

# DOGS, NATIVE BUSH AND THE OUTDOORS

## FARM STOCK MANAGER

writer **PETER WHITE** // photographer **FRANCES EADE**

**Working on a farm in Southland has been a positive change of lifestyle for English-born ALEX DE'LAY.**

He arrived in New Zealand from his home in Northumberland, England in October 2017 on a working holiday.

It seems nothing can stop his commitment to farming and learning as much as he can about the industry – not even losing an eye in an accident involving a firework just three weeks after he arrived in New Zealand.

"I had six months off work and found work on a dairy farm. The farmer offered me a job because I showed willingness to work and then another farmer gave me a working dog," Alex says.

"It just shows you that people will help you if you help them. You make your own luck."

Alex has worked at Granity Downs, a 260-hectare intensive beef and sheep farm in Riverton for the last 20 months. It is renowned for its natural beauty and has a large area of native bush.

He is a stock manager with plenty of variety in his work and loads of responsibility as he is in sole charge much of the time.

"Every day you wake up and something different needs to be done. You always have jobs going on and you have to use your initiative. I am always busy.

"One of the best things is I get to work with my dogs every day. It is good fun to train them and work with them. Just being outdoors is pretty much one of the biggest things about this job."

Last year, Alex completed the Beef + Lamb New Zealand Generation Next programme that involves three workshops over a six-month period.

The programme gives graduates an understanding of farm business, how to develop better decision-making skills, understanding technology and genetics in the industry, the importance of managing mental health and overall industry goals.

Alex loved the knowledge he gained and the trips to Dunedin and Oamaru. He says he now knows more about what it takes to become a farm manager.

His advice to school leavers is to help out at your local farm to gain some hands-on experience and join your local Young Farmers' club.

Alex did not grow up on a farm but loved being involved with animals and volunteered on local farms from 14.

"I just rocked up to a local farm during lambing time and asked the farmer if I could help out. I built up a bond with him over the years and went up there all the time on my bike. It was probably a three-mile bike ride each way.

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ALEX DE'LAY



"I never got paid for it but it was what I enjoyed and that is where my experience started from. I definitely encourage school leavers to always have a willingness to help people.

"All you need is some initiative and common sense and you'll do well in farming."

### KEY FACTS



- **ALEX DE'LAY IS THE STOCK MANAGER AT GRANITY DOWNS, A 260-HECTARE INTENSIVE BEEF AND SHEEP FARM IN RIVERTON.**
- **HE COMPLETED THE BEEF + LAMB NEW ZEALAND GENERATION NEXT PROGRAMME, WHICH INVOLVED THREE WORKSHOPS OVER SIX MONTHS.**
- **FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN FARMING, ALEX RECOMMENDS HELPING OUT ON A LOCAL FARM TO GAIN EXPERIENCE AND JOINING A LOCAL YOUNG FARMERS' CLUB.**



For more information on the **Beef + Lamb New Zealand Generation Next programme**, visit [www.beeflambnz.com/your-levies-at-work/blnz-generation-next-programme](http://www.beeflambnz.com/your-levies-at-work/blnz-generation-next-programme)