma programs, a shorter certificate course, or the entrepreneurship program," Johnson says.

Johnson, an engineer by training, provided consultation on the college's buildings, constructed by the British nearly a century ago. "I have to tell you, the British built really strong infrastructure. The structures are quite stable, and we will incorporate the new infrastructure with the existing buildings."

Development projects can go awry when they're implemented by outsiders who don't understand local conditions and challenges. That shouldn't be an issue here.

"One of the things that's innovative about this project is that it really is a twinning," Johnson says. "We work in complete partnership and solidarity. We're there to assist and guide and train the administration and staff of the institution in order for them to lead the project."

Sharma met extensively with government and industry stakeholders in Uganda last November, "getting everybody on board, making arrangements with the ministry and the World Bank, and making sure the Dal faculty knows the situation on the ground at the college in Bukalasa and in the country context: What does the private sector look like? The agricultural sector as a whole? What is the chamber of commerce doing?"

One thing came across very clearly, he says: "People are really excited about this project."

REUNIONS

Class of ’07 celebrates 10 (and a half) years

Members of the Class of ’07 planned to celebrate their 10-year reunion in 2017. But when life got busy, they pushed the celebrate to February 2018. Organizers encouraged classmates to return to campus for the 10.5-year celebration during the Rick Russell Woodsmen competition weekend.

Melissa (Sellars) McKenzie, Margaret Graves and Amy Hill take in the Woodsmen competition.

Class of ’56 Reunion

Keeping with their commitment to meet every year, the Class of ’56 once again gathered for a reunion in September 2017. The group spent several days touring around the Valley, taking in various sights. Plans are already underway for their 2018 reunion, to be held in NB.

Danny Stewart, Doug Byers and Doris Seaman

EVENTS

Aggie Night at the Bearcats

Aggies cheered on the Truro Bearcats, from the sky box, as they played the Amherst Ramblers, February 16.

Rocky posed with future Aggie, Todd and his mom, Katie (Atkinson) Wilson ('10).

Cheering on the Bearcats

1000th Barley Ring

Ring Days, an annual event encouraging graduating students to order their Barley Ring, marked a special milestone in October 2017. The 1000th Barley Ring was ordered! Lucky number 1000 was ordered by Bri Carkner, a fourth year student, from Ontario. Bri's ring was paid for by the Alumni office and a celebration was held in the Dalhousie Agricultural Students' Association lounge. A special video, highlighting the production of the Barley Ring, was also unveiled.

Dr. Gray and Alumni Association board member, Colette Wyllie ('10) present Bri Carkner (middle) with the 1000th ring.

FUN FACTS:

Since launched in 2010, over 1000 Barley Rings are worn by alumni around the world.

We've heard of at least eight Barley Rings that are worn as wedding bands.

The Barley Ring was designed exclusively for AC alumni by local artisan, Donna Hiebert. She came up with the initial concept while walking her dog from her studio in Halifax, NS. Donna continues to make every Barley Ring, by hand. She is now based in Hamilton, Ont.

Norman Goodyear (Class of '00) and former faculty member was the first alumnus to order a Barley Ring, immediately after the ring was launched in 2010.

Brent Pearson (Class of '91) and son, Dallas (Class of '15), were the first father/son to receive their Barley Rings together in 2015. This started a tradition. Each year, mothers/fathers ask to attend the Barley Party to also receive their rings with their graduating son/daughter.

The oldest alum to order a Barley Ring was Arnold Blenkhorn (Class of '41). Members of the Advancement team travelled to Mr. Blenkhorn's home in Southampton, NS, to personally deliver his alumni symbol.

EVENTS
Blue & Gold Awards 2017

The annual Blue & Gold awards banquet was held on campus November 2, 2017 honouring four alumni who have distinguished themselves through outstanding service to their alma mater, their communities, Atlantic Canada and beyond.

An awards dinner was held to recognize these alumni for their exceptional achievements in the areas of volunteerism and contribution to the agricultural industry.

