



Agribusiness in Schools
DELIVERING AGRIBUSINESS TO NZ SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Industry Spotlight: Toby Collis Built on Farm. Shaped By Purpose.

Toby comes from a fifth-generation dairy farming family and grew up immersed in agriculture. His early years were shaped by the realities of farm life, where hard work and problem-solving were a part of everyday conversations. That grounding gave him an early appreciation for how deeply interconnected the primary sector is, long before he formally studied it or considered it as a career pathway.

Toby's passion for agriculture was strengthened through lived experience alongside his family, particularly his dad, who played a central role in shaping Toby's understanding of farming life. Rather than seeing agriculture from a distance, Toby grew up observing it closely and gradually building familiarity with how decisions are made and systems operate across a working farm.

A key part of that upbringing was consistent exposure to the wider complexity of agriculture, not just the physical work. Toby describes this as formative in shaping his understanding of the sector.

"Being exposed to the people management skills, the agronomy science, the animals and learning to develop all those small soft skills throughout has been a huge blessing to understand how things work where I am now."

Toby attended Palmerston North Boys' High School, where his interest in the primary industries was strengthened through structured learning in horticulture and agribusiness. Studying horticulture from Year 11 through to Year 13 and agribusiness in Year 12 allowed him to connect his lived experience on farm with formal education, giving him both context and clarity around potential pathways.



Toby was guided by great teachers, who shaped how he approached challenges. One moment that stayed with him came from a calculus classroom, where the focus was shifted away from outcomes and toward mindset.

After graduating, Toby went on to Massey University, completing a Bachelor of Agribusiness with a major in Rural Valuation. His decision reflected both a natural continuation of his upbringing and a strong interest in understanding the financial and analytical side of agriculture.

"Massey's roots as an agricultural university really matter to me, and the fact that it all started here is something I value. The family link helped too. My dad studied there back in the day, my older brother followed, and it too felt like the right decision for me."

During his degree, Toby built strong knowledge of land use, valuation, and rural systems within a focused learning environment. Nearing graduation, he sought a challenging industry pathway, leading him into environmental and farm consultancy at KS Agri, where he now supports farmers with compliance, environmental requirements, and performance improvements across diverse systems.

"I think it's critical to have a foundation of how things work. There's a certain amount of content that you learn in a textbook and a classroom that is very foundational."

Looking ahead, Toby sees his future in agriculture as working within systems where better understanding leads to stronger decisions and meaningful improvements across the sector.