

Farm Technology plowing the way now and into the future

by Gloria Welton

Cory Gallant graduated from Charlottetown Rural High School, and then took the four-year business program at UPEI. He still wasn't sure what he wanted to do. He went on to a Computer Science degree and was hired by a company called Itineris, customer information systems for utilities.

"Currently, most of my work is in the United States and Europe," says Cory. "I run multi-million dollar software implementation programs for utilities, water, electric, and gas companies. This work is exciting, stressful, and rewarding."

Bloyce Thompson is a dairy farmer from Frenchfort, PEI. He also graduated from Charlottetown Rural High School. "I always knew I was going to be a farmer because it is in my blood," says Bloyce. He went to Dalhousie Agricultural College in Nova Scotia and took the Agriculture and Business program. He came home, partnered with his father for a few years, and then took over the family farm.

"Our dairy farm also sells breeding stock. In 2009, one of the cows we bred sold for \$1.2 million. We sell embryos to about 15 countries all over the world.

Cory and Bloyce worked together on branding the farm and on other initiatives such as creating an App called Sync21, which helps monitor Bloyce herd's breeding cycles. "The industry was still relying on the calendar to determine when a cow was ready to be bred. I knew there had to be a better way."

The App, which is available on his phone, efficiently tracks everything the farmer and his staff need to know and do to follow each cow's cycle. "There is not another one like it. It is great for my farm, and we are looking into marketing it as well."

Bloyce says the dairy industry is one of the most technical industries in the world.

"We now have robotic milking systems on about 15 percent of PEI farms. Also, tractor work and time on the fields has been reduced, so less time is needed to plant and harvest. Technology has also helped with food safety. Our milk can be traced from the cow to the grocery store.

"Dairy farming used to be a very labour intensive job. Technology has changed farming for the better, and has improved the lives of farmers. With technology comes new skill sets such as the ability to operate computerized equipment, because some new tractors are like getting into a rocket ship."

Bloyce says there are about 7 billion people in the world and farmers are needed to feed them. "Agriculture is only going to continue to grow. It is a great career to launch into."

For more about **Eastside Holsteins**, visit www.eastsideholsteins.com

For more about **Itineris**, visit www.itineris.net



From left, Cory Gallant, Technology Consultant with Itineris, and Bloyce Thompson, Owner of Eastside Holsteins.

Paramedics: a high energy job

by Gloria Welton

Areas of employment after graduation

- Ground Ambulance
- Industrial First Aid
- Recreation and sports facilities
- Emergency medical education
- Emergency departments
- Air ambulance
- Communication centres

"Employment opportunities on PEI usually start with casual positions, which often offer full-time hours," says **Greg Power**. "The demand for full time/permanent positions depends on changes to the current system and new and different roles Paramedics play in the community. Job numbers are generally stable. At least 50 percent of the labour force in this field is female."

Education

Holland College offers two programs for paramedics: Primary Care Paramedicine (two years) and Advanced Care Paramedicine (one year).

The Bachelor of Science in Paramedicine combines the Paramedicine diploma programs at Holland College with foundational science courses, senior specialized courses in life sciences, and advanced paramedicine courses at UPEI.

Working in this field

To be certified and qualified to work in this field, graduates must pass a national exam and then be provincially licensed.

"In this job, you must be prepared to face scenes such as injury and death. It is a job requiring high energy. There is something new every day, you travel around the Island, and shift work is required.

"Paramedics need great communication skills, leadership ability, knowing your limitations, a balanced lifestyle, wanting to be in a helping healthcare profession, being adaptable, good observation skills, staying up-to-date in a fast changing industry, and working as a team and with other professionals."

A typical day starts at a base in Charlottetown, Summerside, Montague, Souris, O'Leary, or Alberton. There are also different posting sites (usually in community fire halls) as the ambulances are dynamically deployed to provide the best emergency coverage for the Island.

"The first duty of each shift is to complete a safety check of all ambulance equipment. When we arrive at an emergency scene, we first make sure it is safe for the paramedics and patient.

"Paramedics's duties are much more advanced than in years past. We are not just ambulance drivers; we are trained to administer initial treatment to save lives."

For more information, visit

www.hollandcollege.com/programs/primary-care-paramedicine/

www.hollandcollege.com/programs/advanced-care-paramedicine/

www.islandems.ca/Pages/home.aspx



Greg Power has been an instructor with the Holland College Paramedicine programs for eight years. He worked as a field paramedic for 16 years prior to starting at the College.