



MIA scholarship leads to dream job for Grace

An accidental introduction to agricultural at school made Grace Macdonald aware of the many opportunities the red meat sector has to offer. Now she's enjoying a rewarding role as climate change and sustainability co-ordinator for ANZCO Foods.

"I grew up in Taranaki with an urban background," says Grace, who was a 2020 MIA Undergraduate scholar and is a 2021 Postgraduate Scholar, combining work with studying for her Masters of Management in Agribusiness, focused on land and economic environment strategy.

"In Year 12 I had a timetable clash so 'had to do' agriculture as a subject and I fell in love with the subject. I went on to do a degree in agribusiness and food marketing at Lincoln University.

"It was such a good degree. I didn't know which specific avenue I wanted to pursue when I started but it gave me such a good understanding that I decided to focus on the commercial side, specialising in land and environmental strategy - all about sustainability."

During her university holidays, Grace worked as a farmhand and as a rousey on Southland sheep and beef farms and then, in her final year, secured an internship with ANZCO at their Christchurch head office.

"I was able to get that foot on the ladder thanks to my MIA scholarship," she says. "And that led to me being offered a full time job.

"It's the perfect role for me and my employers are really supportive of my post graduate studies. The work I am doing fits really well with my studies.

"Currently I'm in charge of measuring greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for on-farm practice for ANZCO. Eventually that information will go into a report to go to farmers annually to explain their GHG emissions. That's aligned with the Government's *He Waka Eke Noa* partnership to implement a framework by 2025 to reduce agricultural GHG emissions and build the agriculture sector's resilience to climate change."

Through this framework, farmers and growers will be empowered to measure, manage and reduce on-farm emissions; recognise, maintain or increase integrated sequestration on farms; and adapt to a changing climate.

“It’s very satisfying to be doing work that is going to be so important to farmers and to the wider red meat industry,” says Grace. “By the end of this year, 25 per cent of farmers need to have their GHG emissions measured and by the end of next year, that will increase to 100 per cent.”

MIA awards six undergraduate scholarships providing \$5,000 a year for each year of study and four post-graduate scholarships of \$10,000 for each year of study annually. They are aimed at students considering a future in New Zealand’s red meat sector. MIA also runs a mentoring programme for its scholars, including a networking and educational event each year in Wellington.

“The MIA scholarships have been so valuable for me,” says Grace. “The level of support from MIA has been amazing, particularly the networking and the exposure to such a range of people in the industry – and, of course, it resulted in a great job straight out of university.”