

MONICA LEY

AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY

Senior School Subjects

- Year 11: English Language, General Mathematics, French, Outdoor Education and Environmental Studies, Media, Religion and Society Units 3+4 Advancement.
- Year 12: English Language, Further Mathematics, French, Outdoor and Environmental Studies.



Why did you choose these subjects? I chose to do English Language and General Maths as they had great teachers; I did quite well in the assessments. I had studied French since Year 7 and it made sense to continue as I was also learning Italian at home at the time. Outdoor Education and Media/Photography I generally enjoyed the practical component to the classes – particularly camp trips and time appointed to solo work in computer labs. I considered them hobby subjects and never planned to go into either field beyond school but both have contributed to my university degree and life. I also did not choose a subject based on whether or not my friends were going to be in that class – I did what I wanted to do and what would suit me best.

What resources did you use to choose subjects? I mostly chose my subjects based on what I did the previous year and asked myself a few questions: Did I enjoy that subject previously? Did I find it challenging but not impossible? Were you happy with your work? Year 12 subjects were also chosen with the assistance of the College Career Adviser, my Learning Mentor and other staff.

Why did you want to study agriculture? Why not? I am a fourth generation farmer who could not spend a day working indoors to save my life. It's all I've wanted to be since I was around five years old and I haven't dreamt of doing anything else. Creating new life is also a beautiful thing, both animals and plants. Going into agriculture during my VCE years and in tertiary education also is a way of being able to care for the environment and be sustainable at the same time.

What is your course like? While some subjects I have found really difficult, others, particularly those that are associated with my agricultural interests and have a more practical element I have actually enjoyed study for the first time in years. It's challenging but broad in terms of being able to specialise in a particular sector of the agricultural industry, covering both management and finance, livestock and pastures, cropping, and weed and pest control, it covers it all so there's no particular major and minor units, despite two elective opportunities

What do you love about your course? I have enjoyed the more practical subjects such as crops, pastures and weeds, with a high focus on plant identification and what affects growth and yields. Having little to no experience in anything other than livestock and machinery when coming to university, I enjoyed expanding my knowledge on agriculture as a whole. The lecturers and other staff are really approachable and knowledgeable in their particular field and are passionate in helping students learn. I have enjoyed the experiences of networking through career expos, guest speakers in class, attending conferences and networking through being on committees for events and groups such as the universities Women in Ag Day for Wagga Agricultural Club.

Give students an example of a 'day in the life' of your course: Generally, a day in the life of a student of a Bachelor of Agricultural Science at Charles Sturt University Wagga Wagga goes: early morning agronomy or plant science or similar lecture, often followed by a trip to a paddock on the university farm to check a crop, diagnose a plant pathogen, or evaluate the quality and quantity of pasture. The middle of the day there is a tutorial in the computer labs where a scenario of a property requires their financial books to be completed. Lunch is had under the trees with friends before attending an animal practical, either in the cattle or sheep yards, or in the laboratory for hands on experiments.

What have been some of the highlights of your course so far? Monitoring invertebrate pest activity in my chosen paddock on the university farm over a few – just so happened to be a pasture paddock with the university's currently calving cattle herd! This really helped with the home sickness, and despite being able to hear the tractors and lambs from my house, there's nothing like being out there in the paddock..

How did the subjects at school prepare you for your course? I should have taken Biology, Chemistry and Accounting or something but didn't. I went with what I wanted to do in school and what made me happy then. I went to university to do a science degree and despite the core science subjects in the Bachelor of Agricultural Science are VCE level, I was seriously thrown in the deep end but general knowledge, personal experience and true grit is all that's helped me through, nothing at all from school.

What is the best piece of advice you've received about following your career goals: Be assertive. Don't take no for an answer and always try your best. If you know you tried your best, there's no reason to be disappointed in yourself.

What advice can you offer students considering studying the course: Broaden your knowledge and experience with agriculture, have work experience with different industries and different roles such as dairy, summer irrigation cropping, feedlots, sales, extension, machinery and consultancy, but maintain or increase your passion to achieve great things in agriculture industry/field days are a great way to network and be able to talk to people in various career paths you may wish to follow.

Why should young people consider studying agriculture: With a rapidly increasing population, farmers will still need to sustainably feed and clothe the world. Studying agriculture can also open up many more doors. You don't just have to be a farmer. Career opportunities include property development, management, finance, research, agronomy, extension, consultancy, teaching and many others.

Course information: Bachelor of Agricultural Science, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, <http://bit.ly/28XptUs>