AGRICOLA

FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF DALHOUSIE'S FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE

SPRING 2020

why agriculture?

What is your ***"why agriculture?"*** That is the question the Faculty of Agriculture has been asking since the launch of its 2020 Strategic Plan. Inside this issue you will be introduced to the strategic plan and learn about the great work being done at the faculty to address the world's greatest problems.

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.

Harold Specht	**1946**
H. June Herbert	**1947**
Wentworth Horton	**1949**
Ted MacNintch	**1956**
Ronald Wilson	**1956**
Alexander Crowe	**1961**
Thomas Nunn	**1961**
Gordon Finley	**1962**
Earl Blades	**1966**
Eric Thompson	**1970**
Brian Wilson	**1974**
Thomas Morton	**1980**
David McElhinney	**1980**
Heather Black	**1994**

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**.

Class of ’75 upcoming reunion

Upcoming 45th Reunion
Members of the Class of ’75 Dwane Mellish, Sheila (Gourley) Crouse, Carol Brennan and Brian Crouse look forward to celebrating their upcoming 45th reunion, October 15 - 17 as part of Homecoming 2020. Stay tuned for more details or contact Carol Versteeg at carol.versteeg@ns.sympatico.ca.

An Aggie wedding

We’ve said it before and we will say it again – we LOVE an Aggie wedding! This past fall, Cora Sharp (Class of ’18) and Andrew Hornbrook (Class of ’16) were married in their home province of NB. We know it was a good time because so many Aggies helped them celebrate!

AGRICOLA

VOLUME 49, NO. 1, 2020

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE

Cover design credit:
Brenna MacNeil/Luke Smith, Dalhousie

Published twice yearly by Dalhousie’s Faculty of Agriculture

EDITOR
Alisha Johnson

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Emma Geldart, Stephanie Rogers

PHOTOGRAPHY
Nick Pearce, Johanna Matthews

ART DIRECTION / PUBLICATION DESIGN
Brenna MacNeil

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE ITEMS TO:
Dalhousie University
Faculty of Agriculture
P.O. Box 550
Truro, Nova Scotia B2N 5E3

PHONE: 902.893.6022
EMAIL: agalumni@dal.ca

For advertising opportunities contact editor.

Mailed under Canada Post Publications
Mail Sales Agreement No. 40063668

SPRING 2020

CONTENTS

FEATURES AND COVERS

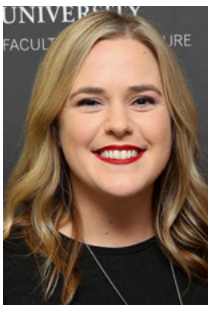
NEWS

AROUND AND ABOUT

EVENTS AND REUNIONS

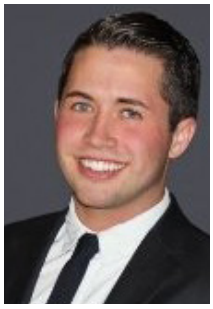
Alisha Johnson
Editor, *AGRICOLA*
Alumni Relations, Dalhousie Agricultural Campus

Message from the editor



Colette Wyllie

Robyn McCallum



Nathan Murray

Geneve Newcombe

What is your "why agriculture?"

It's a simple question, yet it may cause you to pause and consider. And that's why the theme of this *AGRICOLA* is focused on our newly launched faculty strategic plan – *why agriculture?*

In this issue you will learn why agriculture is so important and how, through agriculture, we are working as a faculty to mitigate some of the world's biggest problems: food security, global and local sustainability and health and well-being.

In keeping with the theme of this issue, we asked a few directors from our Alumni Association this important question – *why agriculture?*

"Agriculture is ever-changing, with new technologies, innovations and better approaches established every day. Lifelong learning and accessible adult education in agriculture is vital if we hope to improve the health of our planet and our populations."

– Colette Wyllie (Class of '10), Extended Learning, Dalhousie Agricultural Campus

"I work in agriculture to provide a reliable business partner to finance the growth and innovation of Canadian agriculture, agribusiness, and the food industry. These industries have challenges and opportunities which requires a financing partner who is 100 per cent invested and willing to adapt together."

– Nathan Murray (Class of '11), IT, Farm Credit Canada

"Agriculture connects us all, and that's the part that captivates me. I work on building the pollination capacity for agricultural crops in Atlantic Canada, specifically by researching honey bee health and productivity. Optimizing pollination is an important part of many food crops."

– Robyn McCallum (Class of '13), Atlantic Tech Transfer Team for Apiculture, based at Perennia Food and Agriculture

"I love being able to provide my friends, neighbours and others with fresh, local, high quality food products that we produce on the farm. While there is a lot of work involved in running a farm it is rewarding to do that work with your family."

– Geneve Newcombe (Class of '86), Cornwallis Farms

We encourage you to share your *why agriculture?* with us! Email agalumni@dal.ca

Alisha Johnson
Alisha.johnson@dal.ca,902.893.6022

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

Message from the dean

"Agriculture is our future, it's that simple."

why agriculture?

Agriculture in the 21st century faces multiple challenges. The world population is expected to grow by over a third, or 2.3 billion people by 2050.

Feeding a world population of 9.1 billion people will require raising overall food production by close to 70 per cent while also focusing on reducing food waste and insecurity, increasing efficiency of production using innovative technologies and leveraging cutting-edge research. Poverty, food insecurity both locally and globally, malnutrition and movement of populations from rural to urban centres will also feature prominently.

Our Faculty is committed to dedicating our human and physical resources to addressing these significant challenges to global and local sustainability, food security and health and well-being in this rapidly changing landscape within our sector. These goals are central to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and will be central to our work over the next five years.

Agriculture has a key role to play in the implementation of a One Health approach to these challenges. The One Health vision is a collaborative multi-disciplinary approach to safeguarding human and animal health, reducing disease threats and ensuring a safe food supply through effective and responsible management of natural resources.

It is agriculture that will help feed the world; agriculture that will have a significant impact on climate change and agriculture that will ensure clean water and a sustainable environment for our future.

There isn't another sector that impacts our lives, both individually and collectively, more than agriculture. Agriculture is our future, it's that simple.

Sincerely,

Dr. David Gray

why agriculture?

What is your ***"why agriculture?"*** That is the question the Faculty of Agriculture has been asking since the launch of its 2020 Strategic Plan in December.

Aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development goals, the Faculty is committing its human and physical resources to addressing the significant challenges to global and local sustainability, food security and health and well-being in the rapidly changing landscape of the agriculture sector.

"Agriculture in the 21st century faces multiple challenges," explained Dean Gray. "Feeding a world population of 9.1 billion people will require raising overall food production while also focusing on reducing food waste and insecurity, increasing efficiency of production using innovative technologies and leveraging cutting-edge research," he said. "Poverty, food insecurity both locally and globally, malnutrition and movement of populations from rural to urban centres will also feature prominently."

The UN Sustainable Development Goals are a collection of 17 global goals designed to act as a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future and are intended to be achieved by the year 2030.

"Agriculture has a key role to play in the implementation of a One Health approach to the challenges facing the industry," explained Dean David Gray. "The One Health vision is a collaborative multi-disciplinary approach to safeguarding human and animal health, reducing disease threats and ensuring a safe food supply through effective and responsible management of natural resources. We cannot achieve this without engaging with our students and other future leaders in this sector."

