



Smedley Station

Cadet Training Farm
Prospectus



This is where your farming future begins



At Smedley Station, your classroom is 5,660 hectares of real working farm land. You'll learn by doing – building practical, work ready skills that prepare you for life in modern farming.

Smedley is one of New Zealand's most respected agricultural training farms, offering a two year farm cadetship programme. You'll live on site, train alongside your peers, and gain hands on experience across sheep, cattle and deer farming, while working toward NZQA accredited qualifications.

Our team of industry experts, experienced farmers and trainers are committed to your growth and success. They'll teach you core farming skills like fencing, shearing, stock mustering, dog training, horse handling, and operating farm vehicles and equipment.

Just as important, you'll be supported as a person. We're focused on helping you build the life skills needed to prepare you for a modern farming career.

Each year, we select 13 cadet trainees who are highly motivated and ready to learn. You don't need to come from a farming background – just a genuine interest in agriculture and a willingness to work hard.

The Smedley name opens doors. Our cadets are highly sought after with graduates moving into industry roles and further specialist study.



Key dates

June 2026 Open days: Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 June 2026

July 2026 Applications close Monday 6 July 2026

August 2026 Selection and interviews:
Wednesday 12 and Thursday 13 August 2026

January 2027 Training commences early-January

Costs

Smedley Station is a charitable trust, managed by Public Trust. It operates as a working commercial farm, with income supporting the cadet training programme.

While there are no course fees to become a Smedley cadet, you will need to invest in your own saddle and working dog. The good news is that we will contribute towards these costs. Hostel accommodation and food is provided free of charge.

While you're training, you'll receive a weekly allowance and an annual clothing allowance.

You may be eligible for a Student Allowance, depending on government criteria.

Who can apply?

Applicants must be between 16 and under 20 years old.

The cadetship is a full two-year commitment.

Application packs can be downloaded from our website smedley.ac.nz

Open days are held at Smedley Station in June. Anyone intending to apply for a cadetship is strongly recommended to attend. Families are also welcome.

We plan to let all applicants know the outcome of their application in late July. If you are shortlisted for an interview, we'll be in touch with further details.

Course content

At Smedley, you'll become a skilled farmer through practical learning, backed by sound theory needed to manage a farm well.

Our cadets gain experience across sheep, cattle and deer farming, preparing them for successful real-world careers in the rural sector.

The academic component of the programme is delivered on site by Smedley's training manager, with assessment and moderation by the Eastern Institute of Technology.

Learning is supported through lectures and workshops delivered by specialist tutors and industry experts, as well as attendance at industry events. Strong health and safety practices are embedded in everything we do, and are central to all learning outcomes for cadets.

Cadets who complete all academic requirements will be awarded:

- New Zealand Certificate in Primary Industry Operational Skills (Level 3)
- New Zealand Certificate in Agriculture (Farming Systems) (Level 3)
- New Zealand Certificate in Land Based Sustainability Practices (Level 3)
- New Zealand Certificate in Agriculture – Breeding Livestock (Level 4)

In addition, Smedley Station awards its own certificate on successful completion of the two year cadetship.

Do I need to bring my own horse or dog?

At Smedley you'll learn to handle a horse and train your own dog. We provide working horses as part of the programme. You will need your own saddle, and we provide a \$100 subsidy to help with this. As cadets progress, working dogs also become part of training. A huntaway is required at the start of Year 2, followed by a heading dog as skills develop. We'll support you to source the right dogs at the right time. We cover feed and vet costs, and provide a \$250 subsidy for each dog.



Year 1

Build your foundations

Livestock & animal handling

- Basic stockmanship and livestock handling
- Horsemanship
- Shearing, crutching and handpiece work
- Livestock health, anatomy, nutrition and welfare

Farm operations & practical skills

- Fencing (conventional and electric), repairs and maintenance
- Yard work, scrub cutting, weed and pest control
- Building, repairs and general farm maintenance
- Butchery and cooking

Machinery, vehicles and engineering

- Safe operation of tractors, 4WDs, ATVs and chainsaws
- Mechanical repairs, maintenance and basic engineering

Land, environment & sustainability

- Soils and pasture production
- Horticulture, fruit production and beekeeping

- Water quality, land ecology and sustainability practices
- Forestry

Health and safety & wellbeing

- Farm health and safety
- Life skills and wellbeing

Agritech

- Farm management software

Financial literacy

- Rabobank financial skills workshop modules to support budgeting

Qualifications

- New Zealand Certificate in Agriculture (Farming Systems) (Level 3)
- New Zealand Certificate in Primary Industry Operational Skills (Level 3)
- New Zealand Certificate in Land Based Sustainability Practices (Level 3)



Year 2

Develop your skills

Advanced livestock management

- Stockmanship and advanced stock work
- Animal health, mating, birthing and lambing

Farm systems & production planning

- Feed budgeting and feeding systems
- Pastoral production systems

Agritech

- Farm management software
- EID (electronic identification) and data use

Financial literacy

- Rabobank financial skills workshop modules to support budgeting and decision-making, and understanding farming finances

Farm environment & agribusiness

- Farm environment planning
- Agribusiness activities and commercial decision making

Qualifications

- New Zealand Certificate in Agriculture – Breeding Livestock (Level 4)
- A Smedley Station certificate is also awarded to graduates



Cadet experiences

Earning the Smedley tie is just the beginning. Our cadets' stories reflect the long term impact of their Smedley experience and the lasting connection and sense of community in rural New Zealand.