Distinguished Alumni Award:
Dr. Les Haley ('58)
Young Alumni Achievement Award:
Mr. Sam Bourgeois ('11)
Alumni Volunteer of the Year Award:
Ken ('65) and Teresa ('66) Mellish

Our 2017 awards recipients, LTO R: Ken & Teresa Mellish, Les Haley and Sam Bourgeois.

An alumni family Brian ('75) & Liz ('78) Crouse, Ken & Teresa, Debbie ('76) & Dwane ('75) Mellish at the awards dinner.

Royal Agricultural Winter Fair

We travelled to Toronto in November to once again attend the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair.

Alumni living in Ontario, Matthew Vair ('08) and Breagh Ross ('15) participated at the Guidance Councillor's Symposium, representing the Agricultural Campus.

We also hosted a number of alumni in a skybox during the Royal Rodeo.

ABOVE: Aggies at the Royal Rodeo, L-R: Debbie Beech-Whitman, Kevin Whitman ('81), Karen ('79) and Paul Michaud. LEFT: Future Aggie, Hannah, with parents Meredith (Leier) and Matthew Vair, both Class of '08.

EVENTS
Distinguished Alumnus Award 2017
Dr. Leslie Haley (Class of '58)

You could easily say Dr. Les Haley's career has gone full circle.

Dr. Haley began his post-secondary education at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College. As a student, Dr. Haley had a great passion for being involved and advancing the campus. During his second year of studies, Dr. Haley was involved with the Students' Council, serving as secretary-treasurer. In 1958, he graduated with a Degree Course Diploma.

Dr. Haley went on to continue his studies, majoring in Poultry Science, at the Ontario Agricultural College and received a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture from the University of Toronto.

After a brief appointment with the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Marketing, Dr. Haley began graduate studies at the Ontario Agricultural College specializing in Genetics and Animal Breeding. Dr. Haley completed the requirements for the M.S.A. and enrolled in a doctoral program at the University of California in Davis, California, continuing to specialize in Genetics.

Once receiving his Ph.D, Dr. Haley returned to Canada and began teaching at the University of Saskatchewan. However, it wasn't long before Dr. Haley headed back east, becoming assistant professor with the Department of Biology at Dalhousie University in 1970.Dr. Haley was particularly interested in the way science was taught to undergraduates and participated with other faculty members in the Audio Tutorial Approach to teaching Introductory Biology.

Dr. Haley's research activities included investigations on the genetic variations of oysters, lobsters and mussels. He served as a student advisor, supervised graduate students and had a key role in developing the Honours Program in Marine Biology.

During his eighteen years at Dalhousie, Dr. Haley had a variety of responsibilities associated with the Department of Biology, university administration and the School of Education. program.

In the fall of 1989, Dr. Haley returned to his roots. During Autumn Assembly, Dr. Haley commenced responsibilities as the ninth principal of the Nova Scotia Agricultural College.

One of his first concerns was to increase student numbers and a task force from the faculty was appointed and given this challenge. The group was successful and under Dr. Haley's leadership, enrollment reached nearly 1000 students, a trend that still holds today. Dr. Haley encouraged the development of an aquaculture option in the science degree program and the addition of new space for aquaculture instruction and research. Today, the program is the only one is Canada offering a B.Sc. Agr. with a major in aquaculture. It is well recognized across the country by industry. The program has grown internationally, attracting students from Bolivia, Norway, China and beyond.

He was one of the collaborators who developed the co-operative Masters program in Agriculture with Dalhousie. Dr. Haley promoted expansions in research activity and graduate enrollment. Related to this was the encouragement and development of several industry Chairs of Research.

As principal, Dr. Haley represented the campus in several roles including the Confederation of Faculties of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine, the Canadian Agricultural Research Council, and the Senate of Dalhousie University.

The magnitude of Dr. Haley's contributions to NSAC can be easily observed today by a stroll across campus. It would be hard to miss the name of our Animal Science building—the Haley Institute of Animal Science and Aquaculture. More commonly known as, "Haley". In recognition of Dr. Haley's service to NSAC, the building was named at a ceremony held February 14, 2002.

