

MAKE AN IMPACT WHERE IT COUNTS

ASK ABOUT AGRICULTURE

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“ I HELP DEVELOP TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR FARMERS AND CONSULTING OFFICERS ACROSS AREAS FROM PASTURE MANAGEMENT TO ENVIRONMENTAL BENCHMARKING. ”

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KIERAN McCAHON

The chance to make a difference to an important part of New Zealand's economy was what motivated **KIERAN McCAHON** to get into agriculture.

“What attracted me to agriculture was the ability to make a real wide-ranging impact. It is one of our biggest sectors, but it is also extremely interconnected,” he says.

The 24-year-old has a Bachelor of Agriculture Science from Massey University and a Master of Management, majoring in Agribusiness, from the University of Waikato.

Kieran is grateful to have been awarded two scholarships from DairyNZ, which were instrumental in getting him through his university years.

“It takes the financial stress off your shoulders, meaning you can focus more on your studies. The mentoring side of things was huge as well – being able to tap on people's shoulders and ask questions of experts across DairyNZ was invaluable.”

Now, Kieran works for DairyNZ as a solutions and

development specialist in farm systems, which he says sits between research and extension (advisory services).

“I help develop tools and resources for farmers and consulting officers across areas from pasture management to environmental benchmarking.”

Kieran attended Dargaville High School in Years 9 and 10 then spent his final three years at Westlake Boys' High School. In Year 13 he took Cambridge exams in Maths, English, Physics and Chemistry.

Initially, it was civil engineering he was headed towards until an open day at Auckland University changed his projected career path.

“It all became very real to me. As a country boy, I was wondering whether I wanted to spend four years studying in a city [and] to end up with a job in a city – so I decided to see what else was out there.”

Kieran rates both science and English as incredibly important for getting him where he is today.

“You realise just how broadly applicable those skills are. I have always had a real passion for research, the

ability to be curious and solve problems to real-world challenges. Science gives you the broad method of how to go about solving these problems but you also need to be able to effectively communicate the results, which is where skills in English are valuable.

“Science is incredibly important to allow us to farm better into the future. There is a massive amount of research that goes on within the agricultural industry – from identifying forage species that grow more across the year to looking at options for reducing nitrogen leaching and methane emissions from cows.”

Kieran has three bits of advice to school leavers. First, that there is more to agriculture than just milking cows. Further, you do not have to be raised on a farm to find your passion in agriculture. And lastly, that the industry is incredibly interconnected, people are always happy to show you what they do in their role, so build those connections.

He adds, “Sometimes finding out what you don't enjoy is just as important as finding what does float your boat.”

KEY FACTS



- **KIERAN McCAHON** HAS A BACHELOR OF AGRICULTURE SCIENCE FROM **MASSEY UNIVERSITY** AND A MASTER OF MANAGEMENT MAJORING IN **AGRIBUSINESS** FROM THE **UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO**.
- HE WAS AWARDED TWO **DAIRYNZ SCHOLARSHIPS**, WHICH HE FOUND INVALUABLE DURING HIS TIME AT UNIVERSITY.
- **KIERAN** WORKS FOR **DAIRYNZ** AS A **SOLUTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST**.



For more information on career options within the dairy sector, visit www.godairy.co.nz and www.dairynz.co.nz/people/dairy-careers