

# A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH

## RESEARCH HELPS FARMERS

writer **PETER WHITE**

photographer **JOHN DAVIDSON**

**“Working in the farming sector is more of a lifestyle than a job,” says JACK GREIG, a research technician with DairyNZ based in Lincoln, Canterbury.**

The 23-year-old grew up on a farm on the west coast of the South Island and always knew his career would be in agriculture. He attended South Westland Area School in the small town of Harihari.

In Year 13, he took Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Statistics and Economics, which have been helpful to him since leaving school.

Jack graduated with a Bachelor of Agricultural Science with Honours from Lincoln University before joining DairyNZ in December 2021. His research technician role is varied and interesting – with about 60 percent of his time

spent on farms and 40 percent back in the office.

“It is a key role in research and development for the dairy sector,” he says. “There is plenty of variety. We don’t do the same thing every day, that’s for sure. This includes conducting all the practical research for the scientists’ research projects. We go out on farms collecting samples, measuring pasture and supplement feeds, as well as milk sampling and urine sampling.”

What Jack loves most about his job is the interaction he has with dairy farmers. Meeting so many different people can have its challenges but is ultimately very rewarding.

“Having good communication skills and understanding how to encourage farmers to share information about

their key farm decisions is important. Helping them adapt to changing times is essential.”

While making a difference in the efficiency of farms and improving yields for farmers is important, the environmental aspects are the priority for Jack and his colleagues.

“Trying to reduce nitrate leaching is a key one. The first project I was leading was around ways to understand nitrogen losses on farm using bulk milk urea tests as a key factor. These days there are pressures coming in from government and environmental agencies, so finding ways to respond to these is key.

“How we are going to adjust to climate change is part of it as well. We did a trial looking at cows under heat stress. If things get hotter, how

will they react? Cows don’t really eat when they are hot so to get rid of that hot energy they just stand there and breathe which reduces their milk production.”

Jack would love to see more school leavers take up the numerous opportunities that exist in the agricultural sector.

“Once you get into the dairy sector, you can easily move your way up. There are plenty of opportunities to grow in the role. You might start off milking cows, but it doesn’t take long to learn how to feed your cows and how to look after them.

“You don’t necessarily have to be from a farming background. You can definitely progress a career really quickly in the sector – there are plenty of opportunities.”



“WORKING IN THE FARMING SECTOR IS MORE OF A LIFESTYLE THAN A JOB.”

JACK GREIG

### KEY FACTS



- **JACK GREIG IS A RESEARCH TECHNICIAN WITH DAIRYNZ, BASED IN CANTERBURY.**
- **HE SPENDS 60 PERCENT OF HIS TIME ON FARMS CARRYING OUT PRACTICAL RESEARCH, SUCH AS COLLECTING MILK SAMPLES AND MEASURING PASTURE AND SUPPLEMENT FEEDS.**
- **JACK GRADUATED WITH A BACHELOR OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE WITH HONOURS FROM LINCOLN UNIVERSITY.**



For more information on career options within the dairy sector, visit [www.godairy.co.nz](http://www.godairy.co.nz)

Visit [www.lincoln.ac.nz](http://www.lincoln.ac.nz) for more information on agricultural study options at Lincoln University