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**NERISSA
EDWARDS-HUNTER**

MPI SCHOLARSHIPS

PASSIONATE ABOUT FARMING

writer **PETER WHITE**

photographer **PETER McDERMOTT**

NERISSA EDWARDS-HUNTER was one of six students to receive an On Farm Support Science Scholarship in 2024, awarded by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI). She joined Feilding-based KS Agri on an internship from last July to December.

“This scholarship was hugely beneficial as it has helped me build connections within the advisory sector,” says Nerissa. “My On Farm Support mentor played a large role in both my personal and professional development, which has set me up for success.”

MPI runs the scholarship programme for tertiary students to help increase the number of on-farm advisers supporting farmers and growers.

Nerissa says MPI invested in her success throughout the entire scholarship period and were very supportive.

“Everyone was very approachable and willing to connect us with the right people or resources. Having a mentor through the scholarship also added a personal element, which was definitely my favourite aspect to it.”

Nerissa is now working part-time as a consultant with KS Agri, and part time on a project with Massey University and MPI.

She says every day working for KS Agri is very different and is a combination of indoor and outdoor work.

“There is a wide range of clients, including individual farmers and entities, iwi groups, catchment groups and industry bodies. Field work includes farm visits, gathering samples such as soil or water, and facilitating workshops.

“Office work encompasses analysing results, creating reports and recommendations, as well as mapping, budgeting and consent applications for our clients.”

Getting out on-farm, and especially the client interaction, is what Nerissa enjoys most about her role.

“I also find it very rewarding being able to create tailored plans for a farmer to improve a system’s efficiency and sustainability. In our consulting role, we get to contribute to many aspects of the farm business, which is an incredible privilege.”

Nerissa has a Bachelor of Agricultural Science from Massey University. She says science and farm work often go hand-in-hand.

“Doing a degree in agricultural science gave me the technical knowledge on subjects such as soil science, agronomy, cropping, animal production and animal health. This is definitely essential in my day-to-day work, as we use a systems thinking approach.

“I also gained vital soft skills to communicate complex ideas in the form of report writing and presentation, as well as public speaking to communicate effectively across clients and stakeholders.”

So, what areas of the primary sector does Nerissa see herself specialising in over the next five years?

“I enjoy the farm systems and whenua Māori capability aspects of my role, so across the next five years I will

be aiming to become more proficient as a consultant, especially in these two areas, as I find them very rewarding.”

Nerissa went to Cambridge High School. In Year 13, she took Chemistry, Biology, Sport Science, Statistics and Psychology.

“I always had aspirations of having an outdoor role and decided the primary sector would suit this. It wasn’t until I was at university that I became aware of the array of options available in the primary sector, and from there refined my goal down to being a rural professional.”

Her advice for school leavers coming straight from school — an on-farm role, farming cadetship, or tertiary study, are all great ways to build technical skills, knowledge and industry connections.

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua



KEY FACTS



- **NERISSA EDWARDS-HUNTER** WAS ONE OF SIX STUDENTS TO RECEIVE AN **ON FARM SUPPORT SCIENCE SCHOLARSHIP** IN 2024, AWARDED BY THE **MINISTRY FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES**.
- SHE HAS A **BACHELOR OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE** FROM **MASSEY UNIVERSITY**.
- **NERISSA** WENT TO **CAMBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL**. IN YEAR 13, SHE TOOK **CHEMISTRY, BIOLOGY, SPORTS SCIENCE, STATISTICS AND PSYCHOLOGY**.

ONLINE



For more information on the Ministry for Primary Industries’ On Farm Support science scholarships, visit www.mpi.govt.nz/on-farm-support-science-scholarships