

LOVE OF THE OUTDOORS

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FARMING FOCUS

MICHELLE CRAWFORD used to help her neighbour milk the cows and from then she knew she wanted to be a farmer. Her love of animals and farming has only grown since and now the 21-year-old is living the dream working on a dairy farm near the Waikato town of Te Aroha.

Michelle went to Whangārei Girls' High School. In Year 13, she took Agriculture (by correspondence), Biology, Chemistry, PE and Statistics.

She was relief milking all through her high school years, so it was always going to be a career in farming for her.

"I always knew I wanted to do something in agriculture and definitely working outdoors on a farm," says Michelle.

"I knew I didn't want an office job so I started to grow my knowledge in the agriculture sector by going to uni and then finding a job in the industry that would suit me."

Michelle completed a Bachelor of Agriculture Science at Massey University before landing her job near Te Aroha.

She is grateful to DairyNZ for the mentorship, assistance and support she received while going through university.

"You get paired with a mentor who helps you with any questions you may have. It was highly reassuring. I was fortunate I got the job I have through Susan Stokes, the education facilitator at DairyNZ, who was so helpful to me at Massey."

Michelle's job involves plenty of variety and the opportunity to learn new skills.

On any given day she milks cows in the morning, then does tasks that are needed on the farm – like feeding out to the cows, rearing calves and feeding them milk, fixing fences, weed spraying and machine maintenance.

"I love that it is outdoors. I love the animals, how the job is flexible and you are not stuck doing one thing, plus the job is very practical. There is so much to learn and to do.

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Challenging herself to go out of her comfort zone has been another positive for Michelle, especially working with heavy machinery.

"I have not had much to do with that, so it was kind of a challenge at first, but it is getting easier now – things like putting the loader on the tractor and bale feeders. There is quite a lot going on."

Michelle recommends the dairy industry as a career to consider, especially for young women.

"There are so many more women in agriculture now [who] you can talk to and you don't feel undermined. I feel that if you love your job, then you will never work a day in your life. So for school leavers, if you love being outdoors and you love animals, it is an awesome career.

"There are lots of different jobs in the dairy industry that can suit you and heaps of progression to new opportunities."

KEY FACTS



- **MICHELLE CRAWFORD** WORKS ON A **DAIRY FARM** NEAR **TE AROHA, WAIKATO**.
- SHE HAS A **BACHELOR OF AGRICULTURE SCIENCE** FROM **MASSEY UNIVERSITY** AND WAS SUPPORTED BY **DAIRYNZ** THROUGH HER STUDIES.
- **MICHELLE** STUDIED **AGRICULTURE (BY CORRESPONDENCE), BIOLOGY, CHEMISTRY, PE AND STATISTICS** IN YEAR 13.



For more information on career options within the dairy sector, visit www.godairy.co.nz and www.dairynz.co.nz/people/dairy-careers
For more information on study options available at Massey University, visit www.massey.ac.nz