After leaving such a significant mark on campus and significantly advancing the institution, Dr. Haley was appointed deputy minister of the Department of Agriculture and Marketing. Dr. Haley held this position for two years, during a period of reduced funding for provincial departments. Dr. Haley was instrumental in consolidating the department and regrouping the delivery of several services. In 1998, Dr. Haley retired from Province of Nova Scotia.

Dr. Les Haley has clearly distinguished himself in his area of expertise, bringing honour to the university. He is undoubtedly a positive role model for the Faculty of Agriculture and agriculture, making him a very deserving recipient of the Faculty of Agriculture's Distinguished Alumnus Award for 2017.

EVENTS
Dean's Receptions 2017

Lots of Aggies connected at our annual Dean's Receptions, held this past fall. Dr. Gray hosted a reception at alumnus David Bowlby's operation, Dempsey Corner Orchards in Aylesford, NS. Dr. Gray also greeted alumni at Poley Mountain, NB and Charlottetown, PEI.

ROW 1: Dr. Gray with Caitlin Congdon ('12), Alyson (Carter) Vandergrift ('13) and Alana Bent ('17). ROW 2 LTO R: David Bowlby Sr. ('57). Eileen Beaton ('14) and Thomas Harrington ('14). Alumni Association Chair, Audrie-Jo McConkey ('01), DASA Vice President, Ella Wood ('18), Jennifer MacLeod ('03) and Christina Stewart ('97). ROW 3 LTO R: Agricultural Campus, Alumni Relations, Alisha Johnson and Nelson Ball ('56). David Bowlby ('87), Stephen Ells ('89) and Agricultural Campus, Development Officer, Cathrine Yuill. Bill Seaman ('56), Audrie-Jo McConkey ('01) and Grant Colpitts ('61).

Homecoming 2017

October 12 – 14, 2017 marked Homecoming on the Agricultural Campus. Alumni and friends from across the country visited campus to celebrate and take part in the festivities. Guests enjoyed a Food Truck Fest, took in College Royal and special athletics events, participated in Rocky's Run, enjoyed breakfast in the MacRae library with the dean and more.

Classes of '62, '67 and '72 celebrated their reunions during Homecoming. Members of each class participated in Homecoming activities while also opting to have special outings as a class.

Hungry guests enjoyed Food Truck Fest during Homecoming.

Community Skate

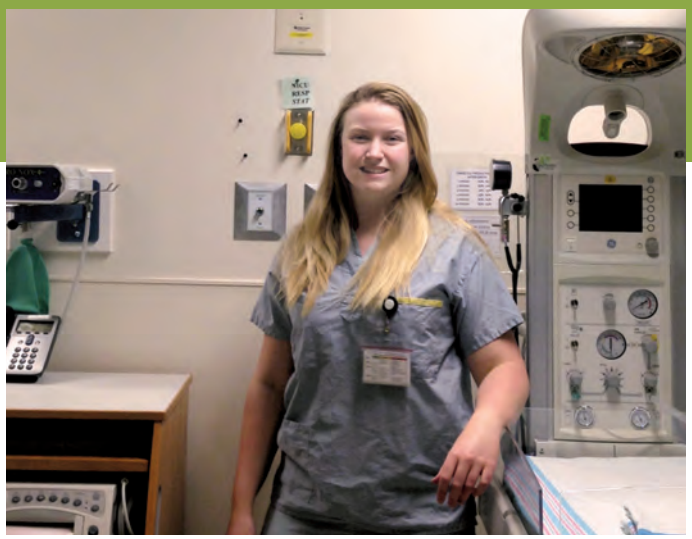
The Agricultural Campus kicked off Dalhousie's 200th anniversary with a Community Skate at the Truro Civic Square on January 1.

Despite the frigid temperature, staff, alumni, friends and community members joined us for snacks, hot chocolate, activities, music and prizes.

Baillie and Jean ('90) Lynds braved the cold temperature for a New Years Day skate.

Pursuing her passion

Julie Vermeer (Class of '13)



Growing up on a dairy farm and pursuing a career as an obstetrician-gynecologist (OB/GYN) may seem like two very different paths. But to Julie Vermeer, the two aren't all that different.

