

# LOVING THE LIFESTYLE

## LIVING AND WORKING ON THE LAND

“Farming doesn’t always go to plan and the animals always come first,” says **BRIAR SWANSON**. The 22-year-old is a shepherd on a sheep and Angus stud beef farm in Balfour, Southland. She grew up on a farm and always knew farming would be her career.

Briar went to St Kevin’s College in Oamaru. In her final Year 12, she took English, Statistics, Religious Studies and two agriculture courses (NCEA and Primary ITO practical). Every Friday she did practical work on a farm learning new skills.

During Year 12, she was successful in gaining a place at Coleridge Downs Training Farm in the Rakaia Gorge, Mid Canterbury.

“I did two years there working and studying through Primary ITO, which was awesome and really set me up to be a shepherd – where I am now in Southland,” says Briar.

Last year, Briar started doing the Beef + Lamb New Zealand Generation Next Programme. It is designed to build sheep and beef farmers’ confidence and provide practical farmers with technical support and growth. There are three workshops held over a six-month period.

“I thought it was an awesome opportunity to get more knowledge of what is going on off-the-farm.

As a shepherd, you do all the practical stuff day-to-day – like fencing and stock work – but you don’t always get to see behind the scenes. The course opened up the opportunity to learn more about that.

“It was a great course. I have my final workshop at the end of this year because we got disrupted by COVID. It has been an awesome thing to be part of and I have met a lot of people through it as well. I think it is already paying off in what I am doing day-to-day.”

Briar has also benefited from the Young Farmers Club. She joined when she moved to Southland and says it has been a great networking tool.

“I am not from Southland and knew absolutely no one when I moved down here. I was looking to make some friends and get to know the community and that is what it did for me.”

Briar loves the lifestyle that comes with living and working on the land.

“The best way to sum it up is I just love the whole experience. You get to live on the farm, you get to work with your dogs every day, and actually get to form relationships with your sheep and cattle. You do really get to know them.

“The satisfaction comes after working really hard on a place for a couple of years, you finally get to see your progress and the input you are putting into the place. You really do get to see the results from that.”

Her advice to school leavers is to back yourself, have confidence to get out there and meet people, and ask questions.

“No question is a dumb question. Farmers are good people and they are willing to help you, as long as you have a good attitude.”



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**BRIAR SWANSON**

### KEY FACTS



- **BRIAR SWANSON** WORKS AS A SHEPHERD ON A SHEEP AND ANGUS STUD BEEF FARM IN BALFOUR, SOUTHLAND.
- SHE ATTENDED **COLERIDGE DOWNS TRAINING FARM** IN THE RAKAIA GORGE, MID CANTERBURY FOR TWO YEARS, WHERE SHE WORKED AND STUDIED THROUGH **PRIMARY ITO**.
- **BRIAR** BEGAN THE **BEEF + LAMB NEW ZEALAND GENERATION NEXT PROGRAMME** LAST YEAR, WHICH IS DESIGNED TO BUILD **SHEEP AND BEEF FARMERS'** CONFIDENCE AND PROVIDE PRACTICAL FARMERS WITH TECHNICAL SUPPORT AND GROWTH.



For more information on career opportunities in the **Beef + Lamb** industry and beef, visit [www.beeflambnz.com](http://www.beeflambnz.com)

For more information on the **Beef + Lamb New Zealand Generation Next Programme**, visit <https://www.beeflambnz.com/your-levies-at-work/blnz-generation-next-programme>