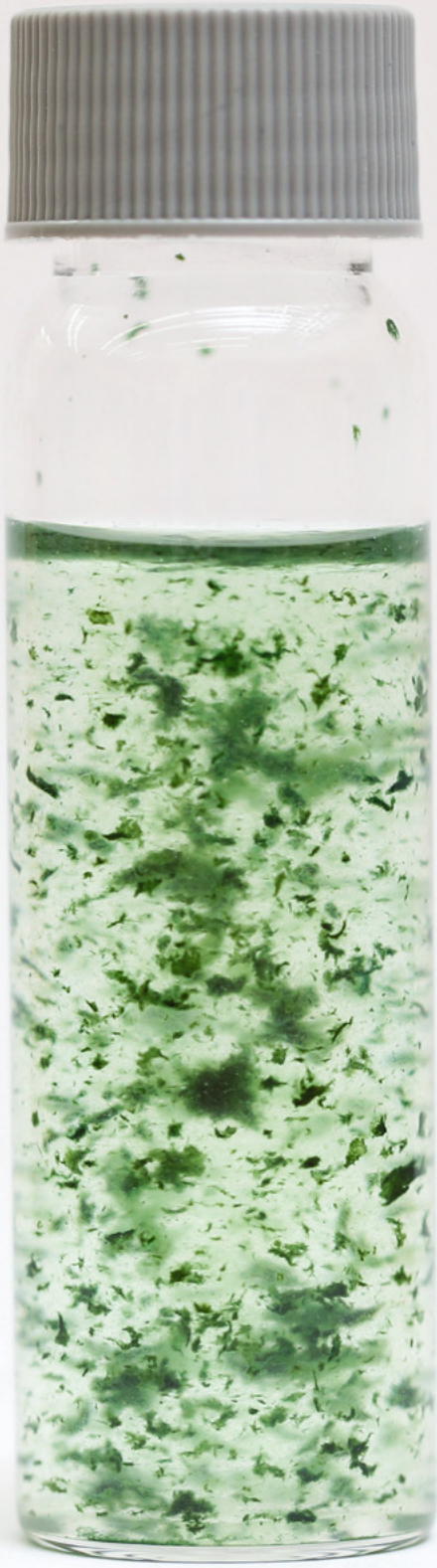

DAL
AGRICULTURE


SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
1 NO POVERTY
2 ZERO HUNGER
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
4 QUALITY EDUCATION
5 GENDER EQUALITY
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
13 CLIMATE ACTION
14 LIFE BELOW WATER
15 LIFE ON LAND
16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

The threat lurking in our lakes

by Niecole Killawee

Human activities are increasing atmospheric greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations causing significant soil erosion while depleting our limited and precious supply of fresh water.



Dalhousie's Dr. Tri Nguyen-Quang and his research team have been monitoring 13 lakes in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

Over the past six years, Dr. Tri Nguyen-Quang's research team in Dalhousie's Biofluids and Biosystems Modeling Lab has been monitoring 13 lakes in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Blue-green algal blooms have been present in each one of them. Also known as cyanobacteria, blue-green algae microbes are notorious for their potential to produce water-contaminating toxins that make people sick, kill beloved pets, and disrupt the natural balance of an ecosystem. Blooms are on the rise in North America, prompting concerns about vulnerable sources of drinking water and public health. Nguyen-Quang's research sheds light on this mysterious natural phenomenon.

During spring and summer, the lakes under Nguyen-Quang's watch feature conditions that are known to favor blue-green algal blooms: shallow depths, warm temperatures, still waters, and excess levels of nutrients within the water (phosphorous and nitrogen, in particular). Often recognized by a smelly, slimy, blueish-green or reddish-brown scum at the water's surface, these massive populations of cyanobacteria are considered harmful algal blooms (HABs) because of their potential toxicity. They can occur suddenly and without warning, sometimes even transforming the colour of entire lakes within a matter of days.

"So far, we cannot predict where and when blooms will happen," says Nguyen-Quang, an associate professor in the Department of Engineering. The unpredictable nature of HABs has been of interest to Nguyen-Quang since 2007, when he first began combining his training in physics, mathematics and engineering to study algal bloom dynamics.

While blue-green algae are naturally occurring in many freshwater environments, they become a problem for cities and towns when their populations increase exponentially, leading to blooms. Luckily not all blue-green algal blooms are toxic, or produce enough of their cyanotoxins to be considered dangerous. But it takes specialized resources to test a water sample for toxin-emitting microbes, and those can be difficult to access in a timely manner.

Nguyen-Quang explains that high levels of cyanotoxins can cause adverse health effects in people if ingested, inhaled, or touched. Symptoms of exposure range from itchy skin and eyes to fever, gastrointestinal illness, and liver damage. The toxins can also harm or kill pets and wildlife. In 2018 and 2019, four dogs in New Brunswick died shortly after swimming in contaminated water, their necropsies proof that cyanotoxins were to blame.

In the interest of public health, water officials have no choice but to act quickly, treating any blue-green algal bloom as potentially unsafe until lab tests prove otherwise. Precautions include urging people to keep their families and pets away from

the affected water and educating the public about the signs of a bloom. If lab tests come back positive for dangerous levels of toxins, the area can be closed to all recreational activity.

But when blue-green algae are detected in drinking water sources, protecting the public becomes far more complicated, says Dr. Nguyen-Quang. That happened recently in Moncton, NB when not one but two drinking water reservoirs contained blue-green algae. Fortunately, a non-toxic bloom occurred in only one of them, a back-up supply, and water in Moncton remained safe to drink. Nevertheless, repeated instances of cyanobacteria in that watershed seem to have prompted an imminent $6-million upgrade to Moncton's Turtle Creek water treatment facility, which was announced last fall.

The effects of climate change likely have a role to play in the increasing frequency of blue-green algal blooms, explains the associate professor. For example, his team has observed blooms in Nova Scotia occurring as late as December. It was a surprising observation, says Nguyen-Quang, because the current scientific literature suggests blooms in our region of the world typically occur between spring and early fall. So, now Nguyen-Quang is partnering with researchers around the world in an effort to better understand the relationship between local conditions and the environments in which toxic algal blooms thrive.

"[Humans] thought we could dominate nature, but we were completely wrong," says Nguyen-Quang, who believes in the power of balance and harmony, values he attributes to his Asian heritage and culture. "When [humans] go about life in an unbalanced way, I believe nature reacts to us with these kinds of phenomena."

When he began his position with the Faculty in 2011, Nguyen-Quang says there was very little data on blue-green algae in Nova Scotia, and that's one of the reasons he felt his research program would be well-suited here. Home to over 3,000 lakes, Nova Scotia provides ample opportunity for the collection of biological, physical, and chemical data — data that will help Nguyen-Quang decipher the code, so to speak, that programs the development of blue-green algal blooms.

"I'm trying to detect and understand messages from nature, and then I will use mathematics as a tool to describe those messages," explains Nguyen-Quang. Data from a number of lakes over a number of years is required to do so, he adds, emphasizing the importance of continued funding for further research.

Having enough data, he says, is key to discovering the universal threshold of a toxic bloom. In other words, Nguyen-Quang's team is working to uncover the precise conditions required to push a freshwater ecosystem past the point of effectively controlling its cyanobacteria population, in addition to identifying factors that lead to toxicity. Then, he explains, he can develop a mathematical model that predicts where, when and how a bloom will form—a powerful tool that could help governments optimize their approaches to water management, treatment, and protection. It's a feat not yet possible, but paramount in a future shaped by climate change.

Wasting food in a throwaway culture

by Niecole Killawee

Achieving global food security while reducing negative environmental impacts is one of the greatest challenges facing agriculture.

Now a PhD student, Ashley MacDonald spent her masters investigating food waste management.

