

COAST TO STATION



VIENNA HEJLTE-LACHS: A CASE STUDY



INDUSTRY: Beef

EMPLOYER: Barkly Downs – Australian Country Choice

LOCATION: North-West QLD

TIME ON FARM: 1 Month

JOB TITLE: Station Hand



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VIENNA

Vienna Hejlte-Lachs is the perfect example of why the AgCAREERSTART program is so important. Her urge to get into agriculture has always been strong, but growing up outside of metro Perth on the West-Coast didn't exactly foster the right environment. After graduating High School in 2022, Vienna tried her hand at the 'traditional' pathway of University, which she quickly learnt wasn't for her. A stint in the mines taught Vienna hard work-ethic and made her realise she could do anything she put her mind to. After a coincidental job offer from a family friend, Vienna found herself working in Soil Carbon Sampling - which eventually led her to committing to a career in Agriculture, and applying for the AgCAREERSTART (AgCS) program

“I REALLY WANTED TO BE IN AGRICULTURE, BUT I JUST DIDN'T HAVE THE RIGHT CONNECTIONS, OR KNOW THE RIGHT PEOPLE.”

THE JOURNEY BEGINS

With a burning desire to learn all things agriculture, Vienna was thrilled when she was placed at a large beef station in the North-West region of Queensland. Although some 3,500km from home, Vienna felt reassured knowing she would have the support of the ACS team;

“HAVING THAT SUPPORT NETWORK FROM AGCAREERSTART IS A LIFESAVER, I FEEL MORE PROTECTED KNOWING THERE IS SOMEONE ALWAYS IN MY CORNER.”

Immediately following the cohort's Orientation Week in Ballarat, it was straight into the deep end for this passionate go-getter. In just under one month at Australian Country Choice's Barkly Downs property, Vienna has already completed a motorbike school and young horse school - which has been a highlight so far. *“I got to work with weanlings (horses), that have only been about 3 days off Mum. We got to do groundwork and horsemanship with them - that to me, was such an experience that you could never get anywhere else. They let us try and break them... so we can bring them into the stock camp halfway through the year, which is really cool.”* In addition, Vienna has also been exposed to trucking, welding, oxy cutting, lick runs, yard work, and *“...oh, we can't forget fencing!”*



LOOKING FORWARD

There is much to look forward to, in the coming weeks she will learn how to fully service cars, as well as get stuck into branding the next drop of calves. With some 2.4 million acres and around 47,000 head - it is going to be a year like no other. Although the closest major town is a 2 hour drive, Vienna is far from alone. With 27 staff on site, she describes the station as very inclusive and social. *"We get to go to campdrafts as part of the company. I am really excited to be able to learn the skills that I always wanted to. Being able to go to my younger self, 'hey, you did that' - that is going to be cool."* Vienna is most excited to take part in the ACC Company Challenge, held in the second half of the year - where she can compete in drafting, barreling, and more. In between all that and wanting to *"make the most out of it"*, Vienna has big plans to spend her \$4,500 Training & Engagement Bursary that is provided by the AgCAREERSTART program. This includes an artificial insemination course and truck license, as well as attending the



Young Beef Producers Forum in Roma and Innovation Generation in Perth. At the end of the year *"I'll be either wanting to continue on (here), or if I ever go back to Perth, I know those skills are there and I can go and do what I want to."* When asked why AgCS is so important to her, Vienna responded;

"I HAVE SO MUCH MORE APPRECIATION FOR THE FOOD THAT GOES ON MY TABLE. I THINK IT IS A VERY UNDER-APPRECIATED INDUSTRY."

Just one month in, Vienna can already see an impact. *"With people seeing what I'm doing, it's a good knock-on effect. The more people that see it and go, 'that would be the lifestyle for me' - the better it's going to be for ag."* For anyone moving to a station soon, consider Vienna's words of advice;

"IF THERE'S SOMEONE GOING INTO AGRICULTURE - GET SOME COMFY SHOES! I'M NOW ROCKING SLIP-ON MOCCASINS!"
