



The Fairlight Foundation
Advancing women in agriculture

Internship Programme Impact Evaluation

May 2025

This evaluation was undertaken by Dr Lesley Petersen, with funding provided by Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence.



CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3	Fairlight Foundation Executive Director	10
Introduction	4	(i) Comprehensive learning experiences	10
Findings	5	(ii) Ongoing evaluation	10
Graduates' Reflections	5	(iii) Mental health and wellbeing	11
(i) Bridging theory and practice	5	(iv) Networking and mentorship	11
(ii) Confidence building	5	(v) Future direction	11
(iii) Leadership and being a role model	6	Fairlight Foundation Board Chairperson	12
(iv) Mentorship	6	(i) Programme strengths and evolving content	12
(v) Programme sustainability	6	(ii) Balancing practical skills with broader learning	12
(vi) Recommendations for improvement	6	(iii) Future opportunities and industry alignment	12
Current Interns' Insights	7	Conclusion	12
(i) Practical skills development	7	Recommendations	13
(ii) Confidence and independence	7	Appendix One: Interview Schedules	14
(iii) Leadership development	7	Graduates	14
(iv) Programme flexibility and support	7	Current Interns	14
(v) Opportunities for programme development	8	Employers	15
(vi) Being a role model	8	Fairlight Foundation Director	15
Employers' Feedback	8	Fairlight Station Team	16
(i) Work ethic and adaptability	8	Appendix Two:	17
(ii) Leadership potential	8	Fairlight Foundation Internship Success Stories	
(iii) Practical skills	9	Appendix Three:	23
(iv) Recommendations for programme improvement	9	Fairlight Foundation Internship Graduate Profiles	
Fairlight Station Team Reflections	9		
(i) Developing practical skills and confidence	9		
(ii) Creating an inclusive team culture	10		
(iii) Feedback and leadership potential	10		

Note: Anonymised quotes from a selection of participants of the evaluation are included throughout the document to emphasise a range of responses.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Established in 2020, the Fairlight Foundation internship programme initially focused on practical on-farm skill development but has since evolved to place greater emphasis on professional growth and leadership development. Now specifically designed to support women in building the skills, confidence, and experience needed for leadership positions, the programme aims to develop proficient professionals who can serve as resilient leaders, role models, and mentors, contributing to the advancement of the food and fibre sector. Driven by the need to address the under-representation of women in management roles within agriculture, the programme is committed to empowering women and shaping the future of the industry. Designed for women aged 21 and over who have completed an appropriate agriculture-related qualification, the internship receives between 12 and 25 applications annually, selecting three interns each year. Now in its fourth year, the Fairlight Foundation sought to evaluate the programme's impact on interns, its sustainability, and its potential for replication in other food and fibre sectors.

This evaluation gathered extensive feedback from current interns, graduates, employers of graduates and current interns, Fairlight Foundation administrators including the Executive Director and Board Chairperson, and Fairlight Station team members, revealing that the programme is highly effective in equipping participants with essential skills and preparing them for meaningful contributions in the agricultural sector. It bridges the gap between academic learning and practical farm work and supports interns' growth into capable and adaptable professionals with a clear sense of purpose, career direction, and professional identity. The programme's combination of mentorship, hands-on experience, and leadership workshops, such as the Halo training programme, has been instrumental in equipping participants with the skills to navigate and succeed in a traditionally male-dominated industry.



2021 Foundation Graduates (L to R) Yvonne van Baarle, Emma Foss and Ella Eades

All of the participants interviewed for this evaluation identified some areas for improvement. Common suggestions included enhancing practical skills training—particularly in fencing, machinery operation, and dog handling—and providing more opportunities for independent decision-making to better prepare interns for real-world responsibilities. Employers expressed a desire for ongoing communication with the Foundation to help them better understand how they can support graduates in their early transition to professional roles, recognising the Foundation's role in mentoring and guiding interns rather than directly securing employment opportunities. Interns and graduates

suggested incorporating comprehensive financial management training to prepare them for the business aspects of agriculture and making visits to other farms compulsory to broaden their learning experiences. Feedback from the Board Chairperson also emphasised the importance of fostering cultural awareness and encouraging interns' greater self-directed learning and research, which could be embedded into the programme's structure to promote active engagement. Whilst the programme's focus on leadership and mentorship was widely praised, recommendations include ongoing adaptation of the programme, informed by the regular feedback gathered from interns, graduates, and employers, to ensure its continued relevance and impact.

Based on the participants' feedback, other recommendations include strengthening practical skills training, offering more independent work opportunities, and enhancing communication between the Foundation and employers. Addressing logistical and technological challenges and making certain learning experiences such as cultural awareness mandatory will also enrich the interns' development. Continuing to expand leadership and professional development opportunities while promoting female representation in agriculture will further contribute to the programme's ongoing success and sustainability into the future.

The Fairlight Foundation internship programme is having a meaningful impact on advancing women's careers in agriculture. Several practical and structural enhancements were identified through the evaluation and are reflected in the recommendations, including opportunities to strengthen skill development, increase intern autonomy, and involve graduates more actively in programme delivery, for example, as guest speakers or informal mentors sharing their post-internship experiences.

The recommendations offer guidance for how the Foundation might enhance its effectiveness and potentially serve as a model for other sectors seeking to promote gender diversity and leadership development.



INTRODUCTION

This evaluation assessed the programme's impact, alignment with employer expectations, and sustainability. It provides insights into how the programme's model could inform similar initiatives in other industries. Feedback was gathered from current interns, graduates, employers, Fairlight Foundation team and Fairlight Station team members to ensure a broad understanding of the programme's strengths, challenges, and areas for refinement.

Participants consistently highlighted the programme's success in bridging the gap between academic learning and hands-on farming experience. Through a combination of practical training, leadership workshops, and mentorship, the internship helps participants build essential technical skills, such as livestock management, machinery operation, and fencing. It also strengthens core transferable skills like communication, teamwork, and critical thinking, preparing participants to adapt to diverse roles in the industry.

The programme's emphasis on leadership development and promoting female representation is a defining strength. Graduates and current interns credited their experiences with boosting confidence and inspiring them to pursue leadership roles. At the same time, they suggested areas for improvement, including enhancing practical skills training, such as integrating advanced training modules on livestock nutrition management and expanding financial management workshops. The six employers also emphasised the need for more consistent communication with the Foundation to better support graduates and facilitate smoother transitions into professional roles.

As the food and fibre sector evolves, the Fairlight Foundation internship programme has demonstrated its ability to prepare participants for leadership and operational roles while addressing critical industry needs. This evaluation highlights its broader potential as a replicable model for other industries, advancing gender equity and professional development across the food and fibre sector.

“We’re not just training farm workers; we’re building resilient, capable women who can take on leadership roles and make real contributions to the industry.”

METHODOLOGY

This evaluation used a qualitative methodology to assess the impact, relevance, and sustainability of the Fairlight Foundation Internship Programme. A total of 22 participants contributed their perspectives, comprising:

- 6 employers of past and current interns
- 9 programme graduates
- 3 current interns
- The Fairlight Foundation Executive Director
- The Chairperson of the Foundation's Board
- The Stock Manager and Farm Manager at Fairlight Station

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore each participant's experience and insights. Tailored interview schedules were used to guide each conversation, focusing on role-specific areas such as graduate preparedness, leadership development, mentorship, and programme structure. These schedules are included in Appendix One.

Thematic analysis was applied to identify patterns, shared reflections, and distinct viewpoints across the participant groups. The evaluation focused on capturing both strengths and opportunities for improvement, with attention to how the programme's design, delivery, and outcomes align with sector needs and aspirations, as well as the Foundation's overarching mission to develop skilled, resilient women leaders in agriculture.

FINDINGS

“The programme’s emphasis on female leadership really inspired me. I left feeling empowered and ready to be a role model for other women in agriculture.”

The Fairlight Foundation internship programme provides a unique blend of hands-on practical experience, leadership development, and robust mentorship. This evaluation sought to capture the experiences and perspectives of employers, graduates, and current interns to understand the programme’s impact and identify areas for further enhancement. The following insights illustrate the strengths and areas for growth as reported by these key stakeholders.

The following insights illustrate the strengths and areas for growth as reported by the participants. The current interns, graduates, employers, and the Fairlight Station team highlighted the programme’s success in preparing participants with practical skills and leadership capabilities, whilst also offering suggestions to refine it further. These findings provide a comprehensive understanding of how the programme is achieving its goals and where adjustments can ensure its continued relevance and impact.



2024 Foundation Graduation attended by former graduates (L to R) Holli Robinson, Aggie Burgess, Ella Clarke Monique Mellow, Mikayla Beaumont, Lily Priest, Emma Foss, Ella Eades, Yvonne van Baarle and Samantha McKelvey

GRADUATES' REFLECTIONS

“I gained so much confidence through the leadership workshops and working independently when there was a chance to. I now feel capable of taking on responsibilities that I once thought were beyond my abilities.”

Graduates reflected on how the internship shaped both their careers and personal development, highlighting its role in building their confidence, skills, and readiness for a career in the agricultural sector. Their feedback was very positive, with many describing the programme as instrumental in preparing them for leadership roles. They also offered constructive suggestions to further enhance its effectiveness and ensure its continued success.

(i) Bridging theory and practice

Many of the graduates entered the programme with limited practical farming experience, and they noted that the internship was crucial in bridging the gap between academic knowledge and real-world application. Skills such as stockmanship, pasture management, fencing, and dog training were areas where graduates felt they gained the most, with technical experiences proving particularly valuable in areas where hands-on learning was not possible in academic settings. Another common theme was the breadth of the learning, which allowed graduates to experience different aspects of farming, from sheep and beef handling to deer management, as well as essential farming operations like machinery handling and water management. These experiences gave graduates a comprehensive understanding of farm work, boosting their capability to manage farms independently.

(ii) Confidence building

Confidence building was highlighted as a key benefit of the programme by all nine graduates. They spoke of how the programme fostered an environment that encouraged learning from mistakes without fear of failure. Graduates appreciated the opportunity to ask questions, make errors, and learn in a supportive setting where they felt valued. This sense of safety and encouragement significantly contributed to their willingness to take on new challenges, whether it was transitioning into leadership roles or navigating difficult situations, such as negotiating wages or managing staff.

