

# BUILDING A SOLID FUTURE

## PROGRESSION AND PROSPECTS ON OFFER

writer **PETER WHITE** // photographer **GEOFF HORRELL**

**GEORGE BLYTH** grew up in Canterbury on lifestyle blocks and always wanted to get into farming work.

His love of the outdoors and animals, particularly dogs, made that a sure thing. A key factor in his decision was the successful SWITCH programme, run through Primary ITO, which gave him two days a week working on a local farm.

"It just confirmed for me that was what I wanted to do. It was a really good experience and probably helped me get my first job."

After finishing Year 13 at Rangiora High School in 2017, George went shepherding in Southland for a year. In 2018, he won a scholarship from Silver Fern Farms worth \$5000.

"For the scholarship we had to come up with a big idea for the red-meat industry. My idea was for the traditional breeding cow to be able to regularly raise twins rather than just singles. I figured it is desirable for sheep to have twins, why shouldn't cattle be able to produce twins as well? They have four teats for a reason."

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**GEORGE BLYTH**

With the prize money, George enrolled at Telford to further his theoretical understanding and has completed a Diploma in Agriculture (Level 5). Telford's campus near Balclutha covers 850 hectares and was the ideal place for him to continue to build his farming career.

George, 20, is now shepherding on Carterhope Estate in Balclutha, a 16,000 stock unit sheep and beef farm.

"I have a really good boss and am happy as can be. I love being in the outdoors and getting the variation that farming offers.

"Each day you are doing something different and it keeps things interesting.

"I have a team of seven dogs and I am really passionate about them. It is really satisfying to train them and work with them every day."



George would like to further develop his skills and progress into a stock manager role. In the long term, he hopes to eventually own his own farming business.

In his final year of school, George studied Physical Education, Agricultural Science, Construction and Mechanical Technology, and did his work placement on a farm two days a week.

He recommends a career in farming to school leavers.

"Bright kids often get turned away from a farming career as they are told they must go and get a degree to be successful. In the farming game you have to be constantly making decisions, so being a thinker is a real asset.

"I definitely think there is a good future in farming. The industry has just proven how essential it is through the COVID-19 crisis and job prospects are good with the opportunity to climb the ladder at a young age. You can also save a decent amount of money as most packages include a house, power and Wi-Fi."

### KEY FACTS



- **GEORGE BLYTH HAS A DIPLOMA IN AGRICULTURE (LEVEL 5) THROUGH TELFORD.**
- **HE WORKS AS A SHEPHERD ON CARTERHOPE ESTATE IN BALCLUTHA, A 16,000 STOCK UNIT SHEEP AND BEEF FARM.**
- **GEORGE DID A WORK PLACEMENT ON A FARM TWO DAYS A WEEK THROUGH THE SWITCH PROGRAMME, RUN THROUGH PRIMARY ITO, ALONGSIDE HIS YEAR 13 STUDIES.**



For more information on studying toward a career in the agriculture industry through the Southern Institute of Technology, visit [www.sit.ac.nz/telford](http://www.sit.ac.nz/telford)

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