KATIE CROSS’S EXPERIENCE AT LOCHINVER STATION NEW ZEALAND 2010

Accompanied by other Tocal students, Katie spent a month’s work experience at Lochinver Station. After Christmas 2010, she then started working full-time at the station.

Lochinver Station is a sheep and beef breeding and finishing property located just 30km southeast of Taupo, New Zealand.

Katie is now working on a sheep property at Mudgee and plans to start a degree in agriculture by correspondence.

2012 JAPAN TOUR

Tocal has a close relationship with Gifu Agricultural College in Japan. In November 2010, second year students from Gifu visited Tocal to learn about Australian agriculture. They also met with Tocal students and local farmers to learn about Australian culture.

While they were at Tocal, the Japanese students gained experience in horse riding, whip cracking, sheep shearing and a variety of other typical Australian farm activities.

Tocal students gained an appreciation for the Japanese culture that is quite different to our own.

In 2011, a group of Tocal students planned to visit Gifu College which is near Nagoya. However, given the earthquake and tsunami, the tour will probably have to be postponed to 2012.

These cross-cultural tours provide a great opportunity for Tocal students to see a part of Japan, visit farms and stay with a farm family. Japan is a key trading partner and an appreciation of their agricultural practices and culture is important for those planning to work in agriculture in Australia.
CROPPING STUDIES

The Certificate III in Agriculture provides students with theory and practical knowledge to enhance their general farming skills.

Students completing Certificate III complete a unit on crops and fodder. At Tocal, the students follow a number of crops from planting to harvesting, often for hay or silage. They learn how to make good quality conserved fodder from different types of forage crops, how to operate machinery such as mowers, rakes and balers.

An integral part of this course is a tour to cropping areas in South West NSW and staying at Murrumbidgee Rural Studies Centre near Leeton. Students observe a range of crops in various stages of growth and get to talk to farmers about their farm operations.

EX-STUDENT- JAMES McRAE

James writes:

“Completing the Certificate IV and Diploma of Agriculture through Tocal College has given me many opportunities in life, not only in the field of practical agriculture but in many other areas in my life.

I took the plunge to complete my Tocal studies instead of my final HSC year (2007) and since then I have worked on a large cattle station in Western NSW, travelled throughout Europe, the USA and trekked the Himalayas in Nepal.

Throughout university studying a Bachelor of Agricultural Business Management (Charles Sturt University, Orange), I worked for Agrisearch, a research company implementing crop trials. During this time, I learnt a great deal working with the agronomist.

In addition, I managed a Biodynamic truffle farm where the hours were flexible and worked well with my university schedule. I have been lucky enough to have flexible and supportive employers!

During my time at Tocal College I learnt to become self-motivated and an independent thinker, I made great friendships and learnt the challenging skills of juggling work and play.

TOCAL FIELD DAYS

The Tocal Field Days are held every year in the first weekend in May. The 2011 event was an outstanding success mainly due to the teamwork amongst staff, students, local community groups and commercial exhibitors.

About 30,000 visitors took the opportunity to spend a day at Tocal and gain information about farm production, new technologies, environmental issues, tractors and machinery, solar energy, pig racing, good food and wine, weed control, sheep dog trials, private native forestry, arts and crafts and much more.

The Tocal Field Days commenced in 1984 to assist local farmers and hobby farmers to improve their management skills.

Over the years, it has become one of the foremost agricultural field days in Australia. At the same time it has retained its people-friendly approach. During this event, visitors often comment on how helpful and welcoming Tocal students and staff are.

Many visitors come back year after year and enjoy seeing all the new exhibits and demonstrations that evolve and change over time.
THE WOOL TOUR

Each year, Certificate IV students who do sheep and wool electives, participate in a tour to the New England region. They visit a number of sheep properties including studs such as Queenlee Merino Stud at Uralla and Cottington’s Dohne Stud at Dubbo.

They also visit Fletchers Topmaking Plant, which processes wool into yarn for the manufacture of garments in Australia and overseas.