"I feel that I come by it pretty honestly, since dairy farming is all about pregnancy and lactation after all!" Julie laughs.

Julie ended up in a medical career not by chance, but through her persistence, hard work, and simply pursuing what she is passionate about. Growing up on a dairy farm in St. Andrews, NS, Julie was exposed to agriculture throughout her life. When it came time for her to choose a post-secondary institution, she was naturally drawn towards Dal AC. Julie had visited the Ag Campus many times through 4-H and was interested in everything the campus had to offer. Although she wanted to study at Dal AC, Julie did not have her career path set in stone.

"When I graduated from high school, I didn't know what I wanted to do but I knew I wanted to go to university and further my education and keep as many opportunities and options open as possible by working hard," Julie says.

So how did she go from studying agriculture to medicine?

"I started seriously considering medical school in my third year of my undergrad at Dal AC," Julie explains.

A passionate sailor, Julie had been sailing on the tall ship *Picton Castle* on their fifth world circumnavigation when one of her shipmates had an accident while exploring a remote island in the South Pacific. Fortunately, he made a complete recovery but it was then that Julie began considering medicine as a career choice.

"This was the catalyst for my decision to pursue medicine, although it took me a couple years of self-reflection to realize it." she explains.

Following her newfound appetite for medicine, Julie began to explore her options. She spoke with friends, classmates, family and professors before deciding to apply for medical school.

Now a graduate of University of Ottawa's Faculty of Medicine, Julie is pursuing her residency in obstetrics and gynecology, a five year program through the University of Saskatchewan in Regina. For Julie, a career as an OB/GYN is exactly what she was looking for.

"It wasn't until February 2017 that I truly decided that OB/GYN was my calling," Julie says. "Although I had been mulling over it in my mind for about a year. For me, it's about the patients I get to work with, the moments I get to share with families and the hands-on aspect of surgery."

While Julie is truly happy with her career choice, it certainly didn't come without its fair share of hard work. For Julie, medical school at University of Ottawa was much different than studying science at Dal AC. One of her biggest challenges, and something she urges other graduate students to be aware of, was having to re-develop her study habits.

"I had to learn to study every day instead of just before the exam," Julie explains.

Rather than taking multiple courses in different areas each semester, medical school at the University of Ottawa was one continuous learning experience with each lecture taught by content experts with different teaching styles and objectives. That meant only writing one exam at the end of each semester but that exam covered a vast amount of material.

"Medical school is often compared to trying to drink from a fire hydrant because there is so much material to learn," Julie says. "I had to change my study strategy because the strategies I had used at the AC couldn't keep up with the volume of material I had to learn."

Although the road to medical school was not an easy journey, Julie has embraced every obstacle and seized each opportunity which has led her to where she is now. Looking forward to the future, Julie's goal is to complete her residency program. She ultimately hopes to aim to focus her services on smaller rural communities.

"By the end of my residency, I hope to have developed the skills required to be a competent and confident rural OB/GYN. I hope to be able to provide services to women in smaller communities, where they have support systems in place, instead of requiring travel to larger centres for care," Julie says.

To future graduates, Julie also emphasizes the importance of networking and seizing opportunities. Julie credits the journey that brought her to medical school to seizing any opportunity that was presented and the support of family, friends, classmates, and professors. Hard work, commitment, dedication and passion, along with an interest in trying new things helped her realize and obtain her dream.

"I encourage everyone to follow their passions, embrace new opportunities that are presented, and to apply themselves 100%," Julie says. "It might not seem relevant right now, but if you're passionate about it, you never know what you will learn or where it will take you."

A worthwhile journey

Nicole Cox (Class of '12)

For some, deciding which career to pursue can be a real challenge. This wasn't the case for Nicole Cox, a 2012 graduate of Dalhousie University Faculty of Agriculture, who now works happily as an industrial engineer.

For Nicole, math and sciences were always a strong point in school. Like many high school students though, it wasn't until Grade 11 and 12 that she started seriously considering her career choice. As she learned more, Nicole realized that engineering was something she would likely excel at.