The structured confidence-building activities, such as workshops on leadership and communication, were particularly effective in helping graduates feel empowered to excel in male-dominated environments. This increased confidence extended into their personal lives, enabling them to pursue roles and responsibilities they initially felt unqualified for.

(iii) Leadership and being a role model

The programme's focus on leadership training, particularly through workshops like the Halo Leadership programme, was frequently cited as a highlight. All of the graduates described how these workshops helped them understand different communication styles, improve emotional intelligence, and prepare for leadership roles. In addition to Halo, the mentorship provided by the Fairlight Station team played a critical role in their leadership development. Regular feedback and one-on-one guidance from team members encouraged them to take ownership of tasks, make decisions, and reflect on their performance.

The hands-on nature of the internship also contributed to leadership growth. As interns, they were often placed in situations requiring independent problem-solving and collaboration, such as planning pasture rotations or managing small farm projects. These real-world experiences taught them to lead by example, communicate effectively, and work confidently within a team. Additionally, informal team-building activities and opportunities to work alongside other interns and farm staff further enhanced their ability to navigate group dynamics and build trust.

Five graduates expressed confidence in their ability to serve as role models for aspiring women in agriculture. The programme's emphasis on public speaking, self-awareness, and professional growth allowed them to develop a sense of responsibility toward mentoring others. One graduate noted how their experiences with speaking events during the programme enhanced their belief that they could inspire future generations. Another expressed a desire to focus on the programme's 'wellbeing' core value, aiming to educate and inspire younger women to invest in their wellbeing while navigating careers in agriculture.

(iv) Mentorship

The mentorship component of the programme was another critical factor in its success from the graduates' perspective. All of the graduates reported that the guidance they received from the programme's Director and the wider Fairlight team was instrumental in their confidence-building and professional growth. Whether it was navigating job opportunities or providing advice on challenging situations, the support system established through the programme helped graduates feel more secure as they transitioned into their careers. They also valued the strong alumni network, where they could continue to seek advice and share experiences with fellow interns. This network has proven to be an enduring resource, providing an ongoing connection with peers and mentors even after the programme ended.

(v) Programme sustainability

Graduates were unanimous in their belief that the programme is highly sustainable for future interns. They emphasised the programme's unique combination of farming skills with personal and professional development, which they felt was essential for attracting more women into agriculture. The structure of the programme, which provides paid internships for university graduates, was highlighted as a key differentiator that ensures participants are both committed to the agricultural sector and have the necessary support to develop professionally and personally. Continuous feedback loops between interns and the Fairlight team were seen as vital in refining and adapting the curriculum each year to keep it relevant and impactful. Graduates noted that this responsiveness to feedback and the ongoing evolution of the programme's content and structure are essential for its long-term sustainability and growth.

(vi) Recommendations for improvement

While the programme was described as highly effective, the graduates identified several areas for improvement to enhance its impact. Four graduates mentioned that extending the programme's duration would allow for more in-depth learning, particularly in practical areas like machinery operation and water management. They noted that additional hands-on training in these areas would better prepare them to handle diverse tasks with confidence when entering the workforce.

Another focus for improvement was to place greater emphasis on financial management training, including topics such as budgeting, farm economics, and decision-making around capital investments. Five graduates mentioned this, stating that stronger preparation in these areas would equip them for the business side of farming, an essential component of career progression in the agricultural sector. The graduates also suggested the inclusion of more independent learning opportunities toward the latter stages of the internship. This shift would help bridge the transition from supervised tasks to autonomous work, further building the self-reliance required for professional roles.

The internship programme has had a significant impact on the graduates by equipping them with the skills, confidence, and support necessary to succeed in the agricultural sector. The combination of hands-on learning, leadership development, and a strong support network has empowered them to excel in a traditionally male-dominated field. The graduates were optimistic about the programme's sustainability and confident that it will continue to attract women in agriculture.

“The support and mentorship were phenomenal. This didn’t just teach me about farming - it taught me how to be resilient and adaptable, which are skills I use every day.”



CURRENT INTERNS' INSIGHTS

“The practical training has been incredibly valuable. It’s one thing to learn about animal health in a lecture and another to actually be part of it on a farm.”

The current interns provided a fresh perspective on how the internship is meeting their needs today. Their experiences show how the programme continues to evolve, with particular appreciation for practical training and leadership development opportunities.

(i) Practical skills development

Reflecting the graduates' feedback, the interns highlighted how the programme complements their academic studies through the integration of practical skills. They noted how workshops, farm visits, and on-farm tasks tied directly into the theoretical knowledge they gained in university, allowing them to better understand and apply what they had previously learned. This practical exposure has been instrumental in building their competence and confidence, particularly in areas such as animal health management, stockmanship, and basic farm operations. Interns also appreciated the flexibility of the programme in allowing them to explore additional learning opportunities, such as visiting different types of farming operations, which broadened their understanding of farming operations and the sector.

(ii) Confidence and independence

The opportunity to take on independent responsibilities was a key factor in building the interns' confidence. They described how being trusted to work independently, whether on the farm or during workshops, reinforced their belief in their own capabilities and provided a significant boost to their personal growth. Interns appreciated the balance of support and autonomy, noting that while guidance was always available, they were encouraged to take ownership of tasks and make decisions on their own. Stepping outside their comfort zones - such as managing livestock, planning pasture rotations, or operating machinery - challenged them in ways that felt daunting at first but ultimately proved rewarding. This experience not only strengthened their self-confidence but also refined critical skills like problem-solving, adaptability, and initiative, which they viewed as invaluable for their future roles in the agricultural sector.

(iii) Leadership development

Interns consistently highlighted the leadership training provided through the programme, noting the impact of workshops that focused on communication, self-awareness, and leadership skills. The Halo leadership workshops were frequently mentioned for their ability



Working in deer yards, Emma Foss

to help the interns understand their own leadership potential and how to apply these skills in both personal and professional contexts. They found the focus on understanding diverse leadership styles and effective communication with a range of individuals particularly beneficial, as it equipped them with tools to collaborate and contribute effectively to a team environment.

The interns shared that engaging with professionals outside the internship programme during the workshops was a valuable part of their learning experience. They appreciated the exposure to external perspectives and leadership examples, which helped them see how leadership skills could be applied in different scenarios. Interns noted that combining practical skills development, personal growth, and insights from external engagement gave them greater confidence to take on meaningful responsibilities in their future careers.

(iv) Programme flexibility and support

Interns valued the programme's flexibility which allowed them to explore additional learning opportunities, such as engaging with industry professionals and experiencing different farming systems. They also highlighted the ongoing mentorship they received throughout the programme. Regular check-ins with Station team members made them feel safe and well-guided in their roles, helping them address challenges quickly and confidently and enhancing their learning experience. The interns appreciated the team's proactive approach in addressing any concerns that arose.

(v) Opportunities for programme development

Whilst the interns commented extensively on the programme's strengths, they provided some suggestions for further development in the programme, such as incorporating more financial management training to prepare for the business side of agriculture. One intern recommended making certain experiences, such as visits to different types of farming operations (for example, dairy farms), compulsory for future interns. These experiences were seen as highly valuable, even for those not necessarily interested in that type of farming, as they offered broad learning opportunities. Another suggestion was to provide more regular updates from the farm's management team, allowing interns to better prepare for weekly activities and feel more organised in their roles.



2024 Graduates (L to R) Ella Clarke, Aggie Burgess and Holli Robinson

Overall, the interns expressed deep satisfaction with the internship programme. They credited the combination of practical experience, leadership training, and mentorship with their professional and personal development. The programme has not only equipped them with the skills necessary to succeed in the agricultural industry but also supported their growth as leaders and role models for future generations of women in agriculture.

“This internship has shown me that leadership isn’t just about having a title; it’s about how you carry yourself and how you support those around you.”

(vi) Being a role model

The interns strongly believed that the programme was preparing them to become role models and mentors for other women already working in agriculture or considering careers in the industry. They felt inspired by the leadership opportunities and confident in their ability to contribute to the sector's advancement. The programme's focus on female representation in agriculture has given them a sense of purpose and pride in promoting gender diversity, and they noted how impactful it was to meet graduates who had completed the programme and gone on to assume leadership roles.

EMPLOYERS' FEEDBACK

“The graduates come to us well-prepared and enthusiastic. They have a work ethic and level of adaptability that makes them stand out from others entering the industry.”

Employers offered valuable perspectives on how well the graduates are prepared for the workforce and the impact of the programme on their organisations. Overall, their feedback was highly positive, emphasising the strengths of the internship whilst also identifying areas where improvements could be beneficial.

(i) Work ethic and adaptability

The employers highlighted the graduates' work ethic and adaptability. All of them noted that graduates entered the workforce prepared to take on responsibilities and excel in challenging situations. They gave examples of graduates stepping into leadership roles or handling complex tasks with maturity, demonstrating a level of professionalism that was “impressive” for this stage in their careers.

(ii) Leadership potential

Graduates were recognised for their leadership abilities, which employers attributed to the programme's comprehensive training and mentorship. They observed that the graduates often demonstrated strong communication skills and were confident in team settings, showing a readiness to lead and contribute effectively to the farm operations.

Graduates have consistently demonstrated strong leadership potential, a quality that employers attribute to the programme's comprehensive training and mentorship. Employers frequently observed that graduates quickly stepped into roles requiring responsibility and initiative; for example, some graduates took the lead in managing complex tasks such as overseeing livestock operations, feed monitoring, and farm computer systems, demonstrating both confidence and organisational ability.

All six employers also highlighted graduates' communication skills and readiness to contribute in team settings, enabling them to positively influence junior staff and contribute to a collaborative work environment. However, three employers noted that while graduates often set high standards for themselves, this occasionally led to challenges in managing expectations and navigating team dynamics, such as unintentionally placing pressure on team members, struggling to align with varying team member expectations, or creating tension when their initiative or communication style differed from others in the team.

