



Networks and new perspectives for Richie



RICHIE QUIGLEY IS a fifth-generation farmer; his family first settled on their property 'Muntham' at Trangie in central-western NSW more than 125 years ago. In the long term, he expects the family farm will be his future too – a 6000-hectare mixed-cropping, cotton and livestock operation.

But in the meantime he is completing the third year of his four-year Bachelor of Agricultural Science degree at the University of Sydney, and looking at “what else is out there” that he can learn from and bring back home. In 2013 this includes exploring agriculture in the developing world with a field trip to Laos.

At home, a Horizon Scholarship awarded through the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation is supporting his studies and broader ambitions to promote agriculture. The scholarship provides \$5000 a year for the duration of his course, as well as mentoring, personal and leadership development programs and work placements.

Richie's Horizon sponsor is Woolworths, and he has spent two weeks on a work placement in the fresh food division at the Woolworths head office. “I've

seen what happens from the producer's perspective, so it was really interesting to see the other half of the supply chain, what happens when the product leaves the farm, through to the retail store. The sheer volume of what Woolworths do is amazing. I was also able to visit sheep and beef abattoirs in Tamworth with the buyer, and a smallgoods processor.”

He said he had also learned a lot from the biennial Australian Cotton Conference held in Queensland in 2012. The opportunity to attend arose through the Horizon program, and was supported by the Cotton Research and Development Corporation and Cotton Australia.

“The conference allowed me to hear and meet industry leaders, people at the forefront of the what is happening in the industry,” he said. From there he has been able to use new contacts to bring speakers to the regular career information and networking sessions he helps to organise as president of the University of Sydney Agricultural Society.

He said one of his most rewarding networking experiences – also a result of the Horizon Scholarship – was his involvement in the Art4Agriculture Young Farming Champions program. As part of Art4Agriculture he has visited three secondary schools in Sydney, talking to students about agriculture. “It's fantastic to help people understand how their food and fibre is produced, and to represent the agricultural industry. Most of the students I talk to are from the city, so they haven't been exposed to agriculture on the kind of scale we work on.” Richie said it was because of the Horizon Scholarship that he was approached for the Art4Agriculture program.

“The Horizon workshops in Canberra are also great because you get to meet a lot of other young people who are passionate about agriculture. It is really refreshing, and it keeps you motivated,” he said. ●

The Horizon Scholarship is open to students entering their first year of university and studying a degree related to agriculture, such as agricultural science, rural science, livestock/animal science, veterinary science or agribusiness.

Applications close on 1 February 2013 and scholarship recipients are announced in late March 2013. Application forms can be downloaded from the RIRDC website – or by contacting RIRDC on 02 6271 4100.

Sponsors of the Horizon Scholarship are Woolworths, Quality Silage Systems, the Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Australian Egg Corporation, Australian Pork Limited, the Cotton Research and Development Corporation, the Grains Research and Development Corporation, the Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation, Horticulture Australia Limited, Meat and Livestock Australia, the Sugar Research and Development Corporation and the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation.