"I honestly hadn't considered engineering until talking with my parents," Nicole explains. "They suggested I look into it. I did some research on the field and thought civil engineering would be interesting."

Civil engineering is an engineering discipline that focuses on the physically and naturally built environments, such as roads, bridges, canals, pipelines, railways, and more. Civil engineers deal with the design, construction, and maintenance of these features. Nicole had set her sights on pursuing civil engineering, until she visited an Open House at Dal AC.

"I went to an Open House at Dal AC and two women in industrial engineering talked to me a bit about it," Nicole explains. "They sold me on taking this discipline instead. I would get to interact with people on a more consistent basis, and it interested me more."

Industrial engineers work to improve the performance of complex systems of people, technology and information. This includes examining workplace processes and working to eliminate waste of time, money, energy and other resources that do not generate value.

"It hinges on the concepts of removing unnecessary waste from a process, looks at continuous improvements and increase efficiencies, which all peaked my interest," Nicole explains.

With her newfound passion, Nicole began her journey as an industrial engineer at Dal AC. She enrolled in the two-year engineering diploma program and graduated in 2012 with a diploma in engineering. After her time at Dal AC, Nicole made the decision to continue her studies at Dalhousie University in Halifax. The engineering diploma program offers students the option to complete an additional two to three years at Dalhousie's Halifax campus, earning them a degree in engineering.

"You get more industrial engineering specific courses the further you go into your degree," Nicole explains. "Thus, there are more opportunities for discipline specific jobs when you graduate because of the continued education."

Nicole now works in Ontario as an Engineering Analyst at a third party logistics company for Shoppers Drug Mart. She is part of the team that develops and implements labour standards and optimizes warehouse layouts. While she's using all of the skills she learned through her degree, Nicole explains it wasn't always an easy journey.

"I'd definitely have to say that getting my degree was the greatest challenge," Nicole says. "However, school also taught me many of the skills of which I use on the job, like multi-tasking, dealing with stress and deadlines, and even how to work with people you may not get along with."

Although her studies were challenging at times, Nicole credits a large portion of her success to the professors at Dal AC. The open-door policy at Dal AC allows students to approach professors with any problems they encounter. Small class sizes also ensure students get one-on-one interaction with professors during class time.

"Dal AC is a great school with its small class sizes and attentive professors," Nicole says. "My favorite thing would have to be the professors I had. I graduated almost six years ago and my friends and I still laugh when we quote some infamous lines from the profs. They had an open door policy and were always eager to help students."

Growing up in Onslow Mountain, Nicole was drawn to Dal AC because of the proximity it is to her hometown. Only 10 minutes away, Nicole was able to live at home and save money while pursuing her studies. Despite living off campus, Nicole still made the most of her time at Dal AC and got involved in extracurricular activities. Nicole played on the Women's Varsity Basketball team for the two years she attended Dal AC, allowing her to meet new people and practice her time management skills.

"It was a huge commitment and definitely forced me to manage my time between practices, games and school," Nicole explains. "It allowed me to meet people in other programs that I probably wouldn't have otherwise met. My favorite part was getting to play the game I enjoy with women who I grew to be very close with."

With some practical engineering experience under her belt, Nicole is now working towards earning her Professional Engineering designation. This means that with a certain number of hours worked as an industrial engineer, Nicole is eligible to write an exam allowing her to practice professional engineering and take responsibility for her own work. She also hopes to work towards getting her Project Management designation and move back to Nova Scotia.

"Now that I've led projects, I can see myself moving to more of a project management role in the future if the opportunity arose," Nicole explains.

Reflecting on her post-secondary journey, Nicole is confident that she made the right choice pursing industrial engineering.

PEI horse farmers recognized for volunteer work

Ken ('65) & Teresa ('66) Mellish

Standing on 400 acres of property and surrounded by 27 Warmblood horses, a result of their own elite breeding program, Ken and Teresa Mellish reflect on how exactly they came to be where they are today.

"Someone basically asked me to buy a dairy farm, I said yes," Ken smiles. "Then I wanted a horse to ride and thought I'd breed my own. Big decisions sometimes just happen; they aren't always well thought out!"

