

CADETSHIP IN FARMING

HANDS-ON, OUTDOORS AND PRACTICAL

writer **SARA CARBERY** // photographer **REBECCA WILLIAMS**

As soon as **KRISTY ROA** drove through the gates of Waipaoa Station for their open day, she knew this was where she wanted to be.

An hour's drive from Gisborne, Waipaoa is an established sheep and beef station focussed on rearing 16,000 animals and helping 10 live-in farm cadets get work-ready.

"I've absolutely loved it," says 19-year-old Kristy, who is in the final months of her two-year cadetship. "I really enjoy the dog work, being outdoors on a horse and working in a team environment."

Learning from a team of industry professionals, "virtually one-on-one", first-year cadets carry out general farm work, such as fencing and bike maintenance, while the second-year cadets focus on stock work.

Major operations like docking and shearing are undertaken by everyone on the station, and every year each cadet is given a dog to train.

Having grown up in Hamilton, Kristy was initially a bit nervous about her lack of farming experience, but her worries were quickly allayed.

"Everyone starts with the basics," she says. "Whether you've grown up on a farm or not. And there are so many people here to learn from."

All 10 cadets – five junior and five senior – live together on the station and share general duties such as milking the cows, feeding the horses



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KRISTY ROA

and pigs and managing dog-food supplies. "It's like living with nine mates!" says Kristy.

Lecture facilities are based at the station and the cadets study towards qualifications at National

Certificate-level as part of the two-year training programme.

Kristy says all the subjects she took in Year 13 while boarding at St Peter's in Cambridge – Biology,

Geography, Statistics, English and Outdoor Education – have been useful.

Outdoor Education taught her leadership and teamwork skills; Biology has helped with pasture growth and animal anatomy; and Geography has assisted with resource management issues and managing the impact of farming on the environment.

Even though she had enjoyed the outdoors, team sports and working with animals from a young age, Kristy hadn't considered farming as a career until a family friend told her about Waipaoa.

Wanting to see if farming was for her, she spent two weeks on a farm during a term break in Year 13 doing tasks such as docking, mustering and helping with general farm work.

"I absolutely loved it," remembers Kristy, who recommends doing something similar if you're interested in farming but haven't grown up on a farm.

When she finishes her cadetship in December – with a National Certificate in Agriculture (Level 4) and 24 months of practical experience to her name – Kristy is heading to Tolaga Bay to work as a junior shepherd.

She aims to work her way up to a management position as quickly as possible and ultimately plans to one day own her own farm.

KEY FACTS



- **KRISTY ROA** IS A **FARM CADET** AT **WAIPAOPA STATION**, AN ESTABLISHED **SHEEP AND BEEF STATION** NEAR **GISBORNE**.
- SHE HAS SECURED A ROLE AS A **JUNIOR SHEPHERD** WHEN HER CADETSHIP FINISHES THIS YEAR AND WILL LEAVE WITH A **NATIONAL CERTIFICATE IN AGRICULTURE (LEVEL 4)** AND **TWO YEARS OF WORK EXPERIENCE**.
- **KRISTY** STUDIED **BIOLOGY, GEOGRAPHY, STATISTICS, ENGLISH AND OUTDOOR EDUCATION** IN YEAR 13.



For more information on the **farm cadet** programme at **Waipaoa Station**, visit www.waipaoa.co.nz

Beef+Lamb New Zealand supports **Waipaoa Station** and is proud of **Kristy's** outstanding achievements, visit www.beeflambnz.com

For more information on careers in **agriculture**, visit www.getahead.co.nz and www.growingnz.co.nz