

## studentsuccess

# Considering a **career** in agriculture?

MCC alumnus Bryan Hammis pursues his passion as a corn production manager

By Adele Stuever-Battel

Photos by Kaitlynn Marie Photography

**B**ryan Hammis did not grow up with an agricultural background, but he stumbled upon his passion 13 years ago when he took a part-time job on a local farm.

“It was the best decision I ever made, without a doubt,” said Hammis, who is the corn production manager at Main Farms in Montcalm County.

Hammis graduated from Montcalm Community College in December 2020 with a degree in Agricultural Operations.

He began working for Paul Main, owner of Main Farms, in June 2008, as a high schooler looking for work to do outside with his hands. After graduating from high school, Hammis attended Western Michigan University, Grand Valley State University and Northwestern University looking for the path that was right for him. Nothing seemed to fit. Hammis had always preferred being outdoors and couldn’t see himself feeling fulfilled in a career that put him behind a desk.

During a conversation with Dan Main, the farm owner’s son, who is also co-manager of Main Farms, Hammis expressed his frustration at the difficulty of finding a program that worked for him. That’s when Hammis learned about the partnership between MCC and the Institute of Agricultural



Bryan Hammis fills a corn planter with liquid nutrients that are applied during planting.

Technology at Michigan State University. Paul and Dan had both graduated from the MSU program and recommended it to Hammis.

“How could I not go to school for what I love?” Hammis said.

He expressed his appreciation for a program that allowed him to work and go to school.

“I could be in the harvester up until 30 minutes before class,” Hammis said.

Hammis’s favorite class was an introductory class in the field of crop and soil science because it was an overview of all the things he appreciates about working on the farm. He feels that the faculty and staff he worked with while a student at MCC were key to his positive experience, citing that most of his instructors had real-life experience on the farm that he feels made them more effective at teaching.

Hammis now manages production of up to 7,000 acres of corn each season. Last year, he earned third place in the National Corn Growers Association Yield Contest for his skill in growing corn efficiently, achieving nearly 300 bushels per acre. Hammis has three plots set aside to enter the same competition this year. He wants to focus on reducing the amount of nitrogen he must apply to achieve his target yield.

Despite being unsure of what he wanted to do with his life shortly after graduating high school, Hammis is happy with the decisions he’s made and his prospects at Main Farms. Dan Main is getting ready to fill his father’s shoes as Paul looks to slow down and pass his farm on to the next generation. Hammis said his goal is to help take the pressure off Dan, who has a family of his own to spend time with.

If he could give advice to himself as a high schooler knowing what he knows now, Hammis would remind himself to follow his passion. He said the old cliché, “do what you love, and you’ll never work a day in your life,” holds true for him. It’s a piece of advice his grandfather, who worked all his life in construction, instilled in him. ■