Ian Evans Sheep and beef farmer, Matahuru Valley

Smedley cadet 2003–2004 and Josiah Howard Foundation scholarship recipient

After graduating Smedley Station, Ian worked in the Wairarapa and Southern Hawke's Bay in shearing roles. He managed Tautāne Station near Herbertville before taking over the family farm.



“ Smedley was hugely valuable for me. Obviously, it was the set of skills and practical skills that you learn. But I think equally important was the life skills that you learn around work ethics, around standards, working with other people. It really reinforced that farming is what I wanted to do. And then those connections and those networks that you build from attending Smedley has served me pretty well for the last 20 odd years.

Lucy Neverman Rural Officer with Rabobank Australia

Smedley cadet 2020–2021

Lucy grew up in town and discovered her passion for agriculture early on thanks to a family friend with a sheep and beef farm. After leaving Smedley, she studied commerce majoring in agriculture at Lincoln University and now works with Rabobank in New South Wales.



“ When I was still in primary school I knew someone who attended Smedley and from there on out it was always my dream. Alongside the practical skills I gained that I will always carry with me, what has stood out since leaving Smedley is all the other skills that weren't necessarily front of mind while I was there – things like resilience, learning to work with so many different personalities, and confidence. It really does set up the foundation for the rest of your career. Having that background helped me throughout my degree as I was able to apply the practical to theory. Now I use those skills day-to-day at Rabobank interacting with clients. The foundation helps me to relate with them, and have genuine discussions about the farm – it is one of my favourite parts of the role.

Chief Whakaue Block Manager, Eskdale

Smedley cadet 2019-2020 and Josiah Howard Foundation scholarship recipient

Chief knew from an early age that he wanted to be a farmer, despite growing up in town. Today, he is block managing a 350 hectare farm in the Hawke's Bay.



“At school, all my mates, none of them were into farming. I was sort of the odd one out. I met people along the way that helped get me into it.

In my first year at Smedley there were 11 cadets accepted. I met so many cadets from all over the country that I still keep in contact with now.

The big goal is farm ownership. It's one of my dreams to share that exposure and help young people get into it... Farming is the best job.”

Rebecca Dickson Studying towards a Bachelor in Agribusiness

Smedley cadet 2024–2025

Since graduating from Smedley last year, Rebecca has continued her learning journey at Massey University and has her sights set on eventually managing a sheep and beef farm.



“I've grown up on farms and have always dreamed of having a career in the industry. I was lucky enough to be selected for Smedley in my last year of high school. Back then I would never have imagined what Smedley would do for me. It taught me the importance of having high standards, a good work ethic and to work with a range of people. It also gave me many practical skills and lifelong mates.

I'm currently studying a Bachelor of Agribusiness at Massey University. The theory work I did at Smedley has given me a good starting point for my degree and I believe the practical skills will help me later on down the track. After university, I'm pretty keen to go shearing, but in the long run my goal is to get back into farming and manage a large scale sheep and beef breeding operation in the hill country.

Bayden Andersen Sheep and beef farmer, Pōrangahau

Smedley cadet 2007-2008 and Josiah Howard Foundation scholarship recipient

Bayden Andersen is living his dream running a sheep and beef farm in Pōrangahau.



“I've always been on a farm and always wanted to be. And then I was fortunate enough after high school to get into Smedley and do my cadetship there and I've been farming ever since. I was really lucky to know what I wanted to do at a young age. That's all I wanted to be. People say it's hard work and long hours and all that. But if you're passionate about it there's nothing easier in the world.

Thanks to the Josiah Howard Foundation for giving permission to share highlights from Ian, Chief and Bayden's On Farm Story interviews. Watch the full videos at youtube.com/@OnFarmStory.



Daily life at Smedley

For many cadets, Smedley is their first experience of living away from home. You're supported, but you're also trusted to step up to the opportunity.

The plan for the day is sent out in advance, so you know what's coming and can get yourself sorted. We share accommodation on station, usually two to a room, with separate male and female quarters.

Breakfast is at 7am. With two cooks on site, we make sure you're well fed before heading out.

Everyone pitches in around the hostel, with duties shared on a roster. That can mean tidying up after meals, milking the cows, feeding the dogs, or exercising the horses. You also do your own laundry using the station facilities.

The working day usually starts at 7.30am. We often start with a meeting that covers what jobs we're tackling and health and safety. What you're doing depends on the season – in summer it might be fencing or shearing, in spring the focus is on lambing and calving.

Cadets work together, and over the year you rotate through different parts of the station in a 13-week rotation. Smaller groups head out to places like our Parks Peak or Onepoto blocks, which give you a feel for different farm environments and working styles. You're given the right gear and equipment to use, and you're taught how to use it safely.

