**Fynn Mitchell DRAFT**

Fynn Mitchell has been raising his own lambs since his early teens, now he’s looking to forge a career in the red meat processing sector, with help from a Meat Industry Association (MIA) scholarship.

Fynn, aged 18, from Lumsden in Southland, who has just started his first year at Lincoln University, is one of nine new MIA scholars announced for 2024.

The MIA provides a range of scholarships annually of $5,000pa for undergraduates and $10,000pa for post-graduate students.

“I come from a sheep and beef farm and I enjoy farming but I have always been interested in all the different areas of the red meat industry,” says the Southland Boys High School pupil, who is studying for a Bachelor of Commerce majoring in operations and supply chain management and hopes to also do a further major in finance.

“I’m particularly interested in the development of new products, developing the supply chain and getting them into new markets.

“That whole process from pasture, through processing and the steps into the market is fascinating and that is the direction I’d like to steer my career into.”

Every year since his early teens, Fynn has taken a loan out from his father to buy about 60 lambs and has shepherded them through lambing, raising the lambs until they are sent for processing, before selling the ewes.

“Then I’d pay back Dad and keep my profits. It’s provided me with a bit of experience in the budgeting and financial side and working with the processor.

“Now I am really looking forward to the mentoring side of the scholarship and the opportunity to attend industry events and network with people across the industry.

“I’m aiming to self-fund through university and during my holidays I have worked crutching sheep. That pays really well but the scholarship will give me more freedom to look for holiday or part time work in other areas of the industry relevant to my career goals and to gain wider experience.”

The main purpose of the MIA scholarships is to provide a pathway for school leavers, undergraduate and graduate students into the New Zealand meat processing industry.

The programme recruits high achieving students who have the potential to become future leaders in the sector. It currently provides support for 18 scholars, 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**