

INDUSTRY PLACEMENTS A WINNER FOR AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE STUDENT

Ashlee Hammond didn't know it at the time, but a simple Google search four years ago resulted in some amazing opportunities for the agricultural science student.

Ashlee was awarded a Horizon Scholarship in 2011, giving her an annual \$5,000 bursary for the duration of her course, plus industry placements, networking opportunities and a trip to Canberra for a yearly workshop with other scholars.

"I applied because I needed the financial support, as without Horizon I wouldn't have been able to afford to go to University," Ashlee said.

But it was also all the other benefits that came with Horizon – the industry placements, the annual workshop and getting to meet the other scholars, all of which I thought was really valuable."

Ashlee, who is from a dairy farm near Kerang (VIC), completed her Bachelor of Agricultural Science in three years at Latrobe University in Bundoora, and in 2014 she did an honours project in dairy nutrition at the same university, supported all the way through by Horizon.

"The program has been absolutely amazing – when you apply for the scholarship you put down what you're interested in, so I listed nutrition and genetics, but when I was accepted for the scholarship I was matched with the Australian Egg Corporation Limited (AECL) – I'd never heard of them before and I was wondering what it was all about.

"However after some research I discovered I'd been placed with the AECL because of the nutrition link - changes to the feed ration impacts on eggs immediately, so that was really interesting," Ashlee explains.

Having done a month placement within the egg industry, Ashlee also hopes to do a marketing placement with Sunny Queen Eggs.

"I wouldn't be able to chase these industry placement opportunities without Horizon, it was not even an area I'd looked in to.

"It sounds really clichéd, but this program really does broaden your horizons, because of the things that it exposes you to – even spending three days at the workshop with the other scholars every year is just an absolutely amazing experience.

"Not only do you get the professional development skills like leadership, teamwork and networking, but you also get to hear about other scholar experiences in all sorts of industries," she says.

With a passion for consumer education and awareness, Ashlee has applied for a Masters of Education, which she hopes to start in 2015.



Ashlee Hammond

"Being in Melbourne for the past four years has really helped me realise my passion for teaching people in both urban and rural areas about where their food comes from and how it is produced," Ashlee says.

I hope a Masters of Education will lead to being an Ag teacher, and I'm also going to do my Certificate IV in Training and Assessment so I can do on-farm education as well."

Asked for the advice she'd give anyone about to enter an agriculture-related degree in 2015, Ashlee doesn't hesitate.

"Studying agriculture is something I can't recommend enough - you graduate with absolute job security with the high demand for agriculture graduates and you will be working in an important industry that is feeding the world.

Not only that, there is so much support available for a student looking to study agriculture – the Horizon Scholarship offers the best support available. Horizon pushes your boundaries and gives you opportunities that would never have otherwise been possible – do it!" Ashlee concludes.

The experiences are courtesy of the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) Horizon Scholarship program, which supports undergraduates studying agriculture at university with a \$5,000 annual bursary, professional development workshops and mentoring, industry work placements and networking opportunities.

Undergraduates entering their first year of an agriculture-related degree at university are eligible to apply for a scholarship, which will provide:

- A bursary of \$5,000 per year for the duration of their degree
- Opportunities to network and gain knowledge at a range of industry events
- Annual industry work placements giving first-hand exposure to modern agricultural practices
- Professional development workshops

For details on how to apply for a Horizon Scholarship, please visit www.rirdc.gov.au/horizon, find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @HorizonScholar.