Canadians are buying more food than they can eat. Much of it gets tossed in the bin, ending up in our landfills. In contrast, the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) found that global hunger is on the rise, despite another one of their findings: a third of the food produced in the world is either lost or goes to waste. Ashley MacDonald (BSc'14, MSc'19) spent two years exploring why Canadians are throwing away such a vital resource to better understand food waste prevention and management strategies.

Now a PhD candidate and part-time academic with the Faculty's Department of Business and Social Sciences, Ashley MacDonald has been a studying or conducting research with Dal AC since 2011. When Divert NS, a non-profit champion for recycling in the province, put out a call for research on food waste management just in time for her Master's program, MacDonald was inspired to get involved.

"I knew I wanted to work within environmental sustainability, but in a way that would be applicable to business management levels," says MacDonald. "I want to merge business objectives with those environmental sustainability objectives that we really need to reach for when it comes to the climate crisis."

Divert NS was looking for insight on depackaging practices that food retailers could implement to help properly dispose of their unsaleable products (e.g., food that's impossible to sell because they're expired). Depackaging efforts can help grocers prevent unused organics, paper, and plastic from ending up in trash that's destined for the landfill.

"Landfill disposal, we know, is terrible for the environment," explains MacDonald. "It's a complete loss of resources and should be avoided when at all possible."

It was during this work, supervised by professor Christopher Hartt, that MacDonald learned about waste management models in place within large grocery chains like Sainsbury's in the UK and Kroger in the US. These grocers use machines that removes unsaleable food from its packaging and then breaks organic matter down in a way that produces methane. The grocers then use the natural gas as an energy source to power their buildings.

"I found that a lot of the research, policies, initiatives and innovations out there look at food waste management," says MacDonald. "Yet, it's agreed upon throughout the literature that, ideally, the most efficient thing to do is to prevent food waste."

That inspired MacDonald to then investigate what leads to wasted food in the first place.

According to a report published by Value Chain Management International in 2014, food retailers were responsible for an estimated 10% of food waste in Canada, while food producers generated 20% of the waste. Canadian households, however, were responsible for 47% of the country's food waste.

There are big-picture factors at play when the causes of excess food waste are explored. MacDonald says that Canada has a strong agricultural sector, but it produces an excess of goods that exceed demand. Retailers end up overstocking shelves and offer enticing deals to clear their inventory. MacDonald also says that Canadians, on average, pay less for food than those living in other developed nations. With such an abundance of consumables available at reasonable prices, it's no wonder Canadian's aren't placing a high value on their food.

With that in mind, MacDonald knew she needed to examine consumer perceptions and behaviours that might explain why people are throwing away food. She scoured academic research, social media posts, news coverage and government reports, and then developed a consumer survey to gain insight on household grocery shopping and waste sorting habits by province.

"There was a lot of confusion about what constitutes food waste," says MacDonald. To provide clarity, she proposes the use of this term instead: terminal food waste. It refers to the food that ends up in a landfill instead of being reused (by donating safe, unsold or uneaten food to food banks, for example) or recovered (by converting the waste to methane and using it as an energy source, like Kroger and Sainsbury's have done).

When it comes to Canadian consumers, MacDonald cites a few common behaviours and perceptions that lead to households generating terminal food waste.

"We buy too much food on grocery shop day and then we don't have a plan for how to use it," she says. It's a behaviour that often results in throwing away forgotten food, especially if its sell-by or best-by dates have passed. Best-by dates, MacDonald says, just signal a drop in freshness and quality, but the food is often still safe to consume. Sell-by dates, on the other hand, are virtually meaningless.

Given that behavioural change is key to reducing household waste, MacDonald used her consumer survey to determine if province-wide waste bans are useful in facilitating change. She asked 180 people living across the country how they feel about the environment, and how they view and deal with their food waste.

Albertan's showed "undesirable" purchasing and waste sorting behaviours. Whereas those living in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island—the only two provinces with waste-ban policies at the provincial level in place—had the most desirable sorting behaviours. MacDonald is quick to acknowledge that waste management policy is complicated because of how differently each province decides to govern disposal. That said, Nova Scotia's terminal food waste only amounts to about half of what's generated by other provinces, illustrating the impact of stakeholders working together to implement challenging policies.

Waste management models in place within large grocery chains like Sainsbury's in the UK and Kroger in the US use machines that removes unsaleable food from its packaging and then breaks organic matter down in a way that produces methane. The grocers then use the natural gas as an energy source to power their buildings.

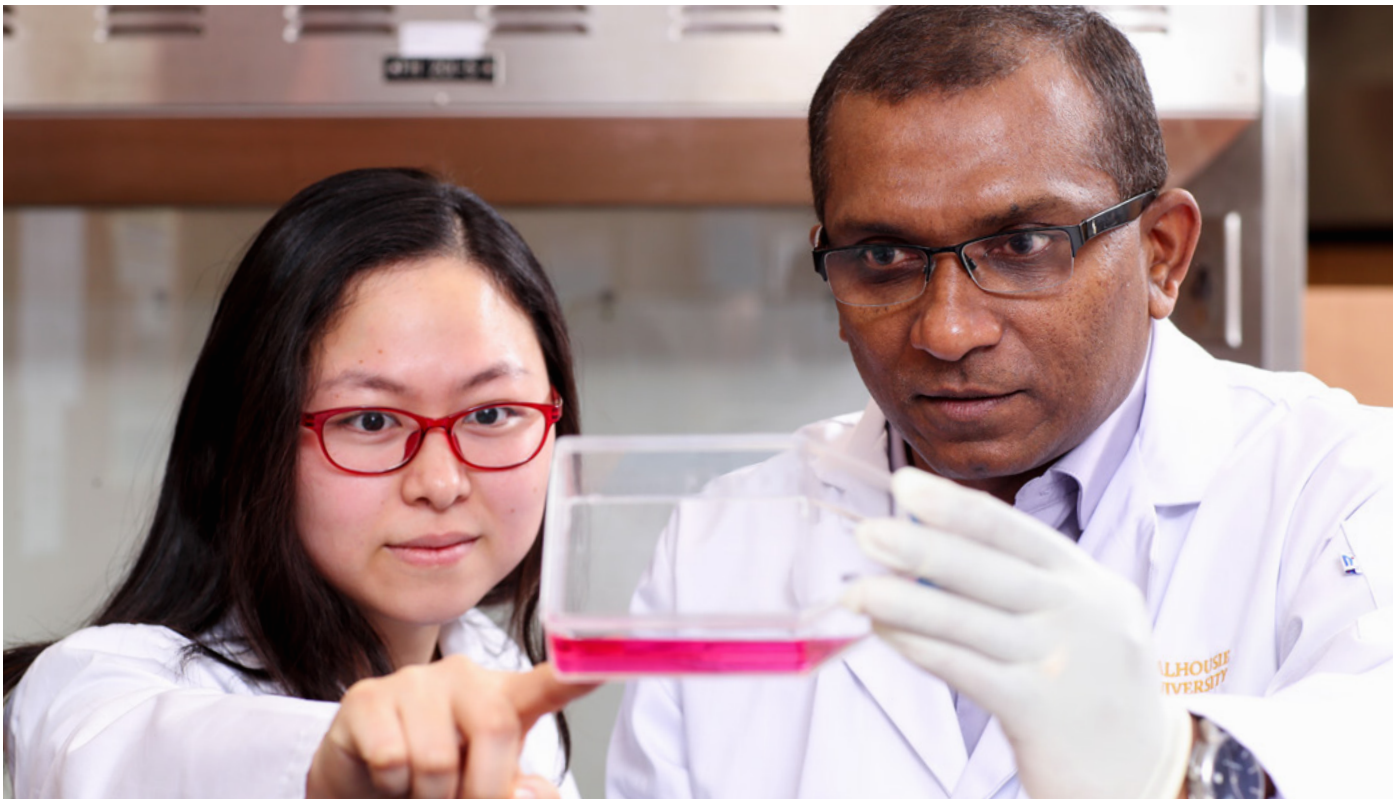
"One comment I kept seeing in the feedback section of the survey was: I know that I waste too much, but I don't know what to do about it," says MacDonald. "There's always going to be some unavoidable food waste... but a little effort is better than no effort at all."