Ongoing development in communication and team management could further enhance their effectiveness as leaders. Overall, the employers' feedback reflects the programme's success in cultivating future leaders for the industry.

(iii) Practical skills

Employers noted some variation in practical skills among graduates, particularly those from the programme's earlier years. While all of the graduates were described as proficient in essential farm tasks, such as livestock handling and general maintenance, some of them required further development in specific areas like fencing, machinery operation, and dog handling. Employers reflecting on graduates from the first intake stressed the need for focused, repetitive practice to help all participants reach a consistent level of skill. They highlighted the importance of making sure technical skills are well-established during the internship.

Feedback from employers of past and recent graduates suggested that these gaps have been addressed in subsequent intakes, with graduates now showing more consistency in their practical abilities. However, a recurring theme was the need for more opportunities toward the end of the internship for interns to undertake independent practical work. Five employers highlighted that this type of experience would better prepare participants for the realities of autonomous roles, where decision-making and problem-solving are critical. They suggested that this approach could further build interns' confidence and readiness to manage responsibilities independently upon entering the workforce.

(iv) Recommendations for programme improvement

As mentioned, five of the employers highlighted the importance of continuing to strengthen practical training and increasing opportunities for independent work to prepare graduates for real-world responsibilities. Three also suggested that closer communication between the Fairlight team and employers about graduates' strengths and areas for improvement could further enhance the post-internship transition. Providing employers with detailed feedback about where graduates may need additional support would allow them to tailor their mentorship and development plans accordingly and ensure the graduates settled into their roles more effectively.

The internship programme is highly regarded by employers for producing skilled and capable graduates. They highlighted the graduates' adaptability, strong communication skills, and willingness to take on new challenges. They also noted the programme's role in helping graduates build leadership potential and develop critical thinking, which prepares them to contribute effectively to professional agricultural roles. Graduates were recognised for their ability to handle responsibilities and fit in well with farm teams, reflecting the programme's success in preparing them for the industry.

“Leadership potential is something we look for, and these graduates have it in abundance. Many of them step up to take on big roles much sooner than expected.”

FAIRLIGHT STATION TEAM REFLECTIONS

“We’re instilling high standards in everything the interns do. It’s about teaching them that they can always be better, and that attitude will serve them in any role they take on.”

The Fairlight Foundation Executive Director, Foundation Chairperson, and the Farm Manager and Stock Manager at Fairlight Station play pivotal roles in guiding interns through an intensive year of skill-building and professional growth. Their collective feedback highlights a shared commitment to high standards, hands-on learning, personal and professional development, and a supportive team environment that empowers interns to gain confidence and resilience, equipping them for meaningful roles in the agricultural industry.

(i) Developing practical skills and confidence

The Fairlight Foundation programme takes a holistic approach to developing capable and confident graduates, with a deliberate emphasis on personal and professional growth. Hands-on learning is one component of a broader professional development experience. Practical training in livestock handling, fencing, machinery operation, and farm maintenance helps build confidence and competence, and is complemented by targeted activities that foster self-awareness, communication, leadership, and critical thinking. Recent internal reviews have confirmed that interns value this balanced approach, noting they would not apply if the programme were practical only. This reinforces the programme's identity as a professional development initiative.

Recognising that many interns arrive with limited confidence, team members work to gradually build their self-assurance through structured support, mentorship, and increasing responsibility. This approach plays a vital role in building the interns' confidence, preparing them to tackle real-world challenges and positioning them for success in their future roles.



Foundation Executive Director Laura Koot (Left) with 2021 Foundation Graduates (L to R) Emma Foss, Ella Eades and Yvonne van Baarle

(ii) Creating an inclusive team culture

Inclusivity and collaboration are core values of the programme, creating a work and learning environment that helps interns feel connected and supported. Informal team-building activities, such as social gatherings and activities outside of work hours, play a key role in expanded building relationships and promoting an inclusive team culture. These interactions also help create a sense of mutual respect and openness, where interns feel welcomed and supported. In this collaborative environment, interns gain valuable insights and hands-on guidance from the team members, enabling them to grow both personally and professionally. By balancing structured training with these informal opportunities, the programme ensures that interns develop strong relationships and feel part of the team.

(iii) Feedback and leadership potential

The Fairlight team views feedback as an essential component of the programme, delivered through both formal evaluations and daily interactions. The team's approach of providing real-time, task-based feedback helps reinforce learning, while structured assessments are seen as another valuable tool for tracking skill development. Through this combination of formal and informal feedback, interns gain a clear understanding of their progress as well as areas for improvement. Both the Fairlight Foundation Executive Director and Fairlight Station Farm Manager envision the programme as a launchpad for future leaders in agriculture. While leadership paths may not be for every intern, those with strong potential are encouraged to step into roles with greater independence and decision-making, developing their confidence to lead and inspire others in the sector.

FAIRLIGHT FOUNDATION EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REFLECTIONS

The Executive Director of the Fairlight Foundation shared her vision for the internship programme and its role in advancing women's participation and leadership within New Zealand's agricultural sector. Her insights reveal a commitment to support the interns in building technical skills and fostering resilience, leadership, and lifelong personal growth. With a focus on mental health support, high standards in practical on-farm training, and a strong network of mentorship, she envisions a programme that prepares women to succeed in diverse roles across the industry. Her perspective highlights the programme's adaptive approach, its emphasis on continuous improvement, and plans for inspiring future generations of women leaders.

(i) Comprehensive learning experiences

The internship combines hands-on farm experience with workshops designed to enhance both personal and professional development. Interns learn essential stock and farm management skills to establish credibility and confidence in agricultural roles. The Director emphasised that this dual focus - on immediate technical and practical skills and long-term leadership qualities - is essential for supporting graduates in making sound career decisions and to approach new challenges with confidence.

The Director highlighted the importance of training interns to high standards in stockmanship, dog handling, and general farm management. Emphasis is placed on a thoughtful, stock-focused approach that prioritises animal welfare and efficiency. Interns learn the 'Fairlight way', including practices such as careful positioning in stock yards and attention to detail in farm maintenance, which are integral to high-quality farm operations.

(ii) Ongoing evaluation

The programme incorporates regular reviews and feedback mechanisms, both mid-year and at the end of each programme year. These evaluations are designed to gather insights from current interns, graduates, and employers, creating a well-rounded understanding of what is working well and where improvements are needed. Feedback from graduates after they enter the workforce further informs these evaluations, ensuring the programme evolves alongside the demands of the agricultural sector.

The Director emphasised the importance of maintaining open communication channels with all stakeholders to keep the programme responsive to changing industry needs. She views feedback as a way to assess outcomes and as a key element in shaping and

improving the programme's structure and curriculum. For example, past evaluations have led to refinements in practical training, mentorship alignment, and the inclusion of financial management workshops. This iterative approach the Director's commitment to continuous learning and adaptation, ensuring that the programme remains relevant, effective, and aligned with its overarching goals.

(iii) Mental health and wellbeing

Mental health support is a core component of the programme, with a registered counsellor available for one-on-one sessions to provide guidance and assistance to interns. Laura strongly advocates for proactive mental health management, emphasising that building resilience and equipping interns with tools to manage stress are essential for personal growth and long-term career success in the industry. Interns are encouraged to view mental health as a critical aspect of their overall well-being, and the programme uses resources and discussions to encourage interns to seek support when needed.

The Director also highlighted the importance of creating a supportive environment where interns feel safe to voice their concerns and navigate challenges. By addressing mental health openly and providing tangible support, the programme aims to help interns develop the confidence and coping mechanisms required to face high-pressure situations both on and off the farm. This focus on well-being ensures that interns are prepared for the practical and leadership demands of their roles and equipped to sustain their personal and professional growth in the long term.

(iv) Networking and mentorship

The Foundation maintains a strong support system for graduates, offering ongoing guidance and mentorship from the Director and the Fairlight Station team. This connection extends beyond the internship year, providing graduates with a reliable network to navigate challenges and make informed career decisions. Graduates frequently reach out for advice on various aspects of their professional journey, from managing farm operations to pursuing further educational opportunities.

Additionally, a collaborative alumni network has been created, where graduates from different cohorts actively support one another. This peer-driven mentorship fosters resilience and strengthens professional ties, creating a community that extends the Foundation's values of collaboration and inclusivity.

The Foundation also values its relationships with employers, recognising their role in shaping graduates' success. Maintaining these connections ensures alignment with industry expectations and provides valuable feedback to enhance the programme. This ongoing

engagement helps create a pipeline of supportive employers who advocate the Foundation's vision of developing capable women leaders in agriculture. The Director emphasised the importance of maintaining relationships with employers and graduates to ensure ongoing alignment with industry needs.

(v) Future direction

Looking ahead, the Foundation has plans to expand its range of programmes to provide other offerings that encourage and enhance women's pathways in agriculture and consequently its impact and inspire the next generation of women in the industry. One key initiative under consideration is a two-day 'Pasture Camp' aimed at secondary school female students. This programme would provide early exposure to hands-on farm work, introducing young women to the realities and opportunities of agricultural careers. By offering practical experiences, leadership and personal development at a formative stage, the Foundation hopes to spark interest in the sector, dispel stereotypes, and create a stronger pipeline of skilled women entering the industry.

The Director also highlighted the importance of strengthening partnerships with schools, community groups, and agricultural organisations to reach a broader audience. These collaborations could help identify and support students who show potential in agriculture but might not otherwise consider it as a career path. Her vision includes ensuring that initiatives like 'Pasture Camp' align with the Foundation's overarching mission to build confidence, technical skills, and leadership capacity among women at all stages of their career journey.

By providing opportunities for early engagement and developing tailored marketing efforts, the Foundation aims to inspire young women to view agriculture not just as a viable career, but as an exciting and rewarding industry in which they can succeed and grow. The Director stressed the importance of these efforts in encouraging more women to pursue careers in agriculture, addressing current gender imbalances, and contributing to the sector's sustainability.

