

Partners in Primary Industry

NZ Primary Industries Trades Academy (PITA)

The NZ Primary Industry Trades Academy is for young school students interested in following a career in the primary industry, is in its fourth year and Derek McCullum, the schools liaison manager, is very positive about its development.

"It started in 2011 with 8 schools and 150 funded places. It now partners with 21 schools and has 410 funded places. Our places are always oversubscribed so we have a strict selection process. Students have to write a CV, go through an interview and must demonstrate a real interest in pursuing a farming career or agricultural study."

The (PITA) Trades Academy is different to other Trades Academies, it does not partner with a tertiary provider but is a partnership between two Primary Industry Training Organisations, secondary schools and willing employers. "We are seeing the positive benefits for students who have been involved. Many have already become apprentices or moved onto other educational programmes in the sector," says Derek.

Year 11 students attend vocational theory classes for two four-hour sessions instead of the regular one four-hour session per week, industry visits, and on-site learning on a farm or in an industry organisation like a pack house or a processing plant. The students can then see how people in the industry earn a living and what skills are needed to get there. "This helps the student connect what they are learning in a classroom and what happens in the real world" says Peter Allen, Head of Technology and Primary Trades, Motueka High School.

"Vocational learning picks up on a student's natural interests and helps focus their energy in that direction. It is the relationship between the theoretical and the real," says Derek. The Vocational Pathways show students that there are options other than just "going to varsity" says Derek. "I used to be a career advisor and I remember all the students used to say: I want to go to varsity. Using the Vocational Pathways students can see the range of career or study options open to them relating to a certain career and they can match their subjects to these career choices."

* This image represents the Primary Industry pathway only.

*I enjoy being outdoors
and working on the farm.
My path is Green.*

The NZ Primary Industry Trades Academy helps engage students who have become disinterested or struggle with a normal curriculum. "This helps students who have the ability to excel but have not been previously catered for," says Peter.

Cory Rako, a Motueka High student, decided to join the NZ Primary Industries Trades Academy to pursue a Primary Industries Vocational Pathway. "I am not an inside person", says Cory who is now in his third year at the Trades Academy and a year 13 student at Motueka High School. "I love being around animals and I like hard physical work. When I finish this year I want to get a job as a junior shepherd on a sheep or beef farm then slowly progress to a senior shepherd and finally manage my own farm."

Cory was chosen to join the vocational programme in 2012 when he was in Year 11. At that stage he was interested in being a chef, but then he changed his direction and was motivated to get into farming. "I was not doing the best at school, but with the school's help I found something that really suited me and a direction for a career."

Motueka High School works on a slightly different model, the vocational theory is not taught on site at an ITO or

Trade Academy but is taught at the school. Students are then sent out into industry to do their learning 'in the field' in two four hour sessions twice a week.

In Years 12 and 13 students undertake day or week long work placements on different farms. "The benefit of the week long placements is that the students get to live like a farmer and see the full cycle, they see the process through a cycle – rather than in short spurts. We had a situation where a student was on a farm when there was a big storm one night, he had to go out in the middle of night to search for the stock. He would never have had that opportunity if he was there for a few hours during the day. It gives them a sense of what real life is like on a farm," says Peter.

"We have excellent relationships with organisations which open their doors to our students and teach them on-the-job. This is a great example of industry taking responsibility for ensuring they have an educated and skilled future workforce. It is these kinds of partnerships which help ensure that young New Zealanders are getting what they need to make their lives a success."

More than 4,200 senior secondary schools students, from 264 schools are currently enrolled at a Trades Academy this year, in 22 Secondary-Tertiary Programmes throughout New Zealand. Using the Vocational Pathways, students can plan their options from learning to earning.

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