

Scholarship raises awareness of opportunities for vets in red meat sector

Veterinary Science student Thomas Walshe says gaining an MIA Undergraduate Scholarship made him more aware of the opportunities for vets in the red meat sector and encouraged him to seek valuable experience at a processing plant.

Thomas, from Hunterville, who is entering the third year of his five year degree programme at Massey, is one of the latest recipients of an MIA undergraduate scholarship. Six scholarships are offered every year, with an award of \$5000 per year for each year of study. Part-time or vacation work in the meat industry may be offered.

“I’ve lived on a sheep and beef farm all my life and my father is a vet and my mother a food technologist,” he says.

“I want to work in agriculture and with large animals and I’m keen to look at all the options. My background had given me an awareness about processing but the application process for the scholarship really opened my eyes to the opportunities for vets in the sector. Vets play an important role in the process and I think a lot of veterinary students aren’t aware about that.”

Thomas spent five weeks of his summer holidays working in the beef boning room at the ANZCO Foods plant, and also gained an overview of the wider operation.

“I wanted to gain a greater understanding of how the process works,” he says. “I contacted the MIA scholarship organisers and asked what would be beneficial for me to learn about and they were very helpful.

“I also asked ANZCO if I could gain wider experience too. They arranged for me to spend the last few days there in different parts of the plant. So I spent time in the yards, on the slaughterboard and with the vets and the meat inspectors.

“It was really interesting and I learned a lot, especially around the veterinary work. I’m very grateful to MIA and ANZCO for those opportunities and the wider exposure will be beneficial for me in making career decisions in the future.”