The Director's and other team member's feedback highlights the Foundation's unique and multifaceted approach to developing skilled, confident women in agriculture, with a focus on resilience, leadership, and practical expertise. Their insights illustrate a commitment to continuous improvement and a strong belief in the potential of women to shape New Zealand's food and fibre sector.

“It’s not only about learning to be a good shepherd; it’s about equipping them with skills that will carry them into future careers and give them the confidence to pursue whatever they want in agriculture.”

FAIRLIGHT FOUNDATION BOARD CHAIRPERSON REFLECTIONS

The Board Chairperson's feedback highlights a comprehensive view of the Fairlight Foundation internship programme, reflecting on its strengths, areas for improvement, and future opportunities. His observations emphasise the programme's value in preparing women for leadership roles and careers in agriculture, whilst also identifying areas where its structure and delivery could better align with the Foundation's strategic goals.

(i) Programme strengths and evolving content

The programme is recognised for building interns' confidence, practical skills, leadership capabilities, and professional knowledge. Over time, its content has expanded to include personal development and mental health initiatives, such as the HALO leadership programme, which has had a strong impact. The addition of NZQA qualifications provides a formal structure to the learning and strengthens career readiness. Interns benefit from a safe, supportive environment and a skilled, committed team who offer strong guidance and hands-on training. External workshops, delivered by experienced professionals, add variety and depth to the interns' learning experience.

(ii) Balancing practical skills with broader learning

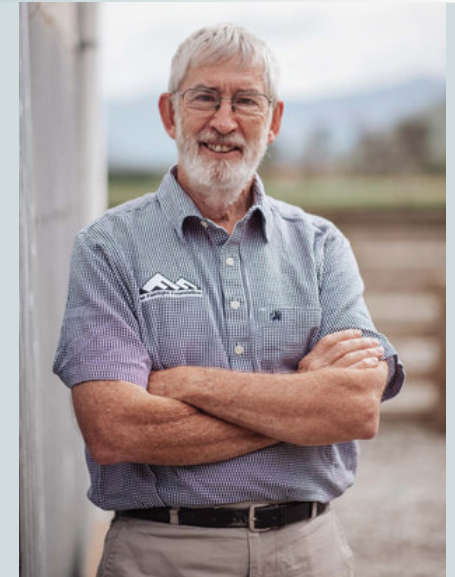
A strong focus on practical components, representing nearly 80% of the programme's content, has played a key role in building interns' confidence and technical capability. This is made up of hands-on activities designed to develop practical competence, reinforce learning, and expose interns to the realities of working in a high-performing farming environment. The Chairperson noted that this emphasis may sometimes limit engagement with broader academic development, such as independent research, preparing beforehand for external workshops, and exploring topics more deeply on their own. To address this, the Chairperson recommended setting clearer expectations around academic engagement within the curriculum, to better align with the Foundation's goal of preparing women for leadership roles in agriculture.

(iii) Future opportunities and industry alignment

Emerging trends in agriculture, such as technological advancements, environmental sustainability, and cultural awareness, could be better integrated into the programme. For example, workshops on future-oriented topics like AI, data analysis, and market analysis could prepare interns for leadership in a rapidly evolving industry. The Chairperson also

emphasised the importance of addressing cultural contexts, such as Māori protocols, which are becoming increasingly relevant in the agricultural sector.

The programme's 100% completion rate demonstrates its value to participants, with graduates and employers consistently providing positive feedback. However, the Chairperson acknowledged the need for more robust evaluation metrics to capture the programme's long-term impact. Currently, qualitative and observational feedback forms the basis for assessing success; future evaluations could benefit from collaboration with external reviewers to complement internal assessment.



**Fairlight Foundation Chairperson
Peter Wilson**

CONCLUSION

The Fairlight Foundation internship programme has emerged as a highly impactful initiative within New Zealand's food and fibre sector, equipping women with the skills, confidence, and leadership capabilities needed to thrive in a traditionally male-dominated industry. Feedback from current interns, graduates, employers, and the Fairlight Station team reflects the programme's effectiveness in developing practical competencies, core transferable skills such as communication, problem-solving and critical thinking, personal growth, and professional readiness, whilst also identifying opportunities for further refinement.

A key strength of the programme is its emphasis on practical on-farm skills development. The interns and graduates consistently highlighted how hands-on training in areas such as livestock handling, fencing, and machinery operation bridged the gap between their academic study and real-world agricultural practice. Employers recognised graduates for their readiness and adaptability, often highlighting their technical competence as a core strength. The Fairlight Station team's focus on high-quality training and skill development ensures interns leave with a strong foundation to meet the demands of the agricultural sector.

Equally significant is the programme's ability to support the interns in building confidence, leadership, and resilience. Through leadership workshops, such as the Halo programme, support from the Fairlight Station team, and opportunities for independent learning, interns develop the self-assurance and problem-solving skills needed to tackle challenges and take on meaningful roles. Graduates valued the programme's emphasis on leadership and inclusivity, viewing themselves as role models and advocates for greater gender diversity in agriculture. Many shared how the support and trust they received during their internships allowed them to step outside their comfort zones and grow into capable, adaptable professionals.

Mentorship was identified as a cornerstone of the programme's success. The collaborative and inclusive culture fostered by the Station team creates a supportive learning environment where participants can learn through both guidance and autonomy. Team members provide real-time, task-based feedback while encouraging interns to take increasing responsibility, helping them develop resilience and leadership potential. The emphasis on mentorship prepares interns for professional roles and aligns with the broader mission of empowering women to lead and inspire others in the agricultural industry.



While the programme's achievements are widely acknowledged, areas for improvement were also highlighted. The Chairperson suggested expanding training in financial management and integrating emerging industry trends such as sustainability, cultural awareness, and advanced technologies like AI. Providing more structured opportunities for independent learning, particularly in the latter stages of the internship, was seen as crucial for preparing participants for autonomous roles. Employers highlighted the importance of maintaining regular communication with the Foundation to better support graduates as they transition into professional work environments. These improvements and adjustments would ensure the programme remains responsive to both participant needs and industry trends.

Now in its fourth year (2024), the Fairlight Foundation internship programme is making a tangible difference in the lives of its participants and contributing to a more inclusive agricultural sector. Its commitment to continuous improvement and participant growth, coupled with its mission to advance female representation in agriculture, ensures the programme is well-positioned to sustain its success and inspire future generations of women in the food and fibre industry.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This evaluation has identified several opportunities to strengthen the Fairlight Foundation internship programme. Based on all of the participants' feedback and building on its successes in practical skills development, leadership development, and mentorship, these recommendations aim to refine the programme, address areas for growth, and ensure it continues to align with the needs of participants, the Fairlight Foundations' vision and values, and the agricultural sector:

1. Strengthen the farm operational skills component by embedding structured workshops in financial management, with a focus on budgeting, farm economics, and decision-making, to support long-term capability development. Strengthen the culture of active learning by formalising expectations for pre-workshop preparation and independent research within the curriculum and onboarding sessions, ensuring interns take greater ownership of their learning.

2. Promote independent decision-making by expanding opportunities for managing specific farm tasks or small projects autonomously during the final stages of the internship programme.

3. Strengthen communication with employers by establishing structured feedback loops and facilitating joint discussions to align graduate support with growth areas.

4. Expand leadership training and integrate industry trends by including topics such as cultural awareness, environmental sustainability, AI in agriculture, and emerging technologies like data analysis and market access tools, ensuring interns are prepared for both on- and off-farm roles.

5. Enhance feedback and assessment processes through regular, formal sessions with mentors and team members to ensure alignment with programme goals.

6. Support holistic growth by continuing proactive mental health initiatives such as counselling and integrating resilience workshops and strategies into daily routines.

7. Continue to strengthen alumni engagement by actively facilitating mentoring, networking opportunities, and the sharing of success stories to reinforce programme impact and inspire future participants.



APPENDIX ONE: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

GRADUATES

Industry Impact

1. How do you believe you have contributed to the agricultural industry since completing the internship? Can you provide examples of your impact?
2. In what ways do you think your current role is influencing others within the industry?

Practical Experience

3. What unique experiences or skills did the internship provide that you felt were lacking in your academic studies?
4. How have these experiences shaped your approach to your current role?

Career Advancement

5. In what specific ways has the programme facilitated your career growth?
6. Have you noticed changes in your confidence or professional opportunities because of the internship?

Integration of Learning

7. How has the knowledge and experience gained during the internship enhanced your performance in your current role?
8. Are there particular projects or responsibilities where you've applied what you learned?

Suggestions for Improvement

9. Were there any elements of the programme that did not meet your expectations?
10. How might these aspects be developed or improved for future interns?
11. What additional components or resources would you suggest to enrich the internship experience for future participants?
12. What topics or skills do you think should be prioritised in the curriculum?

Enhancing Support

13. From your perspective, what could the Fairlight Foundation do differently to better support graduates as they transition into the workforce?
14. Are there specific mentorship or networking opportunities you would have found valuable?

Leadership Perspective

15. If you were in Laura's position as the Director of the Fairlight Foundation, what changes would you implement in the programme?

16. What strategies would you suggest for the farming team to enhance the internship experience?

Long-term Impact

17. Reflecting on your career trajectory since the internship, how do you see the programme's influence on shaping the future of women in agriculture?
18. What barriers do you think still exist for women in the industry, and how can the programme help address them?

Role Model Development

19. Do you feel prepared to serve as a role model or mentor for aspiring women in agriculture?
20. What has influenced your ability or desire to take on this role?

Programme Sustainability

21. In your opinion, how sustainable is the programme for future interns?
22. What factors do you believe are crucial for its continued success?

CURRENT INTERNS

Career Development Insights

1. How does the internship experience differ from your academic studies in terms of practical skills, professional and personal development?
2. In what ways has the programme influenced your career aspirations within the agriculture sector?

Expectations and Outcomes

3. To what extent has the internship met or exceeded your initial expectations? Can you share an example?
4. Have there been any unexpected outcomes from your participation in the programme to date?

Value of Workshops and Training

5. Which workshops or training sessions have you found most beneficial, and why? How have they contributed to your professional growth?
6. Are there particular skills or knowledge areas that you feel are missing from the current curriculum?

