

## From school to work - Helping students into Food and Fibre jobs

So often we hear our teens say, “I don’t know what I want to do” as they search for inspiration into that elusive career pathway and enviously watch those who seem to “have it sorted”.

### How can schools help?



### Expose learners to authentic experiences early. From year 10 if possible!

- **Guest speakers:** choose relatable people - ex-students, local farmers and contractors (workers rather than the boss), and parents. Ask students to invite and organise speakers and prepare them with questions for the event. Check out [Inspiring the Future](#) to find or share relatable guest speakers.
- **Field\contracting or competition days:** Great for building school-industry relationships! Structure the trip, have adult support, and generally only take interested students. Contact key exhibitors in advance and set up an activity\chat with them. Prepare students with questions and discourage just collecting the “free stuff”. Enter students in competitions e.g. Rural Women, Fencing, or Dairy NZ.
- **Field trips:** Either specific to your class interest or expose students to unfamiliar industries.
- **Subscribe to mailing lists and memberships:** These provide invaluable regional contacts. e.g. Federated Farmers, Fencing Contractors Association, Deer Association.
- Build relationships with local operators and contractors (silage\arable). Opportunities into these jobs often come via word of mouth.

### Work Experience - Try before you buy!

- Usually available in Year 12\13 via Trades Academy/Primary ITO or Gateway programmes. Unpaid\full working day\ across all seasons, especially winter. This prepares for outdoor realities and provides time to learn skills and farm\site and procedures in a quieter season, so students are useful during peak times e.g. calving.
- Encourage holiday work!
- Work Experience often leads to apprenticeships, paid weekend/holiday or full-time work.

**Get a driver licence:** This is often an essential requirement so help get students through the stages asap. <https://drive.govt.nz/>

### Got a job? Helping students survive the first season.

The realities of leaving home, cooking, cleaning can be overwhelming. Here’s some things to consider...

- If possible, encourage staying at home for the first year of employment to ease the transition.
- Update a CV and include relevant referees/references.
- Get fit! This is very important and often under rated.
- Ask employers questions about their expectations of the job and the opportunities for on job training.
- What is needed for the job? Access to a vehicle, dogs, household furniture? Will work clothing, PPE, meals etc. be supplied? Ex students are a valuable source for building a support network.
- Is there an employment contract? Has it been read and understood? What about your holiday pay?
- Organise finances. What’s the pay period? Set up bank accounts, do a budget and set financial goals.
- Doctor\Dentist -any appointments - get these done prior to starting work and turning 18.
- If going overseas, what are the requirements if under 18, or under 21. Do they need a full licence for contracting? Do they understand legalities? Have insurance? A will?

### What if things aren’t going well?

Young people need someone to talk to so **set this up before leaving school**. If they are unhappy or the job isn’t what they thought it would be, try popping them alongside an ex-student with greater work experience (ideally in a tractor!) for a “life chat” - it’s worked 100% of the time so far!