

MEET THE MEAT INDUSTRY

EVERY DAY IS DIFFERENT

writer **SARA CARBERY** // photographer **MEL WAITE**

There are many different paths to take into the meat industry and a huge variety of careers to choose from. For **STEPHANIE LEAMY**, returning home to New Zealand from a nannying job in London during the strictest COVID-19 lockdown propelled her into a packing job at AFFCO Manawatū and from there into a fulltime role as a compliance officer.

"I like it that every day is different and I'm constantly learning and interacting with all sorts of different people," she says.

Over the two years she's worked in compliance, Stephanie has gained qualifications in risk management, health and safety, animal welfare and advanced auditing and learnt about rectifying issues across a range of standards and processes.

AFFCO also pays her 10 hours per week to study for a Bachelor of Agricultural Science through Massey University. Providing students with "relevant, up-to-date skills to help you take your place in this exciting industry," Massey's BAgSci covers every aspect of agriculture, including pastures, crops, animal and soil sciences, economics, agribusiness and the influence of government policies, regulations and Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations.

Stephanie was recently awarded a Meat Industry Association (MIA) scholarship, which covers her university fees for a year, teams her with a mentor and provides opportunities to network and take part in training and industry days.

She admits that studying and working fulltime can be challenging, "but I like learning while also seeing it happen in real life".

For example, last year she took a soil science paper which taught her more about the science behind the environmental sampling and monitoring her company does to ensure they are compliant with regulations.

Stephanie's job is just one of thousands in the New Zealand meat industry, which employs more than 25,000 people across a range of areas, including processing, technical (science), marketing, livestock, people management and more.

"There are so many options available," says Stephanie. "There is a career for everyone to match your interests and skills."

Her advice? "Take every opportunity you can."

Stephanie grew up on a sheep and beef farm in the Pohangina Valley in Manawatū and went to St Peter's College in Palmerston North. In her final year there,

she took Biology, English, History, Geography, Religious Education and Statistics. "I kept my options open."

"Biology, English and Statistics are the most helpful subjects as I now have to write audits and effectively communicate with all sorts of people, and I am doing a science degree, so understanding biology and being able to present and understand info in stats is critical."

She says business would have been helpful for the compulsory management and accounting papers she had to take.

Stephanie is unsure where her career will take her but she's excited by all the possibilities. "Being able to live and work overseas would be cool."

mia
Meat Industry Association



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STEPHANIE LEAMY

KEY FACTS



- **STEPHANIE LEAMY** IS A COMPLIANCE OFFICER AT **AFFCO**. SHE'S BEEN IN THE ROLE FOR TWO YEARS AND HAS GAINED SEVERAL QUALIFICATIONS.
- SHE IS CURRENTLY STUDYING TOWARD A **BACHELOR OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE** THROUGH **MASSEY UNIVERSITY**.
- **STEPHANIE** WAS RECENTLY AWARDED A **MEAT INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP**. THIS COVERS A YEAR OF HER TUITION FEES, SETS HER UP WITH A MENTOR AND PROVIDES NETWORKING AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.



For more information on careers, scholarships and graduate positions available in the meat industry, visit www.meatyourcareer.co.nz

For more information on study options at Massey University, visit www.massey.ac.nz