

PO Box 586 Moama 2731
T +61 (0)3 5480 0755 F +61 (0)3 5480 0233
E enquiries@nuffield.com.au W www.nuffield.com.au
A.B.N. 33 092 327 396

2009 SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORTERS

Australian Wool Innovation	Impact Fertilisers
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Friday 10 October 2008

EMBARGOED UNTIL 10AM, FRIDAY 10 OCTOBER 2008

Nuffield scholarship for Greenethorpe prime lamb producer

Prime lamb producer Julie Brien, from Greenethorpe, NSW, will tonight be awarded Australia's leading farming scholarship, a Nuffield Australia Farming Scholarship.

Ms Brien is one of only 16 Australians to receive a 2009 Nuffield Scholarship. She will be presented with her award tonight at the Innovation in Australian Farming awards dinner in Hobart, which is part of the six day Nuffield Australia Spring Tour being held in Tasmania.

Nuffield Farming Scholarships, each worth \$26,000, give young Australian farmers the opportunity to travel internationally and explore agricultural issues and opportunities in a global context. There are about 1300 Nuffield scholars worldwide.

Ms Brien will use her scholarship, sponsored by Meat & Livestock Australia, to investigate how sheep genetics and management strategies can increase lamb production from the existing ewe base. She will study factors influencing multiple births, lamb survival rates and early reproductive maturity.

Ms Brien is livestock manager for her family's mixed farm business, based on their 860 hectare property south-west of Cowra. She produces prime lambs from a composite breeding flock, which varies from 1000 to 2000 ewes, depending on seasonal conditions, and operates a contract hay baling business with her brother. She is also completing a Bachelor of Agriculture at the University of New England.

"Sheep numbers are at a record low in the industry, which is a problem trying to secure international markets and meeting demand," Ms Brien says.

"By focussing on fertility, fecundity and lamb survival I think we can easily produce more lambs from our current ewe base, increase the kilogram return per hectare and the number of lambs per ewe. This will help increase returns from the current ewe base and rebuild the numbers available to the sheep-meat industry. I think more productive ewes can also help us reduce environmental impacts and improve our animal husbandry."

Nuffield Australia CEO Mr Jim Geltch says many Nuffield Scholars go on to become active leaders in agriculture and the community, and sharing their research findings is an important part of the scholarship program.

"For many, the scholarship experience changes their lives by opening their eyes to the wider world and giving them the confidence to pursue their goals," Mr Geltch says.

The 16 2009 Australian Nuffield Scholars will leave Australia in either February or June 2009 for a compulsory Global Focus Program. This will involve travel to China, North America, South America and Europe investigating agricultural marketing and trade issues, environmental issues and experiencing the different social and cultural aspects of each region.

Following the initial six-week program, the scholars will go their individual ways to pursue specific study programs in the country or countries of their choice. Ms Brien hopes to travel to New Zealand, South Africa, the US, Argentina, the Falkland Islands, France and Scotland on her individual tour.

More information:

Julie Brien, T 02 6343 6274, M 0428 436 274, E juliebrien@activ8.net.au
Nuffield CEO Jim Geltch T 03 5480 0755 M 0412 696 076, E jimgeltch@nuffield.com.au

A high-resolution photograph of Ms Brien can be downloaded from the link www.coretext.com.au/communications_images.php