

KAYLIE DE JAGER

F A R M M A N A G E R



PROFILE

My name is Kaylie de Jager, I'm 21 years old and work as a Farm Manager at Patagonia Farm. I enjoy horseback riding, sheep shearing and competing in both hobbies. I adore mountain biking and love to hike during my rest days, I also don't grow tired of conversation about the farming industry and all its aspects. I would love to travel more as I'm definitely a tourist in my own country, I still have much to see and experience.

My journey into the sheep industry grew from an unsuspecting place. As a child I would always opt to play outside, catch butterflies for my insect house, swim and follow my dad to the chicken houses. I absolutely adored horses and have been riding since a child, growing older I believed that this is what I would be doing one day. Grow and work with horses for a living and somehow farm alongside them.

I attended Swartland High School situated in Malmesbury, as soon as I was able to choose my subjects, I opted to do Agricultural Sciences. To my surprise we were a tiny handful of students compared to the other subjects, I worked hard to achieve good marks but for me it wasn't about only being good in the subject, it was about understanding every aspect of farming. I found it so interesting and a hunger to know more about agriculture grew.

We attended an Annual Stock-man competition held in Malmesbury as an outing for the agricultural science students. When I heard about the outing, I made sure to learn everything in my books about farming to be prepared for the competition held for students from other schools. The day of the Stock-man competition was the first time I've properly seen a sheep and held a sheep. To shorten the story, I was the only student to achieved 100% on my quiz and was then allowed to show the sheep in which I won the stock-man competition for that year. Since then, my journey of falling in love with the sheep industry began.

Soon after the competition, I was invited to attend another outing which only allowed a handful of pupils to a small farm in Porterville just past the high school. We learned about so many different aspects to farming and got to taste some lovely figs for the first time too. After we did our tour of the farm we were asked to meet in the shed, where the ladies was asked to stand at the wool section and the guys were asked to stand at the shearing section. I felt a great bit of emotion for not being included in such an activity because I was merely a lady. So, standing at the wool table while looking head on at the shearing station, the shearing instructor asked the guys standing around him who would like to try shearing first. I reached my hand so high up that I caught his attention. Just like that my shearing journey started.

Raising my hand up in the air that day has since changed my whole perspective of wanting to grow up and work with horses for a living. It was the best choice I made that day as it set course to change everything. For raising my hand that day was enough to be invited alongside a other few selected students to attend an official sheep shearing course. I was extremely excited and had all types of nerves and butterflies.

To my surprise it was super hard, very physical work and you have to be mentally strong to become just like the best of the shearers out there. I endured the entirety of the course as some students dropped out and on the last day we had a competition to see which top three students will be invited to compete at the Bloemfontein show. We all did very well and the three of us headed to Bloemfontein shortly after in April.