Simple things, like creating a meal plan before grocery shopping (and then sticking to it), can help families break the habit of buying more food than they need. Shopping in the bulk section allows for personalized portions so people can take only what they need. Many foods can be frozen and saved for later, which can be a great way to deal with leftovers. In cases where families simply can't consume the food in their kitchens, they can check to see if it can be donated, offered to friends and neighbours, or fed to pets and other animals before its disposal.

"Food waste is not this insurmountable mountain. It's something we can combat if we all work together towards a solution. It's about being mindful of our impact and demanding change," says MacDonald. "We all have to take ownership and responsibility... We just need to try—and it doesn't have to be perfect, it just has to be something."

An apple a day to keep breast cancer away

Supporting the health and well-being of our campus, community and world requires a One Health approach: the collaborative effort of multiple disciplines – working locally, nationally and globally – to attain optimal health for people, animals and the environment.



Dr. Vasantha Rupasinghe's extensive research of fruit flavonoids and their effect on human health has earned him countless recognition within Dalhousie University and beyond.

'An apple a day keeps the doctor away'- we've all heard the age old saying encouraging us to eat plenty of fruit everyday. But one researcher at Dalhousie University Faculty of Agriculture is taking the importance of eating fruit one step further.

Dr. H.P. Vasantha Rupasinghe is a professor and Killam Chair in Functional Foods and Nutraceuticals with the Department of Plant, Food, and Environmental Sciences at Dalhousie University Faculty of Agriculture and holds a cross-appointment with the Department of Pathology of the Faculty of Medicine. His extensive research of fruit flavonoids and their effect on human health has earned him countless recognition within the university and beyond. His research program has attracted over $7.5 million in external funding since 2004 has resulted in three patent filings, one licensing agreement, and contributions to the commercialization of over a dozen value-added food products. An accomplished and respected researcher, Vasantha continues to explore the effects of fruit flavonoids and how they can help to prevent and overcome disease. Specifically, for the last eight years, Vasantha's team has been studying the assessment of apple flavonoids in cancer prevention and treatment.

"Our recent research has been primarily focused on flavonoids, the major antioxidant components in fruits, which have remarkable power in preventing the development of oxidative stress-mediated chronic diseases and promoting human health and wellness," Vasantha explains. "One research hypothesis is that some unique flavonoids in cool climate fruits, such as apples and berries, can play as the major biologically active components of our diet to reduce the risk of cardiovascular and neurodegenerative disorders and various cancers."

Through their extensive research thus far, Vasantha and his team have found that apple flavonoid molecules are not only capable of selectively killing various breast cancer cells in test tubes, but also have shown the potential to slow down cancer cell proliferation, migration, and invasion.

"It was interesting to observe that apple flavonoids were cytotoxic to triple-negative breast cancer cells, a type of cancer cell that is difficult to treat with the currently available chemotherapeutics," Vasantha says.

Vasantha explains that current experiments show the apple flavonoids have successfully reduced the growth of human breast cancer cell xenografts of experimental animals. This research was conducted in collaboration with Dr. David Hoskin of the Department of Pathology within the Faculty of Medicine. Masters student Joe Loung and postdoctoral fellow Dr. Wasu Fernando conducted this research as members of Vasantha's team.

"We are currently looking for additional funds to expand our research on breast cancer," Vasantha says. "We wish to test the efficacy of apple flavonoids on other types of cancer cells, as well as their effectiveness of delivering them using different modes."

While the research is promising, Vasantha and his team want to continue to learn more about the benefits of fruit flavonoids. They are looking to further explain the molecular mechanisms of how apple flavonoids selectively kill cancer cells, while not harming the normal cells at the same cytotoxic concentration to cancer cells. They are also investigating the role of apple flavonoids in preventing initiation of carcinogenesis process. Ultimately, Vasantha hopes that their research will help to develop flavonoids-based functional foods, natural health products and therapeutics to reduce the risk of certain cancers and other chronic metabolic disorders.

"We are also investigating the modification of flavonoids to improve their cellular uptake, bioavailability, and therapeutic efficacy," Vasantha adds.

Not only that, Vasantha has plans to conduct research on improving gut microbiome to promote human health through dietary interventions. He notes that there are also considerable opportunities for improving the economics and environmental sustainability of food processing by using the processing waste produced from plant-based food manufacturing as sources of food bioactives.

"In the future, our investigations will explore food wastes as under-utilized sources of high-value nutrients and bioactives," Vasantha explains. "We will investigate the applications as functional food ingredients for the prevention of selected chronic and metabolic disorders ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being at all ages is essential to sustainable development. Food and nutritional security have become an emerging global challenge. Our applied research will attempt to design and develop the future of foods by integrating the new knowledge of discovery research of ours and others, utilization of food waste, application of modern value-added manufacturing technologies, and assessing the quality, health benefits, and marketability."

Labour of love

Lutz Family Farm –
Janice and Larry Lutz
(both Class of ’85)

For Janice and Larry (both Class of '85) Lutz, growing their farming operation has been a humbling and rewarding experience. With a shared passion for creating quality products to help feed the world, Janice and Larry certainly understand the importance of hard work and perseverance.

"We started with very little and raised a family and expanded the farm to be a valuable enterprise," Larry says. "That's what gives me the most pride."

"We've also accumulated so much through hard work and being knowledgeable in our industry," Janice adds. "We operate very efficiently- we may not have the newest equipment, but we have what we need and this helps our financial security."

Janice and Larry own and operate Lutz Family Farm, a fifth-generation family farm specializing in apple and peach production. Located in Rockland, in the heart of the Annapolis Valley, NS, Janice and Larry own about 1,000 acres of land. Of that, 106 acres is operational apple and peach orchards along with an apple tree nursery, forest and vacant land that they are currently cultivating to be used in future apple production.

"Besides the established orchards, we grow our own trees from rootstock in the nursery, about 20,000 each year," Janice explains. "Purchasing full grown trees is a large expense. We can grow high quality trees and it fits well with our labour capacity."

While the farm has been in the Lutz family for five generations, Janice and Larry have tailored it over the years to align with their passion and expertise. In 1988, Janice and Larry took ownership of the farm from Larry's family. At that time, the farm consisted of about 50 acres. The family had apple orchards, beef cattle, hay land, pasture, and woodland. Janice and Larry began the farms transition to primarily apple orchards when they took over 32 years ago.

For the duo, transitioning the farms focus to apple orchards was a no-brainer. Both studied plant science at NSAC. Janice completed her undergraduate project in cereals- plant and growth regulators while Larry focused on plant science and plant protection for his Bachelor of Science. While Larry grew up with farming in his blood, Janice didn't have as much first-hand experience with farming.

"My father's work provided several transfers, so I grew up in several towns around the Maritimes," Janice explains. "My connection to farming was limited- we lived near rural areas and I enjoyed the rural landscape. My father convinced me to do my first year of college at NSAC and live at home. He secretly hoped I'd like it at AC- he had a hunch and he was right!"

