



MEDIA RELEASE

2 June 2016

Lifelong love of animals behind student's windfall

A veterinary science student's lifelong love of animals was rewarded with a \$2,500 scholarship from Agcarm.

Born and bred in New Plymouth, 20-year-old Massey University student Ben Mitchell has never wavered in his aspiration to one day be a vet. Even as a small boy, he would sit outside the penguin enclosure at the zoo with his mother and wait for two hours for a penguin to appear.

"It has been my dream to become a veterinarian since before I was five year's old," said the third-year veterinary science student.

"It is that dream that has driven me and ultimately shaped my path."

When he finishes his studies Mitchell says he will be working in a field he truly loves and one that will provide him with "endless enjoyment for the rest of my life." He also loves getting outdoors to have "free reign of the countryside."

In his commitment to animal health, Ben emphasises the importance of developing new medicines to manage resistance in animals. "A major issue facing the veterinary industry is the development of drug resistance." This happens when infections become resistant to treatments such as antibiotics and parasitic drenches. To combat this, the development of new drugs is vital. He says that "if these medicines are not developed and effective treatment can not be provided, the veterinary industry as a whole suffers."

When he hasn't got his head in a book, Ben can be found on the cricket pitch, basketball courts or playing music. He's won many cricket titles and coaches school children as well as the junior teams of the New Plymouth Old Boy's Cricket Club.

"It's a full on degree, but it's important to counter the stress of study with other activities." Ben is a keen sportsman and musician. In fact he's known to get pretty noisy at home as he's often singing or playing the piano.

"It's a good stress release," he says adding that his sporting and community activities will help him in his career. "I feel that strong interpersonal skills and the ability to work in a team are vital in becoming an excellent vet."

Ben's a natural leader and attended the global young leaders' conference in New York and Washington in his final year of school.

He's very grateful for Agcarm's financial boost, saying that it is of "immense assistance."

"The degree is very costly and the associated practical requirements greatly impede my ability to fund my education."

Agcarm chief executive Mark Ross said the association is pleased to contribute toward the future of such a dedicated, hard-working, all-round high achiever who is so committed to animal health.

"Ben's application was of a very high calibre. We were extremely impressed with the passion and dedication he showed for animal welfare and believe he will be a future leader within the veterinary industry," Ross said.

Agcarm has two scholarships to support education and raise awareness about careers in Agcarm-related industries. The winner of the horticultural scholarship is Sarah Ross.

Industry initiatives led by Agcarm include providing safe and sustainable animal health and crop protection technology for the future of New Zealand, and educating the community about the industry's contribution.

About Agcarm

Agcarm is an industry association of companies which manufacture, distribute and sell products that keep animals healthy and crops thriving. Industry initiatives led by Agcarm include providing safe and sustainable animal health and crop protection technology for the future of New Zealand, and educating the community about the industry's contribution.

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