Wool electives include Sheep Breeding, Wool Harvesting (shearing) and Wool Classing (run at Tocal by Hunter Institute of TAFE).

There are a number of scholarships available specifically for students interested in working in the wool industry.

More Scholarship Information
P: 1800 025 520

ROYAL EASTER SHOW (RAS)

Tocal staff and students were involved in a range of activities of the Royal Agricultural Society in Sydney (RAS) again this year. These included presenting public displays in the Food Farm Pavilion and assisting with the cow milking demonstrations.

Students also worked on the Tocal stand, in the Horse Pavilions and some worked as stud grooms in the beef cattle pavilions assisting with show preparation and parading.

RAS provided a great opportunity for students to mix with people and improve their communication skills. It was a wonderful learning experience, especially for students who spent the entire 2 weeks living on the grounds, looking after animals and speaking to visitors.

Students were surprised when visitors were unaware where food and fibre came from. Many RAS visitors did not realise that agriculture contributes around 45% of the NSW economic activity and $10 billion in Australian exports.
EX-STUDENT - ROWAN SHERIDAN

Rowan completed the Horse Husbandry course at Tocal in 2008.

He recently wrote to us about his career to date:

“My 12 months at Tocal will always be remembered - I had an absolute ball. I wish that it had gone for two years instead of one!

Whilst at College I went on many various work placements, including a couple of TB studs in the Hunter Valley and also watched a couple of different trainer/breakers on the horse tour.

The last work placement I did was in Victoria at the Australian Equine Behaviour Centre (AEBCC). After 3 weeks, I was offered a traineeship towards becoming a horse trainer, which I started in January 2009 and finished at the end of 2010.

When I started at the AEBC it was the same as starting any job, getting to know the crew which was fast tracked and tested by the Black Saturday Bush Fires.

We had a fair bit of damage done but no people, horses or buildings were lost on our property. Some good did come from the ashes- that tough times bring people closer which it did, really made me feel like family.

The first year of the traineeship involved learning all the ground runnings e.g. feeding out, running the stables, horses in and out for work, farm maintenance, learning to deal with clientele, general farm runnings, helping with collections from the stallions, getting up at any hour in the night to load or unload a horse off a truck, learning to teach riding, team teaching and coaching at a beginner level.

The teaching/clinics range from 6 year olds to adults over a variety of disciplines such as dressage, show jumping, cross-country or just pleasure riding.

A big part of the traineeship was learning teamwork and leadership skills in regards to working pupils and work experience (not only working with them but living with them too). My skills learned at Tocal played a huge part in this.

As the year progressed I was given some of my own clients and horses to train, which grew over the traineeship from 1 - 2 horses in the beginning, to 10 - 12 horses by the end. Quite a lot of the horses I dealt with were race horses.

I am now employed as a full time trainer specialising in breaking in problem horses and teaching.

For anyone looking to start a career in the horse industry, the best advice I can give is to always have an open mind and learn to value knowledge and experience as it is priceless, you can never make a wrong decision, you can only make one you will learn from.”

OPEN DAYS

The next Tocal Open Days will be held:

10:00am-3:00pm Friday 8 July 2011
10:00am-3:00pm Friday 15 July 2011

Prospective students and their families are encouraged to come to one of these days.

If you haven’t been to Tocal Open Days are a great time to do so. These give you a chance to find out more about courses available and options for gaining credit at university.

More Information
P: 1800 025 520

CAREER SPOTLIGHT

‘G’ JOB PROSPECTS

Grain Grower
Is responsible for the management of a farm producing grains, including wheat, barley, sorghum, oats and canola.

Grazier
Manages a large livestock enterprise usually involving sheep and/or beef cattle. He/she employs stationhands, sets up mustering teams, engages shearing contractors and plans the overall operation of the enterprise.

Geneticist
Researches animal selection and breeding, and provides advice to breeders on selection criteria and breeding programs.

Tocal Brochure Out Now!

Paterson NSW 2421 Australia
Phone: 1800 025 520
Fax: 02 4938 5549
info@tocal.com
www.tocal.nsw.edu.au

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