Since discovering her love for agriculture while studying at the AC, Janice has become passionate about providing food for her community and beyond.

"I fell in love with the idea of feeding 6 billion people in my first plant science 101 class," Janice smiles. "Growing food comes with a lot of responsibility. I feel sometimes it is a privilege, sometimes it feels like an obligation. When I started at NSAC, I was struck by the responsibility we have, on a global level, to provide nutrition and food to the world."

Larry and Janice Lutz pride themselves on developing quality products that contribute to feeding the world. They also provide employment for their community and beyond.

"WE STARTED WITH VERY LITTLE AND RAISED A FAMILY AND EXPANDED THE FARM TO BE A VALUABLE ENTERPRISE," LARRY SAYS. "THAT'S WHAT GIVES ME THE MOST PRIDE."

Today, Janice and Larry pride themselves on developing quality products that contribute to feeding the world. They also provide employment for their community and beyond. Their greatest challenge has been labour- with their rapid expansion over the years, finding enough help to harvest the crops had become a bit of a challenge. They enrolled in the Seasonal Agriculture Worker Program and began employing people from Jamaica about 12 years ago, allowing them to grow and expand their acreage with confidence. They also pride themselves on their farm's self-reliance. With their background and experience in different industries working off-farm, they've come to be quite self-sustainable.

"Our farm is quite vertically integrated," Janice explains. "We have acquired a lot of machinery over the years, so we are less reliant on contracting services."

Not only is Lutz Family Farm fairly self-sustainable, Janice and Larry built their farming business each while working full time jobs off the farm and raising four children. Five years ago, Larry began farming full-time while Janice has joined him full time as of 2019. They've got their sights set on continuing to grow the farm and ensure their children follow their passions, the same as their parents had done.

"The farm is structured to allow our children to join the business if they are interested," Janice explains. "We have worked hard to build a business that is progressive, efficient, and interesting. The most important goal we have is for us and our children to be comfortable, supportive, hardworking and engaged in our community and appreciate the land we have, the business, and each other."

When reflecting on their accomplishments and growth of the farm over the years, Janice and Larry admit their greatest achievement with a smile.

"We did it!"

Success beyond dreams

Farmer's Daughter – James Austin (Class of '69)

"If your dream's don't work out, dream something else." "Jim" (James) Austin (Class of '69) certainly took his own advice. When his dream of operating a small local vegetable stand took a new path, Jim and his wife, Ferne, simply adjusted their dreams.

"The original plan was to have a small farm market and veggie stand to create employment for our family and community," Jim explains. "I am really passionate about farmer's markets and supporting local farmers, so 29 years ago we decided to open Farmer's Daughter. I never anticipated we would need so many employees!"

Jim and Ferne certainly didn't envision Farmer's Daughter Country Market to be the bustling local landmark it is today. Located in Whycocomagh, in the heart of Cape Breton, NS, the market employs 18 full time staff, increasing to more than 30 employees during the summer months. At its inception in 1991, the small market was open seasonally and stayed that way for the first three years. As word spread of the mouth-watering baked goods and decadent fruits and vegetables, Jim and his family found themselves operating a little longer each year. Today, Farmer's Daughter is open year round.

"When we were a seasonal operation, we found we would lose our best employees when we closed," Jim explains. "There was enough demand to stay open year round and keep our employees, so we did just that."

While the Austin family farm supplies some of the product sold at the Farmer's Daughter, most of their produce is purchased from local farmers (many who are also alumni of the AC) throughout the province. Apples from the Annapolis Valley and strawberries from Millens Farms in Great Village have people storming the doors each summer to buy delicious Nova Scotia products.

"Somebody once told me, you can't do a good job at growing and selling," Jim smiles.

Born in Ontario, Jim has farming in his blood. At the young age of two, Jim's family relocated to Skye Glen, Cape Breton, where his father had grown up. Raised on a farm with his family, Jim attended NSAC where he earned a diploma in agricultural business. When it came time to take over the family farm, Jim and his brother divided the family dairy farm. Jim farmed for many years and as his children, four daughters and a son,

grew older, he decided they wanted a little bit more. Farmer's Daughter was born.

"I've always been passionate about farming," Jim says. "It's been in my blood since I was born."

Word of Farmer's Daughter spread quickly around Cape Breton by word of mouth. Over the years the market grew, requiring three building expansions to meet customer demand. Although the market was gaining traction on its own, four years ago it had a little bit of help.

"One thing we've always struggled with is labour," Jim explains. "We have fantastic employees but there never seems to be enough."

In August 2016, Jim and Ferne's daughters, Sandee MacLean and Heather Coulombe, came up with a plan to increase the number of year round full time employees. A desperate attempt to help the market keep up with the demand for its products, the sisters came up with the idea of offering two free acres of land to people who are willing to relocate to Whycocomagh to work at the store. They posted the advertisement on Facebook and they didn't have to wait long.

"We were going to pay for some advertising for this," Jim says. "But we didn't have to. Within three hours, the opportunity went viral. The phone was ringing off the hook."

Within days, the small country market had 350 emails and some 500 messages on Facebook, all people wanting to come work at Farmer's Daughter in exchange for owning two acres of land in Cape Breton. The family estimates that in total they had over half a million inquiries from all over the world. Heather interviewed with countless radio and TV stations about the opportunity and was able to put the little town of Whycocomagh, and the Farmer's Daughter Country Market, on the international map.

The opportunity wasn't without its limitations, though. Employees would only be eligible for their plot of free land if they worked at the market for five consecutive years and were willing to pay the legal fees to have the land deed officially transferred.

"We've had 10 separate family's come," Jim explains. "So far, two have qualified for the land incentive. But we got more out of this then we would have ever imagined."

Jim explains that three or four families have also planted roots in Cape Breton as a result of the publicity around the quaint little town with a hearty farmer's market. As an advocate of the community, Jim could not be more pleased.

"I am so passionate about our community," Jim smiles. "A small community like this, you got to push it. It's come so far in the last little while and it just keeps growing. I'm so proud that Farmer's Daughter has contributed as much as it has to this community. We're probably one of the largest employers in the area now, and that's a great feeling."

As Jim sits in among market-goers inside the beautiful buildings he and his family have built, he takes one look around and smiles.

"I can't believe we started this place from scratch."

Although mostly retired, Jim can be found almost daily at Farmer's Daughter, working alongside his daughter, Heather (who also attended NSAC).

Raising healthy, happy animals

by Niecole Killawee

Rebecca Meagher

Rebecca Meagher may have grown up in the suburbs, but she found her calling when she transformed her love of animals into a career dedicated to agricultural sciences. After finishing an undergraduate degree in zoology, she discovered a field of research dedicated to the science of animal welfare. That inspired her to a pursue a doctorate degree in the area, which eventually led to professorship at the Faculty of Agriculture.

"Once I started working with farm animals, I really liked that atmosphere," says Meagher, an assistant professor in the Faculty's Department of Animal Science and Aquaculture. "I thought it was fascinating that you could use science to improve animals' lives... there's a lot of opportunity to do some good in this area of research."

Meagher's research — which sits at the nexus of biology, psychology, and agricultural management — aims to uncover new ways of assessing and improving animal welfare on farms. This includes exploring how to assess an animal's emotional state, determining the influence that an animal's early life experiences and environment can have on its long-term health and well-being, and using those findings to help improve animal welfare on farms.

Fear is an emotional state that "seems to be very relevant to farm animals," says Meagher. She knew that dogs and cats are better equipped to deal with unfamiliar situations and stimuli if they experience socialization early in life, which significantly decreases fearfulness and stress later in life.