Programme Feedback

7. Have there been any aspects of the programme that did not meet your needs or expectations? If so, please elaborate.
8. What additional resources or support would enhance your learning experience during the internship?

Future Improvements

9. Looking ahead, what changes or additions would you suggest to make the programme more effective for future interns?
10. How can the programme better align with the needs of employers in the agricultural sector?

Sustainability and Role Models

11. Do you feel that this internship prepares you to become a role model or mentor in the agricultural sector? Why or why not?
12. How important do you believe it is to have female representation in leadership/management roles within the agricultural industry, and how can this programme help address that?

Programme Impact

13. What impact do you believe this internship has had on your confidence and professional identity as a woman in agriculture?
14. In your opinion, how does this internship contribute to the overall advancement of women in the agricultural sector?

EMPLOYERS

Impact of Practical Experience

1. How did the stockmanship skills and general farm skills of the Fairlight Foundation Graduate compare to other junior shepherds you have hired in the past?
2. Were there any practical farm or stockmanship skills you felt the Fairlight Graduate did not have, but should have had?

Expectations for Knowledge and Skills

3. What are your expectations regarding a graduate's knowledge and skills when they join your team?
4. How well do you think the internship programme prepares graduates to meet these expectations?

Roles and Responsibilities

5. What position did [graduate] start at within your organisation?
6. How have their roles and responsibilities evolved since they began?
7. What are their core roles and responsibilities, and how proficient are they in each area?
8. How do you assess their effectiveness in fulfilling these responsibilities?

Graduate Strengths and Limitations

9. What do you see as [graduate]'s core strengths in their role?

10. Are there any areas for development and/or improvement you've noticed in their performance?

Interpersonal and Communication Skills

11. How would you rate the graduate's communication skills within your team?
12. Can you provide examples of how these skills have positively impacted team dynamics?

Leadership Skills

13. How does [graduate] demonstrate self-leadership in their work?
14. In what ways have they shown leadership of others, and how effective have they been in this role?

FAIRLIGHT FOUNDATION DIRECTOR

Vision and Goals

1. What is your overarching vision for The Fairlight Foundation Internship Programme?
2. How do you believe this programme contributes to advancing women's careers in agriculture?

Intern Learning Experience

3. In what ways do you actively engage with interns to enhance their learning throughout the programme?
4. Can you share any specific initiatives you've implemented to support interns during their internship?

Stakeholder Relationships

5. How do you maintain relationships with graduates and employers, and why do you consider these connections important?
6. What feedback have you received from employers regarding the preparedness and performance of interns?

Programme Evaluation and Impact

7. What metrics or indicators do you use to evaluate the impact and outcomes of the programme?
8. Based on your observations, what aspects of the programme have been most effective, and where do you see opportunities for development and/or improvement?
9. How do you measure the long-term impact of the internship on both the interns and the agricultural sector?
10. Can you share success stories that illustrate the programme's effectiveness in advancing women's roles in agriculture?

Support for Graduates

11. How does the Foundation support the graduates as they transition into the workforce?
12. What role do you believe mentorship plays in helping graduates succeed in their careers?

Future Directions

13. What changes or enhancements do you envision for the programme in the coming years?
14. How can the Foundation better address the ongoing challenges faced by women in the agricultural industry?

Personal Reflections

15. What has been the most rewarding aspect of your role in creating and leading this internship programme?
16. How has your perspective of the agricultural sector evolved through your work with setting up the internship programme and working with the interns and graduates?

FAIRLIGHT STATION TEAM

Role in Intern Development

1. How do you perceive your role in the development of interns during their time in the programme?
2. What specific strategies do you use to support interns in their learning and growth?

Intern Engagement

3. How do you engage interns in hands-on learning experiences on the farm?
4. Can you share examples of successful projects or tasks that interns have completed under your guidance?

Skill Assessment

5. What skills or knowledge do you believe interns typically lack when they first join the programme?
6. How do you help bridge these gaps throughout their internship?

Feedback Mechanism

7. How do you provide feedback to interns on their performance and progress?
8. In what ways do you encourage interns to seek and act on feedback?

Team Dynamics

9. How do you foster a collaborative environment between interns and the rest of the farming team?
10. What impact do you think this collaboration has on the interns' learning experience?

Evaluation of the Programme

11. In your opinion, what aspects of the internship programme work well in preparing interns for careers in agriculture?
12. Are there areas where you believe the programme could improve to enhance the interns' learning?

Long-term Impact

13. How do you see your interactions with interns influencing their career choices in the agricultural sector?
14. What role do you think the internship programme plays in shaping the next generation of agricultural leaders?

Personal Experience

15. What has been your most rewarding experience working with interns in this programme?
16. How has mentoring interns impacted your own professional development and perspective on agriculture?



2022 Foundation Graduates (L to R) Katie McNeill, Sammy McKelvey and Amy Ashworth

APPENDIX TWO: FAIRLIGHT FOUNDATION INTERNSHIP SUCCESS STORIES

THE GRADUATES' SUCCESS STORIES

Each of the following graduate stories present a unique journey of growth, resilience, and increased confidence developed through the Fairlight Foundation internship programme. With its commitment to integrating practical skills and empowering women in agriculture, the programme has prepared these graduates to become capable, adaptable, and forward-thinking professionals. Fairlight's approach combines hands-on experience with mentorship and leadership training, ensuring each graduate is not only equipped with essential farming skills, but also with the confidence to take on leadership roles and inspire others in the sector.

These success stories capture the diverse paths the graduates have taken, highlighting the programme's ability to prepare them for a range of roles across the industry. Whether stepping into management positions, supporting their communities, or advocating for women's participation in agriculture, each graduate reflects the vision and values of the Fairlight Foundation. Their experiences demonstrate the programme's broader impact: preparing women to excel in a traditionally male-dominated field and inspiring future generations to pursue meaningful careers in agriculture.

EMPOWERING OTHERS IN AGRICULTURE

Through the Fairlight Foundation internship, Lily gained the confidence and skills to take on a leadership role in her field. Her experience allowed her to develop mentoring abilities, and she now actively encourages other young women to consider careers in agriculture. Not only has she become a trusted figure in her community, but she's also taken on additional responsibilities that showcase her growth and commitment. Her journey reflects the value of practical and personal development opportunities that Fairlight provides, reinforcing the programme's impact on industry representation and mentorship.

Highlight: Lily sees herself not only as a professional in agriculture but as a mentor to the next generation. Her dedication to supporting other women's entry into the industry exemplifies Fairlight's goal of creating leaders who inspire change.

"The programme's emphasis on female leadership really inspired me. I left feeling empowered and ready to be a role model for other women in agriculture."

BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND PRACTICAL SKILLS FOR CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Amy's story highlights how the Fairlight Foundation internship prepared her for a hands-on role in agriculture. Transitioning from a theory-based academic background, Amy found the internship's practical experiences essential in bridging this gap. With newfound confidence from real-world applications, she progressed from a shepherding role to leasing her own land, demonstrating significant independence. The programme also encouraged her to connect with others, further supporting her desire to mentor and inspire future interns. Amy's success is a testament to the internship's unique integration of practical skills and leadership development.

Highlight: For Amy, the programme's emphasis on hands-on skills transformed her academic knowledge into practical expertise. This foundational experience gave her the confidence to lease her own land and move forward independently.

"The internship really bridged the gap between my university studies and real-world farming. The hands-on experience made all the theory come alive and helped me feel truly prepared to work in the industry."

FROM INTERNSHIP TO INDUSTRY ROLE MODEL

Emma attributes her professional growth and the foundation of her career path to the supportive, skill-building environment at Fairlight. She reflects on how the internship's leadership training equipped her with essential skills, particularly in communication and team dynamics, which proved invaluable in her current role. The confidence she built during the internship empowered her to transition into a career where she serves as a mentor to new entrants. Her journey illustrates how the Fairlight internship instils both the technical knowledge and interpersonal skills needed to inspire others and create inclusivity in agriculture.

Highlight: Emma's focus on interpersonal growth and inclusivity shows her commitment to leading with empathy and supporting diverse teams. Her ability to communicate effectively sets her up as a role model for other women in agriculture.

“I gained so much confidence through the leadership workshops and the chance to work independently. I now feel capable of taking on responsibilities that I once thought were beyond my abilities.”

RESILIENCE AND ADAPTABILITY

Since completing her internship, Monique has brought her skills to a new environment, adapting her knowledge to farming practices in Australia. The hands-on experience in the programme equipped her to handle different livestock and farm management techniques. With a foundation in leadership and communication skills, she confidently transitioned into a leadership role in a diverse team setting. She remains a role model for aspiring young women in agriculture, actively supporting and encouraging others through social media and personal interactions. Monique's journey highlights the programme's adaptability and relevance, preparing graduates for diverse agricultural landscapes.

Highlight: Monique's transition to agriculture in Australia demonstrates the portability of the skills gained at Fairlight. Her success in adapting to new challenges highlights the programme's emphasis on resilience and flexibility.

“The mentorship I received didn't just teach me about farming—it taught me how to be resilient and adaptable, which are skills I use every day.”

GAINING INDEPENDENCE AND LEADERSHIP IN AGRICULTURE

Through the Fairlight Foundation internship, Ella transitioned from academia to a practical agricultural role, where she quickly proved her resilience and adaptability. Initially needing to build hands-on skills, Ella embraced each challenge with a positive attitude, steadily progressing in her responsibilities. Over time, she managed her own livestock section and supported her team with animal health tasks, becoming a trusted member on the farm. Ella's journey reflects the programme's ability to build both technical expertise and confidence, preparing graduates for independence and leadership.

Highlight: Ella's growth exemplifies the power of experiential learning, where she evolved from a learner into a leader, capable of managing her own livestock responsibilities. Her journey showcases Fairlight's commitment to developing independence and leadership in agriculture.

“The support and mentorship were phenomenal. Having someone to guide me and answer my questions gave me the confidence to handle even the toughest challenges.”

