

FIRM FOCUS ON FARMING

FARM CADET PROGRAMME writer PETER WHITE photographer DUNCAN BROWN



“GOING THROUGH SMEDLEY AS A CADET IS ONE THING BUT TO WORK HERE AS A STAFF MEMBER IS GOING TO LOOK AWESOME ON MY RESUME FOR FUTURE JOBS.”

SHAUN TAHAU

SHAUN TAHAU has gone from being a trainee cadet at Smedley Station in Waipawa, Central Hawke’s Bay, to one of the block managers training the new recruits. It is something the 22-year-old is proud to have achieved.

“It is awesome. It is an honour for me to have come through the programme and the station managers have obviously thought I was good enough to come back and teach, which is quite cool when you think about it,” says Shaun.

Smedley Station and Cadet Training Farm offers high quality, accredited courses that provide hands-on agriculture skills training for young farmers. Just 13 trainees are accepted each year.

Shaun has always wanted to be a farmer, having grown up familiar with the farming industry. Smedley Station take students straight out of school, and Shaun started there after finishing Year 13 at Napier Boys’ High School.

“I did two years as a cadet. The first year you do general sort of jobs as a junior – like fencing, chainsaw safety and all that sort of stuff. The second year, as a senior, you do your stock work – you get a couple of dogs,

learn how to train them and learn all the general stock-handling skills.”

After his two years at Smedley, Shaun went shepherding for two-and-a-half years before returning to work there as a block manager. In this role, he looks after one of the blocks on the station, having responsibility for all the stock shifts and their feeding arrangements, and has two cadets with him.

“I have a senior and a junior with me, so I organise them for the week. There is also all the liaising with the stock agents to do, so basically, I am responsible for all of the day-to-day management of the block.”

Shaun says working at Smedley is very rewarding as he gets to teach the next generation coming through.

“Just seeing them progress in doing any skill is awesome. I get so much out of my job every day, which is pretty much what anyone would want.”

Shaun took English, Statistics, PE, Agriculture and Engineering in Year 13. He says the key for school leavers who want to get into a farming cadet course is to have a passion for it.

“Show that you are really keen, ask a lot of questions, and get out there and help out on the local farms. The advisory board at Smedley love a person that shows they really want to do it.”

Shaun is positive about his future as a farmer and the benefits of what he is doing now.

“Going through Smedley as a cadet is one thing but to work here as a staff member is going to look awesome on my resume for future jobs.

It is a stepping-stone job here and sets you up really well.

“Ideally, I would like to go into an equity partnership into a farm and what I am doing will set me up quite well for that.”

KEY FACTS



- **SHAUN TAHAU** WORKS AS A **BLOCK MANAGER AT SMEDLEY STATION AND CADET TRAINING FARM** IN WAIPAWA, CENTRAL HAWKE’S BAY.
- HE PREVIOUSLY ATTENDED **SMEDLEY STATION** AS A **TRAINEE CADET**, WHERE HE RECEIVED **HANDS-ON AGRICULTURE SKILLS TRAINING** FOR YOUNG FARMERS.
- **SHAUN** RECOMMENDS THOSE WHO ARE **KEEN ON GOING INTO A FARMING CADET PROGRAMME** SHOW REAL INTEREST IN THE INDUSTRY, HELP OUT ON LOCAL FARMS AND ASK A LOT OF QUESTIONS.



For more information on career opportunities in the **Beef + Lamb industry**, visit www.beeflambnz.com
For more information on the trainee cadet programme at **Smedley Station**, visit www.smedley.ac.nz