**Stephanie Leamy**

Stephanie Leamy is already combining working in the red meat sector alongside studying for a degree in Agricultural Science at Massey University, and she’s excited about the many career paths open to her.

Stephanie, 22, a 2023 MIA Scholar, started out working in the boning room at AFFCO’s Manawatu processing plant and is now a compliance officer with the company.

“I have been with AFFCO for three years now and it has been really cool getting to learn so much about the company and the red meat sector,” says Stephanie.

“I’ve learned about putting the meat in the box but also how the process is run, the different parts of the company and about the regulatory overseas market access.”

Stephanie grew up on a sheep and beef farm at Pohangina, near Palmerston North, and initially went to university to study psychology before deciding that wasn’t for her. She headed to London for her OE - but COVID hit and she came home and joined AFFCO.

She began her Ag’ Science degree while working in the boning room and is now about half-way through, studying remotely part time.

“I’m really enjoying my work and studies. The whole red meat sector is really exciting and I see so many opportunities for where I could go with my career. I am very happy in compliance but I would also like to learn more about marketing, sales and the logistics side.

“AFFCO has been really good about enabling me to combine my studies with my work. I have a very supportive manager who encourages me with any training I’m keen to do. I have done courses in advanced auditing, animal welfare and health and safety and took part in a women in agriculture day.”

The MIA provides an award of $5000 a year for each year of study for its undergraduate scholars and $10,000 a year for each year of study for post-graduates.

“The scholarship will really help with my study fees,” says Stephanie. “But I am really excited about the networking opportunities it provides too.”