BREAKING NEW GROUND WITH CONFIDENCE

Sammy found her career path transformed by the practical experience and personal growth gained through the internship. Coming from an academic background with minimal hands-on experience, Sammy's time at Fairlight equipped her with the confidence and skills she needed to step directly into shepherding. After finishing the internship, she secured a position nearby and has continued to thrive, often working independently and managing her own tasks. Sammy's experience with Fairlight not only prepared her for the responsibilities of farm life but also instilled a sense of resilience and self-assurance that has carried over into her work.

Highlight: Sammy's journey has positioned her as a role model for other young women in agriculture. Her willingness to share her experiences and support younger colleagues reflects Fairlight's mission to empower women, showing them that confidence and skills can help them excel in traditionally male-dominated roles.

“The hands-on nature of the internship made a huge difference for me. I walked away feeling confident and capable of tackling real-world challenges in farming.”

THE INTERNS' SUCCESS STORIES

The interns' success stories highlight their growth and development during the Fairlight Foundation internship. Supported by the Fairlight Station team, these interns have developed into capable agricultural professionals, gaining practical on-farm experience and building confidence. Their progress reflects resilience, adaptability, and a commitment to learning as they tackled challenges and developed their skills in a supportive environment.

Fairlight's emphasis on blending practical training with leadership development has equipped these interns with the skills and confidence to pursue a career within agriculture. Through workshops, mentorship, and real-world tasks, they have discovered their own strengths, expanded their capabilities, and gained clarity on their career goals. These stories reflect the programme's core mission: to inspire, empower, and prepare young women to excel in agriculture and pave the way for future generations.

BLENDING PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE WITH PERSONAL GROWTH

Holli's experience with the Fairlight Foundation internship has significantly complemented her academic background. Whilst she had previously considered an advisory role, the hands-on nature of the internship transformed her confidence and skillset, allowing her to see the direct application of her university studies in a real-world setting. The programme's workshops, especially in leadership and animal health, have reinforced her desire to remain in shepherding, instilling a deeper sense of capability and independence. Holli's time at Fairlight reflects the programme's focus on blending academic theory with practical, confidence-building experiences.

Highlight: Holli's newfound independence, particularly in completing tasks solo, has solidified her confidence in taking on challenging agricultural roles, directly showcasing Fairlight's emphasis on empowering women through real-world responsibility.

“Being given the chance to work independently has really boosted my confidence. I feel trusted, and that trust motivates me to do my best.”

BRIDGING THEORY WITH HANDS-ON FARM SKILLS

Ella's internship with the Fairlight Foundation has provided her with the opportunity to bridge the gap between her theoretical academic studies and the hands-on demands of farm work. Through varied experiences, from soil testing to animal management, Ella has embraced a holistic view of farming. Her newfound passion for practical work is paired with aspirations to eventually pursue an advisory role, showcasing her adaptability and eagerness to learn. Ella's journey reflects Fairlight's commitment to developing well-rounded agricultural professionals who can bring both practical knowledge and ambition to the industry.

Highlight: Ella's journey exemplifies Fairlight's success in turning theory into practice, empowering her with the skills to work confidently on the farm while laying the foundation for future roles in agricultural advisory.

“The practical workshops have been incredibly valuable. It's one thing to learn about animal health in a lecture and another to actually be part of it on a farm.”

FROM COMFORT ZONE TO CONFIDENCE ZONE

For Aggie, the Fairlight internship has been a transformative experience that pushed her beyond her comfort zone. The supportive learning environment allowed her to tackle new challenges, from working with unfamiliar livestock to participating in leadership workshops. The encouragement to try, even when uncertain, has greatly boosted her confidence. She now approaches her tasks with a sense of assurance, prepared to apply her skills in diverse agricultural settings. Aggie's experience highlights the programme's emphasis on safe, growth-oriented challenges that prepare interns for a range of roles within the sector.

Highlight: By stepping into new roles and responsibilities, Aggie has embraced Fairlight's approach to learning through challenges, developing both technical skills and self-assurance that will support her career in agriculture.

“This internship has shown me that leadership isn't just about having a title; it's about how you carry yourself and how you support those around you.”

THE EMPLOYERS' SUCCESS STORIES

The employers' stories highlight the tangible impact Fairlight Foundation graduates are making in the agricultural sector. Each employer recounts the unique strengths and contributions their Fairlight graduate brought to their team, from technical expertise to leadership qualities. Employers praised the graduates' adaptability, work ethic, and ability to step confidently into roles that often require both hands-on skills and critical thinking.

These accounts emphasise the value of the internship programme in preparing graduates to excel in their immediate roles and quickly become valuable, well-integrated members of their teams. The programme's focus on practical training, confidence-building, and leadership is apparent in these stories, showcasing Fairlight's success in preparing graduates to contribute effectively to their roles. The employers' experiences reinforce the Foundation's reputation for cultivating well-rounded, skilled professionals who are bringing innovation, resilience, and positive change to the agricultural industry.

BUILDING TOMORROW'S AGRICULTURAL LEADERS

When John brought Michaela onto his team, he wasn't sure what to expect from a recent graduate. However, Michaela quickly proved to be an outstanding addition, bringing skill, adaptability, and leadership potential. "Michaela's skills are excellent—her stockmanship is even above what we need, and she's incredibly patient and proficient in handling her dogs," John shared. Her ability to manage farm responsibilities impressed him, especially given the unique demands of a farm close to the public.

Michaela's role grew quickly as John saw her potential. Originally hired as a shepherd, she soon took charge of running the farm's FarmlQ programme, tracking health treatments and records across multiple properties. Her organisational skills and keen eye for pasture health led John to trust her with overseeing a 300-hectare section of the farm—a significant responsibility for someone so early in their career. "She's independent, organised, and already showing herself as a leader," he noted, adding that she quickly grasped new technologies and systems in farm management.

Michaela's impact went beyond farm operations to the team itself. Working alongside experienced farmers, she held her own, sharing insights and encouraging a collaborative approach. "She has a quiet but valuable opinion, and she's not afraid to ask questions that make us think," John said, adding that her positive influence even extended to her younger supervisor. Recently, Michaela took on a role as an advocate, speaking to students at Auckland's Mount Albert Grammar School and inspiring them to consider careers in agriculture. Michaela's journey, guided by the Fairlight Foundation, has not only prepared her for a promising career but also shown the programme's success in building skilled, confident, and driven agricultural professionals.

"The Fairlight Foundation is doing an excellent job with their graduates. If we have future positions, we'll definitely look to them again."

A WILLING LEARNER RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

When Hamish and Katie welcomed Sammy as a junior shepherd on their hill-country farm, they quickly saw her enthusiasm and eagerness to learn. Sammy arrived with strong foundational skills from the Fairlight Foundation programme, and while she initially needed more hands-on experience in specific areas, her positive attitude and willingness to tackle new challenges made her a valuable addition to the team. "Sammy was ready to jump into

anything," Katie shared, noting that Sammy's adaptability and interest in improving were key to her fast progress.

Sammy's role grew as she demonstrated her capabilities, especially during the challenging aftermath of Cyclone Gabrielle. The severe weather created numerous unexpected tasks, such as fence repairs and slip clearance, which Sammy handled with resilience and determination. Her work on these tasks not only supported the farm's recovery but also gave her practical skills that weren't part of her initial training. "She adapted quickly," Hamish said, highlighting Sammy's growth in confidence as she took on increasingly complex responsibilities.

A highlight for Hamish and Katie was Sammy's progress with her dog handling skills. Starting out a bit unsure, Sammy learned to manage her dogs effectively over time and even won a local prize with her huntaway dog by the end of her tenure. For Hamish and Katie, Sammy's journey emphasises the value of the Fairlight Foundation internship in preparing young women for meaningful roles in agriculture.

Hamish and Katie look forward to welcoming more Fairlight graduates in the future, knowing the internship programme equips them with both practical skills and the right attitude for success. Sammy's experience on their farm is a testament to the strength of the programme in developing confident, capable agricultural professionals ready to make a difference.

"It was great to see her grow with the dogs—she started off nervous, but by the end, she was confident and skilled."

FROM JUNIOR SHEPHERD TO TRUSTED ADVISOR

Mark employed Ella as a junior shepherd on his team. Though Ella initially needed some hands-on experience, Mark quickly saw her strong potential. "She was highly intelligent and capable of thinking critically," Mark shared, adding that her confidence and skill levels grew rapidly with time and guidance. Ella's ability to analyse situations and propose solutions made her stand out, particularly as she moved into more complex responsibilities.

Starting with basic tasks, Ella advanced to managing her own set of jobs daily and, eventually, contributing valuable insights on managing one of the farm's three properties. Mark valued her ability to identify areas for improvement and communicate effectively with the team. "She wasn't afraid to voice her ideas or ask questions, which helped us improve our planning and team dynamics," he noted. Ella's growth with the farm went beyond technical skills—her positive attitude and teamwork earned her respect across the team.

By the end of her tenure, Ella had become a trusted member of Mark's team, known for her resourcefulness and dedication. Her success story didn't end there; Ella has now taken on a lease for a farm with her partner, putting her skills and leadership to use in her own venture. Mark's experience with Ella highlights the value that Fairlight Foundation graduates bring to their roles, combining academic knowledge with practical skills and the confidence to contribute meaningfully.

“Ella was a pleasure to have around, and she set an example for my own daughters. It's great to see the Fairlight Foundation preparing women like her for the agricultural industry.”

SETTING HIGH STANDARDS WITH PURPOSE

Simon recalls Yvonne as a 'superstar' on his farm, quickly standing out for her focus, organisation, and drive. From day one, Yvonne was motivated to learn and excel. “She picked things up really quickly and was very organised. She set high standards for herself and those around her,” Simon noted. Her well-rounded skills, combined with a dedication to continuous learning, made her a natural fit for the farm's demanding environment.

Starting as a junior shepherd, Yvonne soon took on more responsibility, working closely with the stock manager to oversee her own sections of livestock. Her initiative and ability to organise her workload allowed her to make well-informed decisions, freeing up other team members to focus on larger farm operations. Simon appreciated her self-leadership, as Yvonne would regularly come to team meetings prepared with plans and questions, reflecting her proactive approach to each task.

