How Do I Get Into The Horse Course?

Many potential students are keen on horses and horse courses. One of the most common questions we are asked is “How Do I Enrol in the Tocal Horse Husbandry Course?”

About 23 students are selected for the horse course each year. We also maintain a waiting list that is used to replace students who may withdraw before the start of the course.

Students on the waiting list are usually offered a place in the Certificate III in Agriculture.

Prospective horse course students need to complete an application form and attend a short informal interview. They need to demonstrate a strong interest in horses, sound riding skills and a willingness to learn more about horses and agriculture.

One way of assessing riding skills is through a video of your riding skills. When you apply you should send in a video or DVD of you riding a horse. It needs to include mount, dismount, trot and canter and a couple of sharp turns. Please keep the DVD session short - a maximum of three minutes.

Applications for the horse husbandry course close in October each year.

Only those who have applied, been interviewed and provided copies of recent school reports are considered for these limited places.

So what are you waiting for? Why not get a form from the college and arrange an interview as soon as possible?
Principal’s Column

I am pleased to provide my report for the first Tocal Topics for 2009. At the time of writing, our students have settled into college life and are enjoying their time here.

We now have 100 full-time students in three separate courses. We also have about 35 part-time trainees who come for five day blocks during the year.

In May 2009, Certificate IV students travelled to properties in NSW, North Queensland and the Northern Territory for off campus work experience.

No other agricultural college provides such a wide range of opportunities for students who really enjoy their time on and off campus.

Our students get the opportunity to work on many large commercial farms, some with 50,000 cattle or thousands of hectares of cropping. This often leads to job offers, and they get to see parts of Australia they have never been to before.

Employment rates amongst our graduates remain at high levels, during a time when parts of NSW and other states remain affected by drought.

Our college regularly receives calls from employers seeking students for positions on farms and rural businesses. Fortunately for us, the 2008 graduates are all employed or studying at university.

Tocal staff and students have been busy with various events including the Tocal Field Days, Royal Easter Show, and the Hunter Careers Market.

We are planning to visit a number of NSW schools and Careers Markets this year.

If you see us on a stand, call in and say hello. If you know of anyone who might be interested in agriculture or horse courses, please let them know about us.

Most info is on our updated website at www.tocal.com

With best wishes,

Cameron Archer
Principal

Work Experience in the Northern Territory

During May, Certificate IV students were placed on farms across Australia for a one-month work experience.

For Kate Morris and Chris Gorrige, their day at Alexandria Station on the Barkley Tablelands in Northern Territory starts at 5am. After breakfast, they are out mustering cattle on horseback or motorbike somewhere on the 1.6 million hectare property. This property alone runs up to 55,000 cattle.

Most of their work for the rest of the day involves sorting cattle in yards. One day, they trucked six road trains of weaner cattle off the station to another of the NAPCO owned properties in south west Queensland. The next day, they sorted out some of the home bred bulls for breeding.

The day ends about 5:30pm, tea is served at 7:00pm before retiring for the day after an hour or so of rest and recreation. Work experience students may opt to watch satellite TV in the air conditioned common room, get on the internet or just have a quiet chat to their fellow workers.

The North Australian Pastoral Company (NAPCO) owns Alexandria Station along with 13 other stations in Queensland. About 50 people are employed on this station alone. Four other Tocal students are doing work experience on three of these stations.

There are another five students also doing work experience on S.Kidman & Co cattle stations in Central Australia.

Both these companies fly students from Newcastle to the respective stations and back at their expense and the students work for the month in exchange for food and board.

Other students are located around NSW at enterprises ranging from broad acre cropping to feedlots and cattle studs and mixed farming properties.

Students can also travel to farms in New Zealand for work experience.
Ex-Student - Tim Chaffey

Tim grew up on his family mixed farming property at Attunga near Tamworth. His father Richard is a member of The Tocal Advisory Council, which consists of a group of farmers who ensure that our courses continue to meet the needs of the industry.

He gained direct entry into the Certificate IV in Agriculture based on his past farm skills and experience.