"We looked at whether there are similar effects in dairy calves; if they need similar social contact in those first few weeks of life," she says, adding that cows are social creatures, too.

Meagher observed marked differences between 5-6 week-old calves that were raised in isolation compared to those raised in shared pens with their mothers or another calf. Calves raised by themselves had increased levels of fear, were slower to start eating solid food, and had impairment in certain types of cognition. Those effects could have an influence on the animal's milk production abilities later in life, too.

In another research project, this one a review of existing scientific literature, Meagher found that the common practice of separating calves from mothers shortly after birth in an effort to protect the calves' health is not founded on solid evidence. Developing new farming systems and practices that could keep a calf with its mother longer may be slow or challenging to implement, especially on large-scale dairy farms, says Meagher, but efforts to improve welfare come with many benefits.

"I think research like mine is important because we have a responsibility to manage animals in the best way that we can when they're under our care," says Meagher. "This is about making farms more efficient by getting rid of some of the welfare problems that can inhibit production, but it's also about the social sustainability of the industry, and developing farming systems that everyone in society is more comfortable with."

Meagher is now working to design and establish studies on farmed mink welfare, an area she says is relatively lacking in research so far.

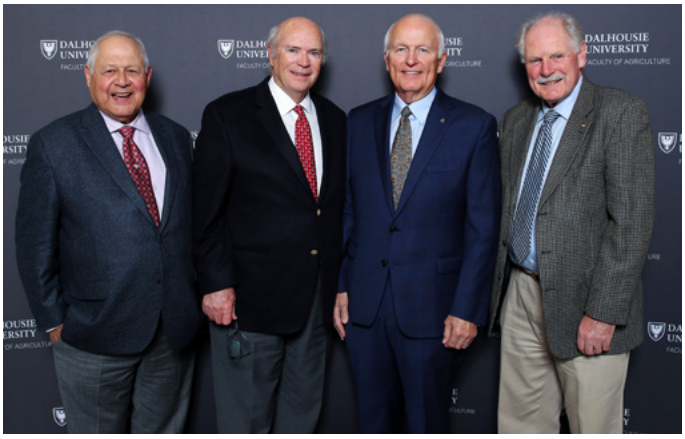
"I think a lot of us who are interested in animal welfare really care about how the animals feel," says Meagher. "Farmers care about their animals, too, and they want to do better for [their animals] if they can."

Blue & Gold Awards

During our annual Blue & Gold Alumni awards dinner, three very deserving alumni were honoured for their outstanding service to their *alma mater*, the agricultural industry, their communities and beyond.

Alumni Association board members Colette Wyllie (Class of '10), Robyn McCallum (Class of '13) and DASA Manager, Pat Jeffcock.

Andrew Lake with wife Tricia (Class of '05) and their two children at the Blue & Gold Awards.



Lifelong friends Stephen Casselman, George Archibald, Don Cameron and Harold Cook (all Class of '66).

Members of the DASA executive.

Volunteer of the Year 2019 – Andrew Lake (Class of '94)

Volunteers are the backbone of any great community, selflessly giving of their time for the betterment of others. Our Volunteer of the Year recipient for 2019 is no exception.

Andrew Lake, vice president of Will-Kare Paving & Contracting Limited, is a lifelong resident of Truro and never hesitates at giving-back to his hometown. He believes that if you are going to live in the community and make the best of the community and have your kids appreciate the community they live in, being involved is what it's all about. It's important to Andrew, which is why he believes you can only get out what you put into it.

With two school-aged children, Andrew takes an active role in their extra-curricular activities, among other initiatives.

Most near and dear to his heart though is Andrew's role with the Canadian Mental Health Association – Colchester-East Hants Branch where he sits on their "Branching Out" Fundraising Campaign Committee.

After witnessing their mother struggle with mental health issues for 25 years, Andrew and his sister reached out to the Canadian Mental Health Association in Truro. There, Andrew and his family identified some gaps in the system that would have supported his mother had they been available. Through discussions with CMHA they were able to build and support some important programming.

All of these organizations have drastically benefited from Andrew's time.

Carolyn Wilson accepts her Young Alumni Achievement award from Dean Gray.

Don Cameron with wife, Rosemary (centre), along with their son, daughter and two grandsons at the Blue & Gold Awards.

Young Alumni Achievement – Carolyn Wilson (Class of '18)

If anyone can get high school students excited about a career in agriculture, it's the recipient of our Young Alumni Achievement award. Although she admits when she was a high school student herself, she wanted to get as far away from farming as possible.

Growing up on a farm in New Brunswick, it was a little hard to escape thoughts of agriculture. Now Carolyn Wilson realizes it's what she is most proud of and that it never really left her mind. And perhaps that's why she spends her days as a high school science teacher, planting seeds in young minds. Through teaching, Carolyn is able to combine her two biggest passions - agriculture and education. Carolyn finds creative, subtle and fun ways to teach kids about agriculture in her daily lessons and through an after-school program, EnviroThon, which she created.

When the bell signals the end of the school day, Carolyn heads off to apply her agriculture passion hands-on. Along with her husband, Mark, the young newlyweds own and operate Brookside Butcher.

At Brookside Butcher, Mark and Carolyn process their own animals, as well as animals from both of their individual family farms for direct market to consumers. While Mark is very much the butcher, Carolyn is behind the scenes responsible for accounting, paperwork and marketing, all to help the business be successful.

As if that's not enough – Carolyn volunteers what little time she has left with the New Brunswick Young Farmers Forum, Canadian Young Farmers forum, as a coach of her high school soccer team and more.

Carolyn's passions couldn't shine any brighter. She is doing what she loves, while making a huge impact to her students and agriculture.

Distinguished Alumnus – Donald Cameron (Class of '66)

Trying to subtly talk his then girlfriend, whom he met while finishing his degree at McGill University, into coming to his home province of Nova Scotia – Donald Cameron explained it was a beautiful place to live and raise a family and that he wanted to build a farming business. He also admitted we could do better here and that someday, he was going to be part of a government to make those changes for NS.

Not only did he sell that proposition to his wife of now over 50 years, but he built, owned and managed one of the biggest farm operations in NS before fueling the biggest desire burning within – and made change.

When first elected to the Nova Scotia Legislature in 1974, Don was appointed Minister of Recreation. Elected six more times, he also served as Minister of Fisheries, Minister of Industry and served as Chairman of the Legislature's Free Trade Committee before becoming Premier of Nova Scotia in 1991.

Among many of the changes he helped make, a highlight for Don included the first day he sat in the legislature as premier, his government introduced Human Rights legislation, which included equal rights for gays and lesbians, making NS one of the first places in North America to do so. Even though this was a moment of pride for Don, he's certainly not one to brag. He admits he is very humble and always said he wanted the job, not the title. And when asked about his career, his quick response is simple – he's a farmer.

Humble, kind, passionate about agriculture and making a difference, there's no question that Don Cameron is a very deserving recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award for 2019.

Homecoming 2019

Alumni and guests returned to campus to attend Homecoming 2019 in October. Visitors enjoyed re-connecting and reminiscing during the Atlantic Agricultural Hall of Fame, Dean's Breakfast, College Royal, Blue & Gold Awards, among other activities.

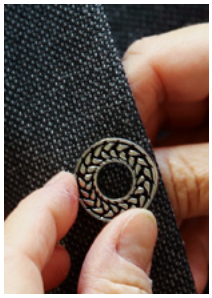
We were pleased to host the Classes of '74 and '79 who took advantage of Homecoming to celebrate their milestone reunions.