Ken (Class of '65) and Teresa (Class of '66) Mellish are the proud owners of New Perth Farms. Located in the beautiful rolling countryside of Prince Edward Island, New Perth Farms is an established breeder of dressage horses. Dressage, often described as ballet for horses, is a highly skilled form of horseback riding where horse and rider are expected to perform a series of predetermined and often challenging, movements. Competitions are held from amateur through to the Olympic level. Ken and Teresa pride themselves on producing horses who are eligible to compete at high level dressage competitions. While their focus is predominantly on producing dressage horses, they also produce top quality jumping horses.

Ken and Teresa purchased their current property in 1980 and until 2002 milked 40 purebred Holstein cows and produced grain and forage as feed for livestock. Although the farm still continues to produce forages, in 2002, they sold their quota and converted the dairy barns to horse barns. They imported high quality breeding horses from the Netherlands which became the foundation of their breeding stock.

"The fact that we breed horses makes our farm a little different," Ken explains. "It's not a common enterprise."

Today, the farm is home to 27 New Perth owned Warmblood horses. Their successful breeding program saw and continues to see, a number of New Perth horses earning national and international championships all across North America. While Both Ken and Teresa are active on the farm their daughter also plays a role in training the horses. Dr. Martha Mellish (Class of '03) works full time as an equine vet at the University of Prince Edward Island's Atlantic Veterinary College. It's Martha who Ken and Teresa credit for peaking their interest in Warmblood horses. The farm is also home to "Perth Pumpkin Patch" which is run by Ken and Teresa's son, Angus (Class of '98) and his wife, Shauna (Class of '98). Their two daughters, aged seven and 10, also help out.

"Although our children aren't involved directly, we work with them indirectly," Teresa explains. "We wouldn't be doing this if it wasn't for them! This was a wonderful place to raise our son and daughter and it's a wonderful place for our grandchildren to come."

Although the farm keeps Ken and Teresa busy, they are both active volunteers with a number of local and global initiatives. Most notably, Teresa is a founding member of Farmers Helping Farmers (FHF), a non-profit organization that helps build sustainable agriculture communities in Africa.

In 1980, Teresa was involved with an international farm consultation on P.E.I. It was during that conference that a hurricane swept through the island of Dominica, destroying entire banana crops of visiting farmers at the conference. A number of Islanders raised money to help the farmers replant. As a result of that effort, a number of Islanders expressed interest in travelling to developing countries to get a firsthand feel for farming and its challenges. Teresa applied and received funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for $250,000 to go towards farming projects in Kenya and Tanzania. This was the first project under FHF.

Since that inaugural trip, numerous Islanders have travelled to Kenya and have raised money to help create sustainable agriculture practices. The organization works with one group for five years and then, through a joint exit strategy, moves on to another.

Today, FHF remains dedicated to their grassroots fundraising. The organization also remains partnered with the University of Prince Edward Island and has just launched a new partnership with Universities Canada. Along with helping to develop farming practices in Kenya, FHF has expanded to provide tools to develop rural entrepreneurs, lunch programs to ensure Kenyan school children receive lunch at school, and resources for farm women. As volunteer coordinator (Teresa) and chairman of the project committee (Ken), Ken and Teresa continue to travel to Kenya once a year to volunteer and pay visits to the many close friends they have developed in Kenya.

It is Ken and Teresa's passion for farming and dedication to helping those in need that led to the development of FHF, which has gained extraordinary provincial, national and international acclaim. Over the past 37 years FHF has raised over $10 million, including support from CIDA, to help farm families and was the impetus for the duo to receive the 2017 Alumni Volunteer of the Year Award.

"It's satisfying work," Teresa explains. "I hope that the organization will continue to grow and develop when we are no longer involved."

The right choice

Sam Bourgeois ('11)

After graduating from NSAC in 2011, it took Samuel Bourgeois one year to realize that the grass isn't always greener on the other side.

"Farming is a lifestyle in some ways but it is also a business and a choice," Sam explains. "My choice was made when I left the farm and worked for a year where I thought the grass would be greener and at the end of the day that's where I realized that I wanted to go back to the farm."