Beyond technical skills, Yvonne also brought energy and drive to the team. While her high standards occasionally challenged her peers, Simon recognised this quality as an asset. “She was always on the front foot, taking responsibility and willing to discuss issues or challenges with us,” he shared. Her commitment to doing the job right earned her respect and encouraged the team to step up their own standards.

Simon's experience with Yvonne illustrates the value of Fairlight Foundation graduates, who bring both practical skills and the right mindset to contribute meaningfully on the farm.

“The Foundation's graduates come well-prepared, with a real purpose and a desire to learn. We couldn't ask for more.”

GROWING SKILLS, GAINING CONFIDENCE

Susan's experience with Emma was a positive journey of growth and adaptability. Starting as a junior shepherd, Emma initially needed to build more practical skills and confidence in her role. However, with her dedication to learning and improvement, Emma quickly became a valued member of the team. “Emma was willing to work hard and was very good with her dogs,” Susan shared, noting her patience and gentleness in working with livestock—a quality that became one of her strengths.

Emma's role expanded over time as she gained confidence in her tasks. Her ability to learn and self-manage became particularly important when the farm underwent staffing changes. Susan recalled how Emma adapted well, taking on increased responsibilities in shifting stock and managing day-to-day farm duties. “She really grew into her role,” Susan observed, highlighting Emma's reliability and strong work ethic.

Emma's strengths, including her friendly nature and teamwork, positively impacted the farm's atmosphere. Susan found Emma's contributions both practical and encouraging, building a supportive work environment. By the end of her tenure, Emma had not only developed valuable skills but also built the confidence to take initiative and pursue further challenges. Reflecting on her time with Emma, Susan emphasised the Fairlight Foundation's success in preparing graduates who bring both skill and a positive mindset to their roles. Emma's growth story is a testament to the programme's value in cultivating adaptable, capable agricultural professionals.

“She was great. She worked hard, had a good gentle way about her around the stock, and was very good in the yards.”

RISING THROUGH THE RANKS WITH SKILL AND DEDICATION

When Matt employed a Fairlight Foundation graduate as a junior shepherd, he quickly recognised her potential. She arrived with a solid skill foundation and a willingness to learn that made her a natural fit for the role. Matt noted her eagerness to embrace new responsibilities and her open-minded approach to feedback.

The graduate's soft skills became a key asset to the team. Her empathy, attentiveness, and professional communication created positive atmosphere on the farm. She engaged meaningfully in team discussions, addressed challenges constructively, and provided feedback to colleagues with ease. Matt was impressed by her ability to lead through example, contributing to both the social and operational success of the team.

As she proved her capabilities, the graduate's role expanded to include managing her own livestock section, monitoring feed levels, and supporting animal health tasks. Her ability to take on these responsibilities independently and efficiently earned her a promotion, with Matt entrusting her with even greater responsibilities. He observed her natural leadership skills, noting that her positive influence extended to junior team members and added to the team's dynamic.

Looking ahead, Matt sees potential for her to move into management roles within the agricultural sector. "She has what it takes to succeed long-term," he said, expressing his hope that she pursues a career in agriculture. Her journey on Matt's team reflects the strength of the Fairlight Foundation internship in preparing graduates who can make a meaningful impact on the industry, equipped with both practical skills and the right mindset for growth.

"She came with a great attitude, ready to take on anything we threw at her!"

THE FAIRLIGHT STATION TEAM'S SUCCESS STORIES

The Fairlight Station team plays an essential role in the success of the internship programme, providing hands-on guidance and mentorship that prepares interns for the demands of the agricultural sector. The Director of the Foundation brings overarching leadership to this effort, shaping the programme's vision and ensuring it aligns with its mission to empower women in agriculture. Together, the team and Director focus on delivering practical training, building confidence, and supporting interns' personal and professional growth.

The team creates a supportive and inclusive environment, involving interns in meaningful tasks while providing timely feedback and clear opportunities to develop their skills. Their dedication to mentorship ensures that interns leave Fairlight not just with practical knowledge, but also with the resilience and leadership qualities needed to excel in their careers. These success stories highlight how the Director's leadership and the Station team's commitment to excellence, work hand in hand to shape the next generation of agricultural professionals.

BUILDING SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE ON THE FARM

The Stock Manager at Fairlight Station plays an essential role in equipping interns with practical skills whilst building their confidence and independence. Recognising that many interns start with limited hands-on experience, the stock manager tailors guidance to each intern's needs, teaching core tasks such as livestock handling, fencing, and tractor operation. With a focus on "doing things the right way," the stock manager ensures that each intern learns efficient techniques that help them gain confidence in their abilities.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the stock manager's role is watching interns transform from beginners into capable, independent team members. Providing real-time, task-based feedback, he encourages interns to ask questions and learn from each experience. His dedication to mentorship has a profound impact, with interns leaving Fairlight prepared for the demands of the agricultural industry and equipped with the resilience needed for future success.

Highlight: Interns report a marked increase in their confidence to work independently, often crediting the stock manager's guidance as crucial in overcoming initial anxieties with practical farm tasks.

Programme impact: Interns consistently achieve competency in core agricultural skills, like livestock handling, fencing, and machinery operation, with noticeable improvements in efficiency and confidence.

"It's incredibly rewarding to see each intern transform into a confident, capable team member. By the end of the programme, they're ready to tackle challenges on their own."

SETTING HIGH STANDARDS AND BUILDING FUTURE LEADERS

As the farm manager and a key instigator of the Fairlight Foundation internship programme, this team member is dedicated to developing skilled, confident agricultural professionals. Emphasising high standards across all tasks, the farm manager works closely with interns to build foundational skills in stockmanship, machinery handling, and farm maintenance. Believing in the importance of confidence-building, the farm manager provides support and opportunities for independent work, helping interns feel prepared for the challenges they will face in their careers.

The farm manager also values inclusivity and collaboration, cultivating a supportive team culture that integrates interns as active members. This collaborative environment allows interns to learn from various team members, each bringing unique strengths and insights. Through his role, the farm manager not only builds capable graduates but also sees potential leaders emerging from each cohort, ready to contribute to and inspire the future of agriculture.

Highlight: The Farm Manager's emphasis on high standards and teamwork not only strengthens interns' technical skills but also fosters the qualities needed to become influential leaders in the agricultural sector.

Programme impact: Graduates frequently move into roles with increased responsibility within their first year, thanks to the strong work ethic and high standards instilled by the Farm Manager.

“We’re not just training interns for today’s tasks; we’re setting them up to be the leaders of tomorrow. Watching them take pride in their work is what this programme is all about.”

VISION AND DEDICATION TO EMPOWERING WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

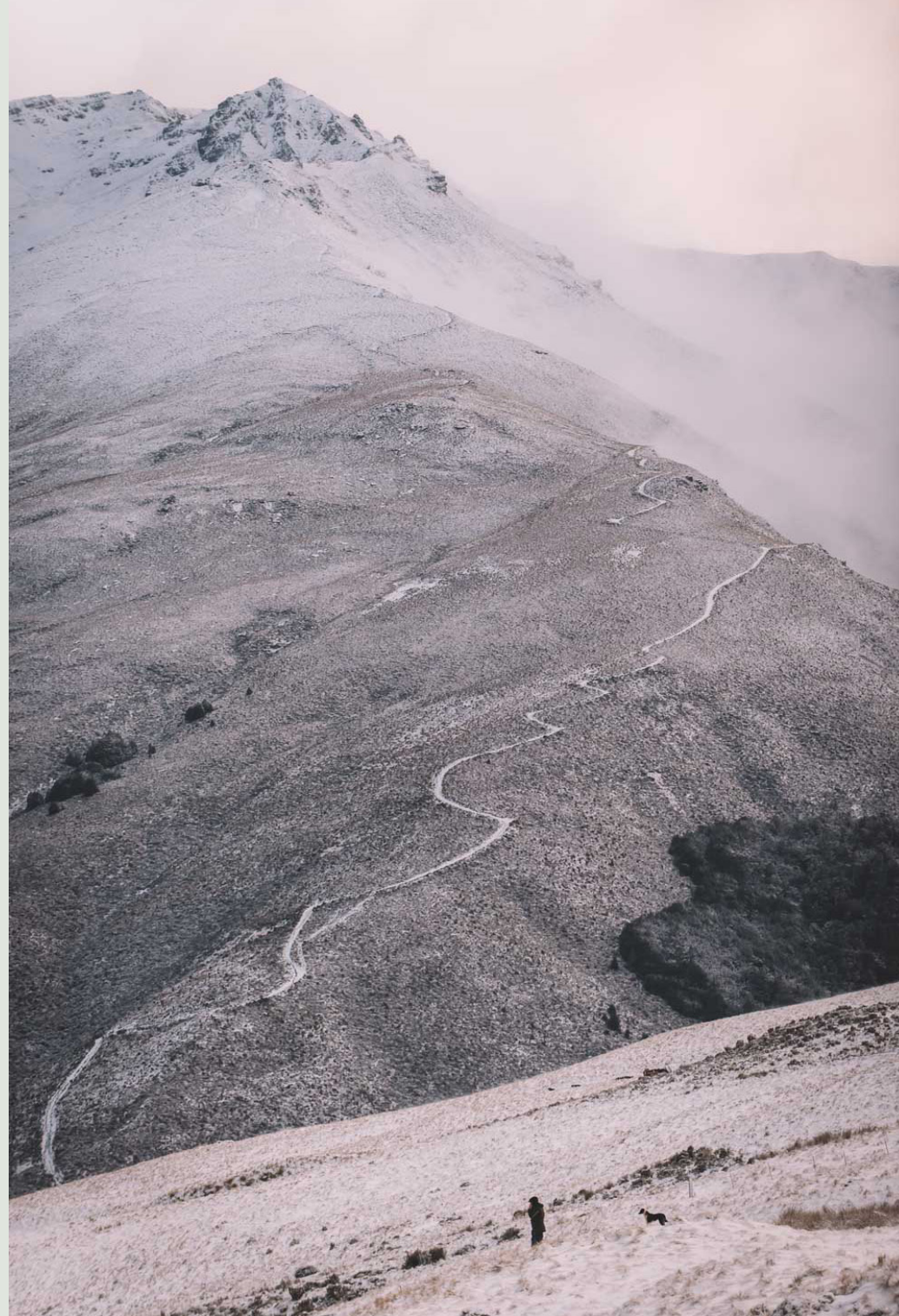
The Director of the Fairlight Foundation is the driving force behind the internship programme’s mission to empower women in agriculture. Her vision is to create confident, skilled professionals who are prepared to lead and inspire others. By combining hands-on practical training with leadership workshops, the Director ensures that the programme develops both the technical abilities, and the interpersonal skills needed for success.