Dean Gray and Rocky enjoying the Dean's Breakfast where guests received a campus update from the dean and a sneak peak of the Faculty's newly launched strategic plan.

Priscilla and Eric (Class of '58) Jennings attended the Blue & Gold Awards. Eric was awarded the Distinguished Alumnus award in 2015.

First-year student Baillie Lynds shows off her chicken at College Royal.

Members of the Class of '74 catching up.



Members of the Class of '74.

Members and guests of the Class of '79.

Scholarship Banquet

Celebrating student success and honouring our donors

For many students, attending the Faculty of Agriculture is a family tradition. The campus has always had a culture of closeness, not only because of the small class sizes and attentive instructors, but also because multiple generations of the same families have called AC home. When reflecting on their time at the Faculty of Agriculture, many alumni are heard to say their decision to attend was greatly influenced by family members.

In 2009, the Alumni Family Bursary was established with funds raised through the Annual Appeal to celebrate the sons, daughters, nieces, nephews and grandchildren of AC alumni. The annual bursaries now range from $1000-$1500, with the largest amounts awarded to students with the strongest connections to AC alumni. This academic year, the bursary provided $12,000 in scholarships to deserving students.

Representing the Alumni Family Bursary (and the Alumni Association) at the 2019 Scholarship Banquet were Brian Crouse (far left) and Colette Wyllie (far right) with student recipients, front: Nellie Wood, Adrian Bent, Katie McCallum and Helen Pickard. Back: Luke Fisher, Ryan Porter, Andrew Manning, Samantha Nichols and Erica Sullivan. Missing was Evan Cogswell.

Dean's Receptions

A great group of AC alumni and guests recently gathered in Florenceville-Bristol, NB, in late January, for the first Dean's Reception in the area. Dean Gray informed the group of campus news, while Associate Dean of Research, Dr. Chris Cutler, gave a presentation of research taking place on campus. We look forward to returning!

Mollie Pickard (Class of '18) and Evans Estabrooks (Class of '62)

Dean Gray has always been pleased to host alumni at various Dean's Receptions throughout the year. Keeping with annual tradition, Dean Gray travelled to Poly Mountain, NB, in late fall with the Alumni office.

New design for Cox Institute revealed

With a new year comes new possibilities and nowhere is this more evident than with the reconstruction of Cox Institute.

After the main academic building on the Agricultural Campus was significantly damaged by fire and water in June 2018, the Faculty of Agriculture has had a long road to recovery.

The long and arduous process of cleaning and repairing equipment, salvaging research and making alternate arrangements for learning, teaching and research space has been all encompassing.

"I cannot say enough about the resilience of our faculty and staff. Although the past year and a half has had its challenges, the leadership everyone has shown has made a tremendous difference in getting us to where we are today," said Dean David Gray.

The Faculty is actively working toward a move-in date over the summer months of 2020 and opening its doors to students in September.

Work is well under way in the facility and a packed-house sneak-peek event was held in January to reveal the design visuals of Cox East wing (formerly "Old Cox") with the campus community. The facility will look substantially different: faculty, staff and students can look forward to greater collaboration spaces, more modern layouts and amenities, and new facilities and equipment. As well, a lot of work was undertaken to bring the building, built in the 1960s, up to modern-day building codes.

"I want to say a sincere thank you to Ian Nason, Peter Coutts and their teams who've been with us since the beginning, supporting our faculty and the recovery teams and who've been as committed as all of us to getting things back to normal for our staff, faculty and students," said Dean Gray.

Nicola Embleton-Lake, Assistant Director Space Management, Planning with Facilities Management lent her expertise to the new space design.

Nicola and Mary-Jane Adams, then Director of Campus planning, worked collaboratively to determine how the space in East Cox worked prior to the fire. How did space relate to other spaces within the complex? How did the spaces support and interrelate with each other? What worked well in existing spaces and what did not? Where were the issues? Where did they see potential for improvement? What works best for those who use the space most often?

Staff, faculty and students anxiously wait for Cox to be completed and fully operational. Renderings of a classroom, lab and office space provide a visual for the restored building.

"This is how we learned how the building functioned and how we could potentially improve relationships and inter-relations between spaces," Nicola explained. These were the considerations and suggestions for improvements made to move towards a more effective and efficient overall layout of the complex.

"One of our main principles is to ensure efficient and effective use of space, it became apparent that this, like many other buildings, undergo changes at various times that need to happen but may not be in the best location or within the appropriate associations with other spaces," she said. "In laying out the program for this building we could consider those issues and provide suggestions where improvements could be made to move towards a more effective and efficient overall layout of the complex."

A 126-page space program has identified each space that is required and its functional and relational requirements to ensure the rebuild will address any missing pieces.

"We needed herculean efforts from members and they (from the VP to the custodian) rose to the occasion," said Nicola. "And although all space is university space, when faced with a tragic event such as a fire, the loss of the space, their teaching material, the research material all contributes to the loss and are all grieved. You must respect the grieving process and you have to help some people through it," she added.

THE FACULTY IS ACTIVELY WORKING TOWARD A MOVE-IN DATE OVER THE SUMMER MONTHS OF 2020 AND OPENING ITS DOORS TO STUDENTS IN SEPTEMBER.

Nicola will be submitting "Space triage in an Emergency Situation" presentation to the Eastern Region of APPA: Leadership in Educational Facilities (ERAPPA) conference in 2020 in Saint John, New Brunswick for consideration.

"The simple truth is emergencies and disasters can strike anyone, anytime and anywhere," she added. "I see the work Mary-Jane (Adams) and I did as triaging in an emergency and I would like to present on that theme."

Celebrating 115 years

The Nova Scotia Agricultural College officially opened its doors on February 14, 1905. In the 115 years since, we have graduated 1000's of students, added to our student population, changed and expanded our programs, increased faculty and staff positions, grown our research reputation, merged with a larger institution and developed many partnerships It has been a mighty 115 years!

Among this growth, the most obvious change has been to the campus landscape and infrastructure. In celebration of 115 years, look how we've grown.

Residence

After the Second World War, class sizes expanded and the enrolment of students continued to grow. As a consequence, the first residence on campus was opened in 1959. Today, three residence buildings on campus provide housing for close to 350 students. The last to complete the Horseshoe was Fraser House and officially opened in September 1970.

Science Building

A view of campus behind the old Science Building with Humanities House visible in the background. The Ruminant Animal Centre is prominent in the photography today. The old Science Building was destroyed by a disastrous fire in 1946. After that, many students had to be relocated to the military hospital facilities in Debert, Nova Scotia. The construction of a new science building, Harlow Institute, and a central heating plant made it possible for the college to move all of its programs back to Bible Hill. The increase in faculty during 1980 expanded research activities and the college started to respond to more opportunities for international development programs.

Cumming Hall

The iconic Cumming Hall is the main administrative building on campus and was constructed in 1904. During several decades of change, the educational demand kept on increasing and the agricultural industry expanded substantially. In order to keep up with this change, the educational programs got broadened, academic buildings were built on campus and new student services were offered. In the 1970s, the athletic center was added as well as a new dining hall. The old auditorium in Cumming Hall got redesigned into the Alumni Theatre.

Community Day

The Agricultural Campus opens its doors annually to the community for a day of fun, entertainment and education in July. Community Day 2020 will mark the 50th anniversary of this tradition. Already in early stages of the college's development there were measures in place to take agricultural education closer to the people. This included new demonstration buildings at exhibition sites throughout the province and clubs with agricultural themes for the rural youth.

