



Training the trainee... Monaro Farming Systems leads the way

As this year draws to a close, Monaro Farming Systems celebrates a third year of managing a successful traineeship program for young school leavers on the Monaro who are looking for a long term career in Agriculture.

As of the end of 2014, six (6) young trainees will have been inducted and trained through the program. This year, the two trainees were locals Cameron Johnson (Cooma) and Kate Connolly (Bredbo) who have worked across eight to nine "host" properties in the Cooma and Bombala region. Kate and Cameron have both demonstrated the ideal aptitude and work ethic highly sought after in young people. They have proved to be diligent, reliable and extremely hard working and learnt a wide range of skills and different ways of doing things. Feedback from host employers has been nothing but positive for these two local kids.

Asked why he participated in the program, Malcolm Pearce from Coolringdon replied "Having been through the Jackeroo system myself, I still look back on those years as being a good introduction to learning many skills that I often use today. I see the traineeship as mirroring that system with the added benefit, that you can learn how to perform a particular task many different ways."

Lisa Philips, a sheep and cattle producer from Jerangle who joined the program this year as a host employer, talks very highly of Cameron's work ethic and how "easy he is to have around." Lisa mentions she would have "no hesitation in recommending him on to any future employer."

Craig Mitchell (MFS member) was the main initiator of the traineeships due to the growing concern of retaining and attracting young local youth to choose a career in the agricultural industry and to stay and work on the Monaro. Craig wanted to "give young people the opportunity to gain skills and get an understanding of a broad view of successful management practices across the Monaro".

Both trainees have thoroughly enjoyed their experience this year and the chance to learn from some of the leading producers on the Monaro. Asked why he chose to apply for the MFS traineeship, Cameron mentions "wanting to gain practical skills and grab the opportunity to work on different places on the Monaro". Cameron's only challenge this year has been trying to work out the paddock lay-outs on all the different properties.

Kate will now go on to study an Agricultural Science Degree at Charles Sturt University in Wagga in 2015 while Cameron is still considering his options of continuing working in

agriculture on the Monaro or taking on a local apprenticeship. Both Kate and Cameron have nearly completed a Cert III in Agriculture as part of the traineeship.

Funding for the program has been sourced mainly out of the MFS operating budget with help from RDASI (Rural Development Association Southern Inland), Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) which paid the trainees to attend the shearing school at "Coolringdon" in May 2014 as well as NSW Farmers (Cooma Branch) and RB Sellars who has donated work clothing each year.

MFS is currently advertising for trainees for 2015.

For more information please contact Nancy Spoljaric – MFS Project Officer,
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