**Oliver Stark DRAFT**

Oliver Stark, a student, aspires to build a career in the red meat sector beyond the farm. His pursuit of a scholarship from the Meat Industry Association (MIA) is instrumental in realising this goal.

Oliver, 20, from Gore, is in the third year of a mechanical engineering degree at the University of Canterbury and has also gained practical experience working at Silver Fern Farms’ Finegand Plant at Balclutha.

The MIA programme recruits high achievers who have the potential to become future leaders in the sector, providing a range of scholarships annually of $5,000pa for undergraduates and $10,000pa for post-graduate students.

Oliver is one of nine new scholars joining the programme for 2024 and there are also nine returning scholars. All are undergraduate or post graduate tertiary students, studying a subject relevant to the red meat processing industry and planning a career in the sector beyond the farm gate.

Oliver grew up on his family sheep and beef farm but says he was keen to explore a career in other parts of the sector.

“I have always been interested in the technical side of the industry and I am really enjoying my degree. During the holidays, I worked as a maintenance engineer at Finegand and it was really interesting. I see engineering in processing as a potential career path.

“I got to do a wide range of work and it really provided an insight for me as to how important it is to keep everything running efficiently and smoothly to ensure the plant is as productive as possible.”

Olivers says the financial sponsorship will be very helpful for him and he’s also looking forward to the mentoring and networking opportunities provided, to give him further insight into the industry.

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