Convocation

In the early years of the Agricultural College, its role was to assist and prepare farmers. Hired graduates would come in the winter to give talks to the newly formed farm groups. The students who did not go directly into farming would often transfer to other agricultural colleges in Ontario and Quebec to complete their degree. Many of these first graduates were the early leaders of agricultural services for Canada. From 1980 on, a new legislation allowed the college to either grant a BSc in Agriculture or negotiate a suitable degree granted by another institution. This academic agreement for granting degrees was developed with Dalhousie University.

The Convocation procession is a tradition on the Agricultural Campus every May, this one taking place in the 60s lead by Dr. Bill Jenkins.

ExtensionEngineering

The college's roots included three agencies, the School of Agriculture, the Provincial Normal School and the Provincial Farm, in the late 1800s. They were formed to a new College of Agriculture and officially opened on February 14, 1905. A large horse barn was added to campus in 1912 as well as other facility expansions after federal funds were made available. These measures were taken to encourage agricultural education.

RESIDENCES

SCIENCE BUILDING

CUMMING HALL

COMMUNITY DAY

CONVOCATION

EXTENSION
ENGINEERING

Special soccer ball brings back memories

When this autographed soccer ball was recently discovered in a storage closet in the Langille Athletic Centre, the Alumni office knew it would have special meaning for former athletes. And one name in particular stood out.

It was the simple and neat printing of “Ivan Joseph”.

A quick email to Dalhousie’s Assistant Vice-Provost, Student Affairs, Dr. Ivan Joseph and an even quicker response in capital letters had us all bubbling with excitement!

Although Dr. Joseph did not attend the former NSAC himself, his dad, Ivan Joseph is a proud member of NSAC’s Class of ’73.

Dr. Joseph happily accepted the soccer ball at his Halifax office in late fall. He was then more than pleased to return the soccer ball to his dad, in Ontario, during a Christmas visit.

“To say my dad was pleased with the championship ball from the 1972 Nova Scotia Agricultural College team was an understatement,” said Dr. Joseph in a December 26 Twitter post. “First thing he did was go deep into the closet to bring out the jacket. The circle is complete!”

COMMUNITY DAY Agricultural Campus

Thursday, July 16, 2020 | 10am – 2pm **dal.ca/communityday**

HOMECOMING 2020

Save the date October 15-17

Plans are underway for another memorable Homecoming on the Agricultural Campus. We hope you can join us for this annual event which includes Reunion activities, Blue & Gold Awards, the Dean's Breakfast and more.

Class years ending in "0" and "5" celebrate milestone reunions in 2020. This is the perfect opportunity to reconnect! Homecoming is an ideal time to host a reunion. However, the Alumni office is pleased to support your reunion plans during any time of year. If you are interested in initiating a reunion celebration for your class, contact the Alumni office.

agalumni@dal.ca | 902.893.6022

AN EVENING OF GREAT COMPANY
AND CONVERSATION WELCOMING
DALHOUSIE'S 12TH PRESIDENT, DR. DEEP SAINI.

ALUMNI RECEPTIONS

Dr. Saini began his presidency in January and is eager to learn from your experiences as members of the Dal community. Together, Dr. Saini looks forward to strengthening our impact while pushing the boundaries of global knowledge and innovation.

We hope you can join us and be part of the celebration in your city.

January 28	Truro, NS
February 5	Halifax, NS
February 25	Ottawa, ON
February 26	Montreal, QC
February 27	Toronto, ON
March 25	Sarasota, FL
April 6	Edmonton, AB
April 7	Calgary, AB
April 8	Vancouver, BC
April 29	St. John's, NL
June 10	Boston, MA
June 11	New York, NY
June 16	Saint John, NB
June 17	Charlottetown, PE

alumni.dal.ca/2020receptions

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY
ALUMNI

Brian Crouse

(Class of '75)

Brian Crouse is the newest director on the Faculty of Agriculture Alumni Association board. He has already become a valuable asset with his connections, passion for and history of the Agricultural Campus, its students and alumni.

In April 2018, Brian retired after a 41+ year career in agriculture. Much of that time being spent exactly where Brian earned his diploma in 1975 – at the Agricultural Campus.

Throughout his fulfilling career, Brian served in numerous positions including student placement officer, manager of Career Services, Scholarships & Awards and Student Recruitment while bringing his career to a conclusion as academic advisor and coordinator of the First Year Experience. He enjoyed his many opportunities to travel internationally -to places like the US, Norway, India, Colombia and Brazil, promoting the AC and developing pathways for students to come to study at the AC.

Brian influenced, supported and advised so many students over his career – making a huge impact for both the students and AC.

Now enjoying gardening and home projects, along with the change of pace retirement has given him, Brian recently took some time to reflect on his student and career days on the Agricultural Campus. Brian's wife, Liz and one of his two children (Megan) are also proud AC alumni, along with countless extended family members. Son, Tim, is a grad of Dalhousie's MBA program.

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?

I always valued the sense of "team" at the AC. The collaboration between faculty and staff from multiple units make it a collegial place. AC students are fortunate to have a wonderful team of academic advisors complementing the staff in Student Services.

That being said, I also feel the connectedness of faculty and the teaching staff with alumni is truly unique (and special) to the AC. Faculty and staff are often able to speak to current students about the career options of alumni from their respective programs. Many faculty members are active researchers and students have benefitted from having information on research brought into the classroom. Being able to promote the strength of these teachers when encouraging high school students to attend the AC, was something I did with pride.

Overall, the AC has been very student focused – something I have always been proud of.

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

There certainly has been a lot of change on campus since I was a student 47 years ago. The growth of academic programs and the supporting infrastructure and buildings to support a comprehensive university campus is an obvious change.

However, the most significant change for me to note is the shift in student demographics. From a time when students primarily came from Atlantic Canada and were generally from rural and small-town schools, to the present when students come from across Canada and all around the world, in fact.

You dedicated your career making a difference to students at the Agricultural Campus, what are you most proud of?

I am proud that students who have graduated in the 45 years since I graduated from the AC have had the same positive student experience during their studies that I had.

I had a wonderful career supporting students. How gratifying it was to support the transition to university studies for students over the years and then to follow their success after they graduated. A highlight of my career at the AC was leading the Student Recruitment program and establishing linkages with agricultural universities in India. I am very proud that these relationships continue to provide pathways for students from India to come to study at the AC.

This issue of the *AGRICOLA* highlights our new strategic plan – why agriculture? Why is agriculture important to you, with the work that you did/do at the Agricultural Campus?

When talking to high school students about studying agriculture we often defaulted with the phrase that "agriculture is more than farming" while acknowledging the importance of those producing food in primary agriculture.

When we think of the food we eat, a greater sense of what agriculture is gained as we understand that "agriculture" is the science, business and engineering associated with the food industry. We can work in marketing or quality control in food processing, be a journalist, work in banking or finance, or be involved environmental management - and all of us work in "agriculture"!

As the newest member of the Faculty of Agriculture Alumni Association, what do you think alumni should know about the Alumni Association? What do you hope to gain from being involved?

There's a vital role for alumni to support the AC's recruitment initiatives to encourage high school students in their area to consider the AC. The AC provides a wonderful experience for students who may be interested in its wide range of two- and four-year programs.

However, the Agricultural Campus may not be top of mind for high school students. Alumni can be key influencers by maintaining regular contact with local high school guidance counsellors and can encourage AC students to maintain contact with their home high schools.

The Alumni Association is the bridge between alumni and the AC. I am looking forward to helping the Alumni Association continue to facilitate opportunities for alumni to keep connected with the AC. The Alumni Association is also a link that provides the common bond for alumni to re-connect.

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

Barley Party 2020

Friday, April 3, 2020




DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE