

## Keeping it in the family

Sophie Sullivan is a kiwifruit industry native and has over a year and a half of experience working for Shortridge Estate, where she has already made a name for herself as a dedicated and skilled professional.

Sophie grew up in the kiwifruit industry, and so her passion for the sector began when she was very young, beginning with fond memories of the family orchards. Her family owns an 11-hectare kiwifruit orchard, and Sophie still loves working below the vines alongside her mother. She enjoys being out in the orchards, getting her hands dirty and learning by doing. This hands-on approach has helped her develop a deep understanding of the industry and the skills necessary to succeed in it.



*“I’m a very hands-on learner, so just getting out there, being on the tools, just being shown as much as I can, just learning from other people. That was my main way, and I did learn quite a lot through Polytech, but yeah, it’s a very, very cool industry to work in,” she says.*

In her current role as Assistant Manager at Shortridge Estate, Sophie is responsible for helping to oversee the day-to-day operations of the company. She works closely with other members of the team to ensure that the company's goals are being met on a daily basis, which includes supporting the teams reporting to her as well. Like them, she began in a kiwifruit production role, moving from lab work to field work, and then into management. She now does a bit of both, which she quite likes! When asked about her career progression at Shortridge Estate, Sophie says that she *“started out doing a lot of winter bud counts, and then I moved into a supervisor’s role. I moved into a lab role then I moved into an administration role, and now I’m back in the orchard to help the family out.”*

Sophie is always on the lookout for ways to streamline processes and make the operations more efficient, for both her family and for Shortridge Estate. Her willingness to roll up her sleeves and get her hands dirty sets a great example and is helping to build a strong team spirit. To her, it is only up from here. She sees that the industry is rapidly growing, and she is passionate about the potential it creates for anyone curious about working in the kiwifruit business.

*“There’s just so many different jobs that you can do, like you can come from any part of the world or any other industry and pretty much find a job that will suit you,” Sophie says.*

With the Bay of Plenty sunshine overhead, and her family by her side, Sophie sees a long and fulfilling future ahead of her at Shortridge Estate. Her strong work ethic, positive attitude and natural leadership skills will carry her far, and she is sure to make a significant contribution to the kiwifruit industry as a whole!

