

MY PASSION FOR AGRICULTURE



Hamish

Yanco Agricultural High School

- My interests include:
1. Cattle Showing – I show steers. I have competed in shows in 3 states in Australia this year.
 2. Working on the farm

My favourite subjects at school:

- Maths
- Science
- Agriculture
- Cattle Showing

MY FUTURE IN AGRICULTURE

I currently am a Year 8 student attending Yanco Agricultural High School. I live on my family's 5,000 acre mixed grazing farm near Tarcutta in NSW

The steps required to become a stock and station agent are go to TAFE and get a Certificate 4 in Stock and Station Agent. There is an auctioneers school, which could be completed. The big companies have traineeships.



A Day in the Life of a Stock and Station Agent

By Hamish Maclure

Monday as a stock and station agent in Wagga Wagga usually begins early around 2 am. As Monday is cattle sale day. Sometimes we start later but that depends on the draw of the sales. If we had the second draw of the sale for example most of the cattle would be in the Wagga Wagga Livestock Marketing Centre by 5pm on Sunday night. This means drafting would have started on Sunday night, with most of it done late Sunday and into the early hours of Monday morning. So it is a late night or early morning (1am) on Sunday night.

Then it is back at the yards Monday morning at about 7:45am to finish off the drafting and speak to clients who are looking to purchase stores and making contact with the meat buyers who are in the selling ring. The sale begins each week with bulls at 7am, prime cattle at 7:30am and store cattle at 11am usually, but this could vary depending on the numbers. When they sold the 7,500 prime cattle at the Wagga Wagga Livestock Marketing Centre they were still selling prime cattle at 5pm.

Before the sale I made a special effort to catch up with Mrs Bianca Wales, a new client of mine who I visited the day before and helped her class her Angus steers for the market. Bianca is aiming for the top of the market at the Livestock Marketing Centre for the day. I spoke to her about the new beef calculator the agency has developed and explained to her it is not all about the sale price and topping the market. She needs to consider the costs of the feed, travel, agent fees and other running costs.

At the beginning of the sale, the auctioneer calls the sale to attention. So I yell out "Saleo, Saleo, Saleo". The sale starts with the first pen and each pen is sold to the people sitting in the seats in the selling ring. The winning bidders are from the Merungle Hill stud. This part of the day requires a loud and clear voice, quick mind and good maths skills.

After the sale the cattle are counted out and stored out in the back yards for delivery. I check this is done and then email, text and phone clients depending on their preferred communication method about the prices for the day. As the market is down and the drought is taking its toll, these talks can be hard.

Once this is done I can have some lunch at the café and network with other agents, buyers, clients and potential new clients.

In the afternoon I travel to Holbrook to speak to Miss Kim Crown a client about the final details of their upcoming stud merino sheep sale. They are offering 150 rams at their 15th annual on farm sale. We discussed their marketing campaign (including the use of auctions plus as part of the live sale), reviewed the professional photos and videos they had done of their top 5 rams and decided when they are to go up on the internet and spoke about making client phone calls to personally invite loyal clients.

On the way home from Holbrook I stop at Keajura Park, a newly established Limousin stud and meet one of my favourite clients about his Limousin steers. He has them in the yards and I ran my hands over them and check their fat scores that would be best for the market they are aiming for. He wants me to advise them on the best selling and marketing methods. We discuss the current market at the sale yards and the average is about \$2.60 per kilo for the 500kg live weight steers. Dave, the client was considering selling to JBS. I said I can get him \$3.80 per kilo carcass weight. If they were to dress at an average of 63% they would make \$1,197 compared to the market where they would make \$1,300 (less sale yard fees). We discussed that the travel costs and the agent fees are the same either way. He ended up deciding to sell through the sale yards at Wagga Wagga.

In the evening I'm on the phone for a few hours talking to clients about their animals and plans. Then I am in bed early as it has been a long day.