Spotlight on Yvonne MacIsaac, Dairy production technician — Nova Scotia

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First, bit of background

Yvonne grew up in Georgeville, Antigonish County, within walking

distance of the Northumberland Strait. She has always loved caring for animals from a young age, starting with a little kitten her father found at a job site. Her love of horses came from her father too, which led to having a pony and a horse over the years. Yvonne's interest in cows came from an aunt who owned a couple of Holsteins and milked them by hand. She graduated from NSAC in 1987 with a BSc in Agriculture, majoring in Animal Science, then she worked at Mike and Sue Vermeer's for the summer months while attending NSAC where she gained a tremendous amount of practical experience in animal husbandry and the everyday operation of a dairy farm.

Her Favorite Work Memories

Yvonne said she enjoy's hearing about clients receiving their Master Breeder shields; a wonderful recognition for an achievement that was well earned after years of carefully selected breeding strategies. Also, to walk back into barns and see the strength and resilience of producers who have rebuilt their farms and lives after devastating losses.

The most common question from clients

Looking for ideas to improve udder health and reproduction are the most common.

There is such a wealth of resources available to producers now, not only within Lactanet but also through feed company reps, breed reps, and Veterinarians.

What part of the job does she enjoy the most?

She has always enjoyed just being in barns and around all the animals on a farm, as well as spending time speaking with producers about their farms and every day happenings. Yvonne always considers her time

spent on a producer's farm a privilege; she sees their dedication and the care they take, so she tries to offer the best service she can.

What brought me to work for Lactanet?

"I started working with ADLIC in 1988, after a ROP milk tester told me about this new milk recording company that was looking for people."

She returned that spring from Australia after working there for 9 months on a dairy farm. She returned to Mike and Sue Vermeer's farm for that summer and started with ADLIC in the fall… And after more than 30 years, she is still with Lactanet!!!

What does she like to do outside of work?

Yvonne loves to spend a fair bit of time walking and snowshoeing on the many trails in Cape Breton and along the Northumberland Strait, as well as kayaking. She also enjoys looking after horses, cats and dogs for friends' whenever they need a hand.

What changes have you noticed either in your job, or the industry in the last few years?

There are more options available for producers now with their milk samples. Apart from the standard SCC, fat and protein values, they now have GestaLab, KetoLab, and MUN. We also have Dairy Production Advisors in our own Atlantic region which has been such a valuable addition to the delivery of services. The implementation of ProAction has certainly made a positive impact on practices on dairy farms as well as show the public how much producers care about their animals, industry and the quality of the product they produce.

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