**Thomas Hayward**

Student Thomas Hayward grew up on family’s beef stud in Ngāruawāhia in the Waikato but with support from a Meat Industry Association scholarship, he’s aiming for a career in a different area of the red meat industry.

“My family has an Angus stud and so I have a good grounding in the genetic side, understanding meat and its management,” says Thomas, aged 20, who is in his third year at the University of Canterbury studying for a Bachelor of Law and Bachelor of Commerce, majoring in operations and supply chain management.

“My passion for the industry is how through the supply chain can we grow demand internationally and ensure that emissions for every kilo of meat is as low as possible without hindering our production ability.

“That is from all aspects of the industry and supply chain, from the farm gate to the consumer – and how we can use operational management to make sure we are as efficient as possible at reducing emissions.”

Thomas is one of nine new MIA scholars for 2024. The 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.

“My parents have an Angus stud with 500 cows and hold two bull sales a year – and they also raise lambs,” he says. “They supply bulls all over New Zealand and source genetics from overseas and select for traits such as intramuscular fat and marbling.

“I’m very interested in the breeding for those traits and in effective feed and how we improve cattle to be the most efficient and best possible and how that interacts with the wider meat industry.

“I am really enjoying my degree, both the supply chain and the critical thinking that the legal side brings and applying that from the lens of an agricultural person.”

The MIA scholarship includes mentoring and events and networking opportunities, which Thomas says is one of the most exciting aspects.

“The red meat industry is full of people with great knowledge and ideas and it is so good to be recognised and have the opportunity to be mentored by these amazing people. The scholarships are a great initiative, helping bring the younger generation into the industry and supporting them to be involved in its success in the future.”

The MIA scholarship programme currently provides support for 18 students, including 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.

**ENDS**