



Focusing on minimising waste and creating value from by-products

Nelson Harper has a passion for waste minimisation and a summer job with ANZCO made him aware of the opportunities to apply his skills to the red meat sector.

MIA Undergraduate Scholar Nelson has family roots in Hawke's Bay and Taranaki and is in the final year of his Bachelor of Engineering (chemical and bioprocess) degree at Massey University in Palmerston North.

"After graduating, I would really like to work with the red meat industry helping them to turn 'by products' into product they can sell, rather than paying to dispose of it," he says.

"Over my three years of study, I've done three internships around protein. In my first year, I worked with Turks, turning offcuts into sausages. Last summer, I worked for Breadcraft in Masterton on Cricket Lab, their cricket protein operation. That was a great innovative business. I went to a presentation by the founder of Cricket Lab and it was so interesting I asked if there would be any opportunities to intern.

"Then, during my last holidays, I worked with ANZCO in their beef section with their technical team on environmentally focused projects dealing with different waste streams and lowering the footprint of the plant. That was a really interesting internship."

Ultimately, I'd like to run my own business helping organisations to turn by products into high value materials, but I'm keen to get experience in industry first."

Nelson is also considering undertaking post graduate study, alongside work.

The 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. The MIA also runs a mentoring programme for its scholars, including a networking and educational event each year in Wellington.

"As a student the scholarship funding is a really good thing but I am really excited about the networking and mentoring opportunities the scholarship provides," says Nelson.

"Networking is critical to the kind of work I want to do because so much of it is about connecting people up with the right people or organisation. That's very much what I was doing over summer with plastics and other 'waste products' - finding other people and organisations that have good uses for it."