After his year at Tocal in 2003, Tim worked on cropping properties at Gunnedah and Mungundi. He has also worked at ‘Yaram Park’, a Victorian Hereford and sheep property.

A few years ago, he enrolled at Marcus Oldham College in Victoria to continue his studies. This course leads to an Advanced Diploma followed by a Degree in Rural Business Management.

As part of the College course, he travelled to New Zealand and China to study agriculture, marketing and business management. In the middle year of the course, college students are required to work for a year in a rural business. Tim spent his year on a large cropping property at Burren Junction in western NSW.

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 and 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 those who spent the entire two weeks living on the grounds, looking after animals and speaking to the attending crowds.

Students were surprised that attendants didn’t know much about where food and fibre came from. Many RAS attendants were unaware that agriculture contributes around 45% of the NSW economic activity and adds $10 billion in Australian exports.

Ute Muster

Each year there are a number of students with their own vehicles. Quite a few students have utes which they are very proud of.

These are often decorated with various items such as spot lights, bull bars, mud flaps and various stickers.

Some students enter competitions with their utes which are very popular around the country.

All those with utes got together during the year in one of the Tocal paddocks for a photo.

Traineeships at Tocal

Tocal has a traineeship program for people who want to work on farms and rural businesses.

This course involves blocks of training at Tocal whilst being employed on a farm somewhere in NSW. Students gain a Certificate II or III after one year and can then progress to a Certificate IV with another year of training.

Trainees with previous experience can be accelerated through the programs by starting at Certificate III and gaining credit for previous training or work experience.

Traineeships are available on beef, dairy, horse, cropping and mixed farming properties.

If you prefer to work and train part-time contact Tocal staff and they may be able to assist you to find a suitable traineeship.
Tocal Field Days

The 2009 Tocal Field Days were the best ever with lots of great activities for our visitors.

Enquiries for our full-time agriculture and horse husbandry courses were the strongest they have ever been. This reflects the buoyancy of the agricultural sector during the current economic downturn.

The number of people attending the Tocal Field Days topped at 28,000 with the exhibitor stands buzzing with interest and sales.

The demonstrations and talks on hay fires, snail farming, keeping backyard sheep, handling and using dogs and fencing construction were keenly attended. One of the spectator highlights was the piglet races.

Judging by the high level of enquiries during the field days and from the careers markets, it looks likely that the College courses will again be full in 2010.

So if you are thinking about coming to the College next year make sure you attend one of the Open Days on each Friday of the July and October school holidays.

Careers Markets

During the year Tocal staff go to a large number of Careers Markets throughout NSW. We can’t get to all of them but try to get to the main ones.

The careers markets we attend include: Dubbo, Bathurst, Forbes, Wollongong, Orange, Coffs Harbour, Canberra, Nowra, Gosford, Parramatta, Northern Beaches, Penrith, Newcastle, Tamworth, Armidale, Goulburn, Campbelltown and Kew.

Tocal also held a successful on-campus Careers Market and this received a great response from Hunter schools.

Were you one of those who visited us in May? If so, let us know what you thought of this careers market by emailing info@tocal.com

“V” Job Prospects

Vet Nurse

Vet Nurses assist veterinarians to care for domestic pets and farm animals that require treatment. Various TAFE colleges offer courses in this area and a number of Tocal graduates have become Vet Nurses due to their interest in working with animals. There are a large number of veterinary practices in towns and cities around Australia and these provide job opportunities for people interested in this field.

Viticulturist

The Hunter Valley is the premier wine-growing region in NSW but wine grapes are now grown throughout NSW. A number of Tocal graduates have embarked on careers in this expanding industry. Typical job tasks include vine establishment and management, pest and weed control, fencing and construction of trellises, harvesting and transport.

Open Days

College Open Days are held on each Friday of the school holidays.

2009 Open Days

10.20am - 3.00pm Friday July 17
10.20am - 3.00pm Friday July 24
10.20am - 3.00pm Friday October 9
10.20am - 3.00pm Friday October 16

Enquiries 1800 025 520.

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