It was this choice that eventually led him to the title of Young Alumni of the Year at Dalhousie University Faculty of Agriculture's 2017 Blue and Gold Awards. The Blue and Gold Awards honour alumni who have distinguished themselves through outstanding service to Dal AC, their communities, Atlantic Canada and beyond. The Young Alumni of the Year award recognizes the outstanding achievements of Faculty of Agriculture alumni aged 40 and younger. Alumni are recognized for outstanding achievement that may have earned them regional, national or international prominence through service to humanity in their profession or volunteer organizations, through community service or the advancement of knowledge and service to the Faculty of Agriculture.

A third generation farmer, Sam operates Belliveau Orchard alongside his father, Robert (Class of '81) and sister, Sonya located along the picturesque Petitcodiac River Valley in Memramcook, New Brunswick. The farm, bought by Sam's grandfather in 1967, has been in operation since 1932. It is home to over 70,000 apple trees planted on nearly 100 acres, 90 acres which are currently in production and 10 acres not yet in production. Each year, more trees are planted to ensure the farm can keep up with market demand and to replace old orchards. They also operate a packing facility that sees apples from growers in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island.

In the family for 50 years, Belliveau Orchard has 45 full time employees and an additional 40 employees during the busy summer season. In addition to growing apples, the farm also produces sweet cider, hard cider, juice, and award-winning wines. In addition to employing members of the community, the farm is a popular agro-tourist destination. The farm offers a fall U-Pick, tours and an on-farm café and market. During harvest season, Belliveau Orchard serves over 7,000 guests, each week, at their café.

"Our farm is unique because of our location," Sam explains. "We are in the middle of the Maritimes so trucking, ports, and much more are all within a couple of hours. Also, for our agro-tourism, we are within an hour radius from about a population of 200,000 people. We always make sure we have something new every year on our agro-tourism side to be able to stay competitive and in touch with our customers."

Growing up farming with his family, Sam chose to study at Dal AC to expand his knowledge of farm management. He completed a diploma in enterprise management (farming) and after a year of working elsewhere, returned home to New Brunswick to farm with his family. Sam explains that his choice has been nothing but rewarding and their accomplishments fill him with a sense of pride.

While at Dal AC, Sam was also an active member of the woodsmen team. He was also enrolled in the Atlantic Agricultural Leadership Program, a program that provides an 18-month, advanced-level training to leaders in the agricultural industry. Despite his busy schedule, Sam is also an active member in his community. He is a director with the Agricultural Alliance of New Brunswick, and has been a volunteer firefighter for the past 12 years.

"Family farming is fun because you get to work with your dad and even your sister on a daily basis, which makes it special but hard at the same time," Sam smiles. "You have to learn to juggle the business side of the operation at the same time. It's taken some sacrifice and a lot of hard work but a lot of reward comes with it. Being able to work with family member's day in and day out and being able to have fun at the same time, that's what gives me the most pride."

Of course with any business, the farm hasn't seen such success without a few bumps along the way. Challenges arise when least expected, from government policies to labour shortages to a weak market, yet Sam and his family have kept their sights set on the goals they have set to achieve.

"At the end of the day, you need to keep going ahead and follow your vision," Sam says.

As for their plans for the future, Sam hopes that the farm will continue to thrive and expand. An asset to their surrounding community, it is the hope that the farm continues to have a positive impact on the local businesses in their area as well.

"Our plans are to keep on expanding and planting new varieties of apples with always the best technologies available," Sam says. "We also want to keep on growing our processing side making sure we are able to pack and market our fruit, and other grower's fruit, in North America."

Sam is humbled by Dal AC's selection of Young Alumni of the Year. More than deserving of the award, Sam explains that he wouldn't be where he is today without all that he learned during his time spent studying at Dal AC.

"Really, I feel like there are a lot of young alumni that deserve this award and I can't believe I was the chosen one for this year," Sam says. "Dal AC is a very good university and I learned a lot both in academics and socially. The best part about Dal AC is that you are surrounded by people who love agriculture and live and breathe it like you do. The friends and connections you make long term are what matter most."

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