



## **Applying collaborative ecosystem processes to new product development**

“I have been reading the Meat Industry Association (MIA) strategic vision and the red meat sector is a huge industry, with many opportunities and challenges,” says post-graduate student Todd Fortune. “I think collaboration across innovation ecosystems could provide real value to the red meat sector.”

Innovation ecosystems and processes are the main focus of Todd’s Masters of Design Enterprise research, with the topic of “A Collaborative New Food Product Development System”. He plans to do a case study of a red meat processor as part of his studies. Todd, who is in the second year of the Otago Polytechnic programme, is a 2021 MIA post graduate scholar.

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.

Originally from Wellington, Todd gained a Bachelor of Culinary Arts (BCA) degree, also at Otago Polytechnic.

“The BCA is a strong design-led and entrepreneurial programme with food as the medium” he says. “We work on designing food products, systems, services and experiences. My major project in year three was to prototype potential products for a chocolate company. It was very engaging, and I felt I would like to further develop my career along the lines of product design and innovation processes.”

A fellow student’s work sparked Todd’s engagement in the red meat sector.

“Another undergraduate was doing an internship within the red meat sector and I saw an opportunity to do some research into innovation ecosystems and processes with a systems-thinking and regenerative-led approach.

“This refers to understanding the system and its effects, whilst considering going beyond sustainable practices. Regenerative practices consider animal welfare, farming practices, worker empowerment, wider community programmes, and environmental initiatives to ultimately provide value to the those involved, the wider community, and the environment.

“We follow a design-thinking philosophy, where the first phase of the framework ‘Empathise’ is crucial to understanding the users and customers and their behaviours. You have to challenge your own assumptions and biases, and not project your behaviours on to the users. This ensures that the innovations are desired by the targeted users.”

Todd is also very interested in open innovation.

“Industries, the creative sector, government, and universities all have a role to play around innovation, as different organisations and individuals have diverse sets of resources, knowledge and skills.

“Open innovation means the sharing of knowledge and collaboration between these in developing new systems or products. I’m interested to see what other bodies such as government, academic institutions, or other food and beverage organisations the red meat sector is working with. This would involve further exploration and discovery of opportunities for the future.”