

**Philip Keddy**  
**Young Alumni Achievement Award 2014**  
**Class of '06**

As a young boy, he spent hours outside playing with toy tractors and trucks. Being told to go inside for supper or bedtime was pure punishment. Even as he grew older, he wanted to be involved with farm activities – from spring planting, growing or irrigating the crops, fall harvest or helping in the barn with animals, he was there. He learned at an early age to operate equipment and always great concentration to the task at hand.

Not much has changed for young alumnus, Philip Keddy. Although the tractors and trucks are no longer toys.

Since graduating from NSAC in 2006, Philip has been working alongside his parents, Charles and Doris, managing their family operation in the Annapolis Valley. Although the farm was built on strawberries and raspberries, Philip saw an opportunity and accepted the risks and challenges.

Shortly after returning home from NSAC, he converted ¼ acre of family farm land into a test site for sweet potatoes for a local agricultural research facility. Seven years later, he has grown the sweet potato test site into one of the few commercial sweet potato farms in Atlantic Canada. Now spanning 28 acres, the sweet potatoes have taken off.

Of course, it hasn't always been blue skies and sunshine. Sweet potatoes are labor-intensive and need superior care in Atlantic Canada. Since the plants are so fragile, special attention to the temperature is essential before they are hand-planted in the spring and then hand-harvested in the fall, as well as during storage. The past few years have had their high points and low points, full of trial and error, including the loss of a full crop due to improper storage. Philip has maintained a positive outlook and persevered through all of this.

Philip has travelled to North Carolina and to Ontario to study ways to improve growing, harvesting and storing sweet potatoes. He continually looks for ways to minimize the labour-intensive side of the business and a new climate-controlled warehouse has corrected the storage problem.

Described as a hardworking family man who's enthusiastic about farming and passionate about promoting farming to other young farmers, Philip hopes to one day take over the family operation.

Philip has served on the board of directors for the Young Farmers Forum of Nova Scotia for four years. For the past two, he's led the board as chairman. He also serves on the board of Farm Management Canada.

Philip has graduated from the Total Excellence in Agricultural Management (CTEAM) program offered through the George Morris Center, Canada's leading economic agri-food research centre. The four-module program, is for Canada's top farmers. It addresses issues unique to farmers, with regard to finance, succession, the environment and public policy.

Although his dedication to farming fills his days, he's quick to make time for his wife, Katelyn and two young sons, who he hopes will also become stewards of the land.

As a successful young alumnus who is truly passionate about agriculture and has a bright future, it is most fitting that Philip Keddy be named the 2014 recipient of the Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture's Young Alumni Achievement award.