Moving back to Bemidji, Minnesota from the U.S. Virgin Islands in March might seem like a difficult transition, but for Rosemary “Christie” Ketring, ’05, the cold and snow are no surprise. Growing up in East Grand Forks, Minn., Ketring found city life did not prohibit her from discovering a passion for agriculture. Ketring was used to a smaller high school and the proximity of the Crookston campus to home was appealing. More importantly, the campus offered her the degree option she wanted in animal industries management. She immersed herself in activities like the Horsemanship’s Club, Animal Science Club, and Intercollegiate Horse Show Association (IHSA) while on campus.

“I really enjoyed my collegiate experience at Crookston. Even though I did not have a background in agriculture, I wanted to learn everything I could,” Ketring explains. “The other students helped me learn and form my own ideas and opinions. As a group, we could get things done because we enjoyed working together; I never felt like an outsider.”

Once graduated, Ketring set off on the adventure of a lifetime, taking a position as a research analyst in the animal science program at the University of the Virgin Islands Agricultural Experiment Station in Kingshill. Ketring had to make adjustments for the change in lifestyle and as the only female researcher at the station, she found the challenges gratifying.

Ketring was responsible for managing the facility, ordering inventory, managing workers in the field and for the health and well-being of the experiment station’s sheep herd. “I think this whole experience has made me easier to deal with,” Ketring admits. “I am no longer intimidated by new situations, and I gained self-confidence and self-reliance as a result.”

Those abilities were enhanced because Ketring was allowed to take on responsibilities and manage. “I had the freedom to make decisions, offer suggestions, have my name on published research and attend the animal science conference for professionals in my field.” Ketring relished those opportunities, and they were available to her because the experiment station is small. In her undergraduate experience she discovered that small class sizes offer students great advantages. Those same things were true in her work as a research analyst at the experiment station.

Will she miss heading to the beach in one of the most beautiful places in the world? Probably, but Minnesota has its own special kind of beauty. That is something Ketring won’t have to learn to appreciate, she was born to it.

If you would like to learn more about agriculture at the U of M, Crookston, visit www.UMCrookston.edu.