

FORGING A NEW WAY FORWARD

TAKING LAW & ECONOMICS INTO AGRICULTURE



“ REBEKAH TE RITO
 I WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT OTHERS SEE AGRICULTURE AS A VIABLE OPTION GOING INTO THEIR CAREERS. THE SUPPORT THAT IS REQUIRED FOR THOSE ON FARMS TO GET THE BEST OUT OF THEIR OPERATIONS PROVIDES COMPLEX CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES. ”

writer **PETER WHITE** // photographer **ALAN STEVENS**

REBEKAH TE RITO is proudly setting a new path for law graduates to follow.

Despite having had little to do with farming while growing up in Auckland, she sees herself as a future leader in the dairy sector.

Rebekah is in the third year of a Bachelor of Laws and Management Studies majoring in Law and Economics at the University of Waikato. The 20-year-old wants to work with farmers, local councils and government.

“I am the only DairyNZ scholar with a law and economics degree and of Māori descent. I hope many others will come through with a legal degree into agriculture along with greater diversity in the sector,” she says.

“As an individual from the city, I want to make sure that others see agriculture as a viable option going into their careers. The support that is required for those on farms to get the best out of their operations provides complex challenges and opportunities.

“I want to make positive changes in the sector. We have to look after the planet but also do it in a way that we can still sustain ourselves economically.”

Rebekah’s interest in agriculture began in Year 13 at Rosehill College, where she studied Economics, English, Mathematics with Calculus, Mathematics with Statistics, and Physics. Her sister set up a TeenAg club, which was part of New Zealand Young Farmers. Rebekah entered a local competition with another student and finished second. She then took part in the national grand final and won an award.

“It really encouraged me to stay in the sector. I didn’t want a job in the city when I left high school.”

At university she has created strong networking associations – such as membership of the Future Foods Network, Rural Business Network and New Zealand Young Farmers – to broaden her networks and learn more about the industry.

“Networking is incredibly important. The Future Foods Network has enabled me to talk to some incredible people in the industry with the opportunity to engage with them on a personal level. From there, I have been exposed to some great opportunities.”

She has found internships as an Economic Researcher at DairyNZ and Law Clerk at Federated Farmers, as well as working on a dairy farm, hugely beneficial to her becoming established in the sector.

Rebekah is one of only two students at the University of Waikato with a DairyNZ scholarship. This has enabled a close relationship of both academic and personal support, which has been coupled with ongoing support from DairyNZ and opportunities to gain relevant experience.

She has a simple message for school leavers: “You need to be open minded. Too many people worry about the status of a particular career path instead of thinking how they can be beneficial to society.”

KEY FACTS



- **REBEKAH TE RITO** IS COMPLETING A **BACHELOR OF LAWS AND MANAGEMENT STUDIES MAJORING IN LAW AND ECONOMICS** AT THE **UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO**.
- SHE HAS FOUND THAT **NETWORKING, INTERNSHIPS AND WORKING EXPERIENCE** PROVIDES **GREAT OPPORTUNITIES** AND ARE **EDUCATIONAL AND HUGELY BENEFICIAL**.
- **REBEKAH** ADVISES **SCHOOL LEAVERS** CONSIDER HOW THEY CAN BE **BENEFICIAL TO SOCIETY** WHEN **CONSIDERING THEIR CAREER PATH**.

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