

Agriculture awards recognize Island farmers and employees

submitted by Carla Buchanan, Executive Director, PEI Agriculture Sector Council

Agriculture Sector

Each year, the **PEI Federation of Agriculture** celebrates the contribution of Island farmers and employees. The past few years have been challenging ones, yet farmers and employees continue to demonstrate their commitment to the industry.

In February, a number of industry awards were presented and inductees were named to the Atlantic Agriculture Hall of Fame.



The Agriculture Employer of the Year Award was presented to Brian Morrison of Morrison Farms Inc. in Summerside. This award was sponsored by T&K Fire Equipment Ltd. in Charlottetown.

Brian Morrison of **Morrison Farms Inc.** in Summerside was recognized as Agriculture Employer of the Year. He goes above and beyond to ensure his employees have a positive work experience.

Morrison Farms Inc. is a second-generation potato and beef family farm. All family members play an important role in the day-to-day operations and management of the company. Brian's father Elbert and two sisters Daisy Steele and Emily Morrison also share the work of operating the potato farm and beef feedlot.

The primary crop is approximately 800 acres of potatoes with grains, milling wheat, and soy beans planted in rotation. During the peak season, they have 18 employees.

Brian was nominated for this award by one of his employees, **Francis Dowling**, who describes him as an "excellent boss, owner, and co-worker who maintains a calm and professional manner even when difficult conditions arise." Brian offers a tremendous level of support and dedication to his employees by providing flexible work hours, appropriate training as needed, and an emphasis on farm safety.

About the PEI Agriculture Sector Council

The PEI Agriculture Sector Council represents agricultural organizations and related groups. Through promotion, education, skills training, and agriculture awareness, the Council seeks a skilled, sustainable agricultural workforce on PEI.

The **PEI Agriculture Sector Council** presented their first annual Agriculture Employer and Employee of the Year Awards.



The Agriculture Employee of the Year Award was presented to Blair Sentner (left) who is Foreman of Vanco Farms Ltd. in Pownal. Presenting the award is Ian Simmons, Chair of PEI Agriculture Sector Council and co-owner of Kool Breeze Farms, in Summerside, who sponsored the award.

Blair Sentner from Ebenezer, PEI was recognized as the Agriculture Employee of the Year. Blair makes an invaluable contribution to a farm operation.

Blair is employed as foreman with **Vanco Farms Ltd.** where he has worked for the past 27 years. In that time, Blair has helped grow the operation from a 90-acre potato farm to the present 1,300 acres of potatoes with grains and forage.

Blair's duties include farm management, agriculture equipment operation, planting, harvesting, truck driving, and mechanic work on farm equipment. Blair says that for the most part the skills that he has acquired are self-taught from years of working in the industry. He does hold a Class 1A License, a Mixer and Loader Certification and has completed a welding course at Holland College.

Blair was nominated for this award by his employer, **Peter VanNieuwenhuyzen**, who describes him as being an "immensely dedicated and well-organized worker who has excellent technical farm knowledge and a dedication to getting things done on time." He has been married for 27 years to Melody and has five children and one grandchild.



For more information about **PEI Agriculture Sector Council**, contact **Carla Buchanan** at 892-1091 or e-mail clbuchanan@peiagsc.ca. Visit the website at www.peiagsc.ca