

AWARD-WINNING YOUNG FARMER RURAL CAREERS FOR ALL

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ALANA FITZPATRICK has already made quite an impression in dairy farming, in just her third season in the industry. In April, Alana was named the 2025 Bay of Plenty Dairy Trainee of the Year, after finishing runner-up in the same category in 2024. For her efforts, she won \$6,120.00 in prizes and three merit awards.

She won after a mix of eight practical tasks and a half-hour interview with three judges. Alana (22) says winning the award has made people in the rural sector more aware of who she is.

"It has been amazing. The networking opportunities have been just great and have built more confidence in myself, and my abilities as a farm assistant," she says.

"People are happy to talk to me, and they were before, but now even vets approach me and know who I am."

Alana attended Tauranga Girls' College. In Year 13, she took English, Maths, Chemistry, Biology and Physics.

"I always wanted to be a vet when I was growing up, but didn't quite have the drive to get there. Then, I decided I wanted to be a sheep and beef farmer after I saw an episode on Country Calendar. I thought 'I want to do that' so tried to get a cadetship but didn't quite make it.

"I decided to do a one-year, full-time course at Toi Ohomai (Institute of Technology). I got a relief milking job at a 700-cow farm between Tauranga and Rotorua, while I was waiting for the course to start, and I never really left the farm."

Alana completed her NZ Certificate in Agriculture Level 3 in Farming Systems, Vehicles, Machinery and Infrastructure, and Dairy Farming. She is studying for her Dairy Farming Level 4.

"It is really what the employers want to see these days, that you have your paperwork behind you and also you know the practical side of it as well."

Alana embraces the new technology that is available in the industry. She enjoys discovering how it can benefit on-farm systems.

"Things like collars are really helpful with mating and animal health issues. They have little devices that measure cows' rumination and their activity."

Joining the Te Puke Young Farmers club last year was a great way to meet more people, to push herself outside of her comfort zone, and help build her confidence.

Next season, Alana's goal is to work towards gaining a second-in-charge position. She hopes within four years to step up to be a farm manager.

Her advice to school leavers is to give it a go – particularly young females considering a career in agriculture.

"There are so many pathways in the rural sector, even if you don't want to be on the farm. You can go into feed specialist roles or so many other things you can do.

"It is quite easy to get ahead if you want to work hard. That is one of the key things. Listening is also really, really helpful. If you can listen, you can learn."



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KEY FACTS



- **ALANA FITZPATRICK** WAS NAMED **THE 2025 BAY OF PLENTY DAIRY TRAINEE OF THE YEAR**.
- SHE COMPLETED HER **NZ CERTIFICATE IN AGRICULTURE LEVEL 3 IN FARMING SYSTEMS, VEHICLES, MACHINERY AND INFRASTRUCTURE, AND DAIRY FARMING** AND IS NOW STUDYING FOR HER **DAIRY FARMING LEVEL 4**.
- **ALANA** ATTENDED **TAURANGA GIRLS' COLLEGE**. IN **YEAR 13**, SHE TOOK **ENGLISH, ECONOMICS, MATHS, CHEMISTRY, BIOLOGY AND PHYSICS**.

ONLINE



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