Under her guidance, the programme emphasises resilience and mental health support, with a counsellor available to help interns manage stress and build self-assurance. The Director is dedicated to continuous improvement, adapting the programme based on feedback from interns, employers, and industry trends. Her passion for empowering women in agriculture is evident in the supportive network she has cultivated, providing graduates with lifelong mentorship and a foundation for future success. Her commitment to excellence ensures that each intern leaves Fairlight ready to make a meaningful impact in the industry.

Highlight: The Director’s commitment to mental health, resilience, and leadership development ensures that Fairlight graduates emerge as empowered women, ready to make a lasting impact in agriculture.

Programme impact: Graduates leave the programme feeling more confident and prepared, with many later pursuing mentorship or leadership roles to empower other women in agriculture.

“This programme isn’t just about learning farm skills; it’s about building a foundation for lifelong success in agriculture.”



APPENDIX THREE: FAIRLIGHT FOUNDATION INTERNSHIP GRADUATE PROFILES

Compiled by Fairlight Foundation's Executive Director



Mikayla Beaumont, 2023 Fairlight Foundation Graduate

Before Fairlight, Mikayla studied a Bachelor of Agricultural Science at Massey University. Being an Aucklander, there wasn't many opportunities for her to obtain on-farm experience, but through some summer work on sheep and beef farms, Mikayla discovered her drive to go shepherding. Attending the Fairlight Foundation internship programme was the perfect opportunity to build on the knowledge gained from her Ag degree and gain the hands-on practical farming experience Mikayla needed to get into an on-farm career.

Post Fairlight, Mikayla landed herself a shepherding role with Auckland Council across 9 farms in the Northern region.

In this role she quickly picked up more responsibility, and after 6 months she was given her own block to look after under supervision. Mikayla spends three days a week at Tawharanui, 164ha running 450 MA ewes and 45 breeding cows and has the responsibility of pasture management, making key decision around set stocking, mob sizes, rotation lengths, feed budgets etc. Mikayla also has input into the animal health decisions specifically around drenching regimes and give valuable suggestions into weaning, mating and breeding events. Other than the livestock side of things, repairs and maintenance, weed control, topping, and water systems are all also a big part of her graduate shepherding role. The rest of her week is filled helping on the other blocks, mostly doing stock work.

Outside of work, because Mikayla learned how to shear at Fairlight with professional shearing tutor Ken Payne, she started shearing her neighbour's sheep and this led onto more weekend work regularly shearing lifestyle blockers sheep. This also often involves giving animal health treatments and passing on any advice she can to the lifestyle block owners.

One of the biggest things Mikayla took away from Fairlight was how important it is to get involved in the community around you. Mikayla has joined the Rodney Dog Trials

since moving back to Auckland and says that this has been the best way to meet more like-minded people and build a support network for bringing on her young team of dogs.

Since graduating Mikayla has also spoken to the Ag class at Mt Albert Grammar School in Auckland to share her experience as a Fairlight Foundation intern and rural professional.



Amy Ashworth, 2022 Fairlight Foundation Graduate

Prior to being accepted into the Fairlight Foundation programme Amy had completed a Bachelor of Agriculture Commerce Majoring in Farm Management at Massey University. Amy grew up up on sheep and beef farms until she was 15 but as they were corporate managed farms she didn't get to do a lot of hands-on work other than helping out at the busy times like weaning and tailing. However, it was enough of an introduction to convince Amy that working the rural industry was where she wanted to be.

When Amy graduated from the Fairlight Foundation programme she took on a shepherding role at PAMU owned Goudies Station, a 2000ha flat to rolling pumice country property, running a Romney stud, Silver Stabiliser cattle stud, angus commercial cattle and wapiti and red deer.

Right from the get-go Amy started with her block to look after, which included making pasture management and stock shift and animal health decisions. After roughly 8 months Goudies Station brought in a cattle stud and Amy stepped up to manage the day to day running of this operation which included managing the daily feeding and tasks like organising the tagging at birth.

Passionate about genetics, Amy enjoys the fortnightly genetics meeting for the Silver Stabiliser with the manager, farm technician and the cattle geneticist where she gives them a day to day run down about daily concerns and upcoming events.

Amy has also enjoyed being involved in the expo days presenting and discussing weights of our stock to companies who have been interested in partnering with the cattle stud.

After 2 years at Goudies, Amy moved to Gisborne in 2025 to a 1500ha Hill country station where they carry, maternal & terminal ewes, Hereford cattle and red deer.



Ella Eades, 2021 Fairlight Foundation Graduate

Before being accepted into the Fairlight Foundation programme, Ella had completed a Bachelor of Science majoring in Animal Science and had some basic farming experience doing the odd bit of drenching and tailing and she had worked with cattle in the yards Bovis Testing in her role for Assure Quality.

Ella's first role after graduating from the Fairlight Foundation was as a shepherd at Glen Eden Station which is predominantly a finishing property, consisting mostly of lambs but also included steers and bulls too. There was a small ewe breeding flock and small mob of cows which they bred to finish as well.

Ella loved the team culture and environment because everyone got to pitch ideas at Glen Eden. The stock manager and owner had overall say, but every morning the whole team would meet and talk what was happening for that day and also had discussions about general animal management. Ella learnt a lot from this and eventually got brave enough to pitch her own ideas as time went on. Ella was given the responsibility of looking after the day-to-day decisions on a block which included pasture management and stock rotations. There was a lot of yard work like weighing of stock (both cattle and sheep) drenching, vaccinating etc and there was also a period of time for about 3 months when they didn't have a stock manager where Ella was then required to plan most of the stock shifts animal health work during that time.

At Glen Eden, Ella was also part of a 2IC discussion group was run by Baker Ag which had meetings every 2 months. She also attended Wormwise workshops, Atkins ranch meetings and a Rabobank financial skills workshop. The owner of Glen Eden also did sessions with Ella to explain the financial side of his farming operations and he was very transparent about what things cost on farm, and she learnt a significant amount from this.

Now, Ella and her farming partner Toby are leasing a 515ha rolling/steep hill block in Otoko just 45 minutes north of Gisborne. They have 2000 breeding ewes and 300 steers, all of which will be finished or sold store. The farm is strong country that is generally summer safe, the infrastructure needs re-establishing. Toby and Ella have had to create financial budgets, yearly stock management planners and make all stock policies/ animal management decisions together. They have had a lot of support to get here, especially from

Toby's family who farm close by. They are part of a discussion group run by Ag First which has monthly meetings and since being in Gisborne, they also took part in a Rabobank 2-day workshop focused on getting to farm ownership.

In the next 5 years or so Toby and Ella will also be leasing Toby's parents Hill country farm off them which is another 700 odd hectares. So, they will have around 1200 hectares all up. They are hoping to eventually buy the place they are leasing now and potentially Toby's parent's place from them even further down the track.



Emma Foss, 2021 Fairlight Foundation Graduate

Before being accepted into the Fairlight Foundation programme, Emma had completed a Bachelor of Agricultural Science majoring in Agriculture at Massey University. Emma grew up on a sheep and beef farm which she did work on in school holidays however she didn't plan on pursuing a shepherding career for a long time and lacked confidence when it came to the idea of her applying for a shepherding role.

Emma's first role after graduating from the Fairlight Foundation was as a shepherd at Waipapa Station, Twin Oaks Angus cattle stud. Twin Oaks is a leading Angus cattle breeder, cataloguing 50 R2 and 50 R1 bulls every year. They also have a lamb finishing operation buying in and finishing thousands of lambs annually.

Emma loved being a part of the Angus cattle stud as she has a passion for animal genetics and was able to learn lots about the mating decision process as well as all the other processes involved from birth right through to sale day. While at Twin Oaks, Emma's main roles involved doing stock work, yard work and genetics program specific processes with the cattle stud, e.g. help with decision making around mating choices, recording data of calves at birth etc. The lamb finishing operation added an element of diversity to the job and the all the mustering was great for dog development.

Towards the end of her time at Twin Oaks Emma decided that she wanted to challenge herself in a different way going forward and looked to explore different career options within the rural industry. At the same time, she was also experiencing trouble with her own mental health which, thanks to the support from the Foundation, she had been proactively managing since receiving professional therapy during her internship partially funded by the Foundation. She was amazed at how well these sessions went and came away thinking about how she could spread awareness around mental health as well as pursuing a new career at the same time. Emma has always had an interest in helping other people and after going to get work done herself, she was inspired to train as a therapist.

She then spent the next year studying and working casually on her home farm while completing a Diploma in Advanced Clinical Hypnotherapy. Clinical Hypnotherapy utilises hypnosis along with different modalities that include Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) to help elicit the change a client is after. Working with the subconscious mind provides a unique and highly effective way to do so. The subconscious mind is the biggest part of the mind (far bigger than the conscious mind) and therefore has a big influence on how and why we do things the way we do. She intends to help clients remove blockages, find resources and make positive changes to any limiting belief systems and/or habits that could be upgraded to have a positive impact on a client's life. Her aim is to specialise in rural mental health and help those within the rural industry by offering one-on-one client sessions online which will enable her to have an impact across the country.

Emma also wants to spread knowledge around the effects of rural mental health, how someone may experience it, how it can interrupt their everyday life and how others can support the people closest to them if they are going through a hard time. She plans to do this through social media platforms for a start and would like to progress to doing speaking events in rural communities in the future.

