



Media Release

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### **Ballance scholarship winners gearing up for future in agriculture**

Five young students from throughout New Zealand are gearing up for a future in the agriculture industry after receiving Ballance Agri-Nutrients scholarships this year.

James Booker from Te Aroha, Peter Gardyne from Chatton, north of Gore, Nicola Bennett from Otautau, Alexander Watson from Millers Flat, Roxburgh, and Holly Andrewes from Kerikeri are the recipients of Ballance scholarships, providing them with \$4,000 a year for up to three years to support them during their university studies in agricultural related disciplines through the Ballance Agri-Nutrients Scholarship scheme.

James, Peter and Nicola will use the scholarships to fund their studies at Lincoln University, with James in his second year of a Bachelor of Agricultural Science, Peter in his second year of a Diploma in Farm Management, and Nicola in her third year of a Bachelor of Commerce (Agriculture).

Holly is continuing a Bachelor of Veterinary Science at Massey University, after completing her first year in 2006.

Each year one of the scholarships is awarded to an engineering student, as engineering expertise is important to ensure ongoing improvements of environmental performance of manufacturing plants. Alexander Watson is studying at the University of Canterbury for a Bachelor of Engineering, majoring in chemical and process engineering. Alex intends to apply his engineering skills to the agricultural industry on graduation, with the goal of improving existing chemical products such as fertilisers and pesticides.

Ballance Head of Agro-Science Warwick Catto says the scholarship scheme is an excellent rural community initiative.

"This scholarship has a real community objective. By supporting young talent in the agricultural sector and encouraging their academic study we are fostering the future development of the agricultural industry, benefiting the rural community as a whole."

"Since the scholarship was first established in 2002 the number of students interested in a course of study with an agricultural focus has steadily increased, and applicants are of an extremely high calibre."

"James, Peter, Nicola, Holly and Alexander fought off some tough competition and were chosen from more than forty applications received. It's great to see young people like them passionate

about the agricultural industry and keen to develop their talents to support and enhance the mainstay of New Zealand's economy well into the future.”

Since the scholarship programme began in 2002, 33 scholarships worth up to \$12,000 each have been awarded, and the company has employed two previous scholarship winners as full-time staff, as well as several others on temporary contract basis.

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