You will have a theory lesson one day a week, where you hit the books and learn why you're doing what you're doing on station. Sometimes you'll hear from visiting speakers like vets or industry advisors who give a broader view of farming life.

Dinner is around 5.30pm, which leaves your evenings free. Some people head off to sports practice, others relax in the lounge, catch up with mates or enjoy a bit of downtime.

Weekends are usually free. It's an opportunity to go horse-riding, or make the most of the hunting and fishing right on our doorstep. Some people choose to build experience and earn extra money by helping out nearby farms. We give our cooks the weekend off – so if you're staying on station, food is provided, but you'll need to cook it yourself.

You live, learn and work together on station and pretty quickly Smedley starts to feel like a big family.



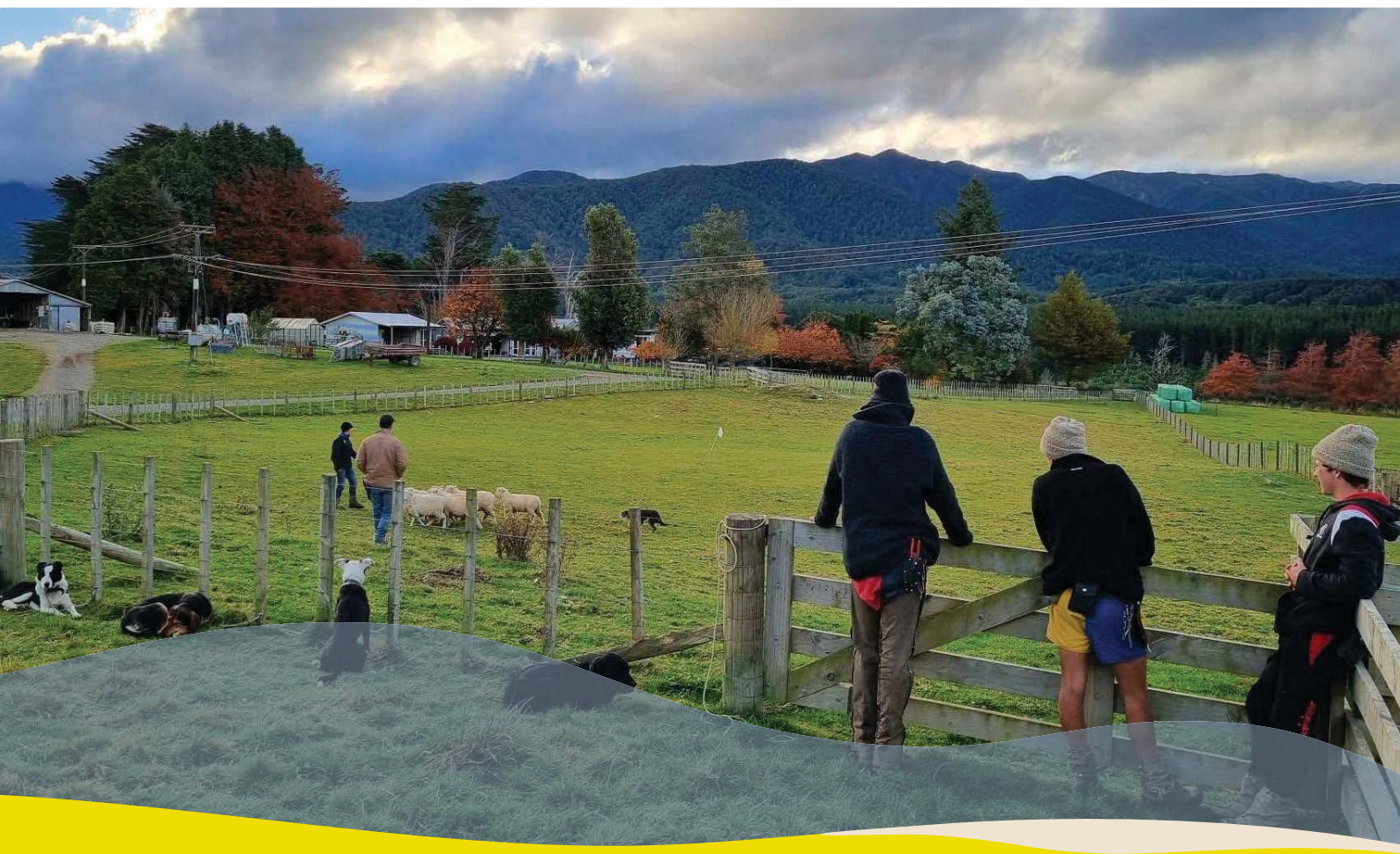
About the Howard Estate and Smedley Station

In 1919 Josiah Howard left his Central Hawke's Bay property to the Crown with a clear purpose: to educate the next generation of New Zealand farmers. From that vision, Smedley Station and Cadet Training Farm was established in 1931.

Josiah's wishes were that Smedley Station "teach young people, so as to give them a wide knowledge and practice of better standards of farming," and that its cadets would live and work together as a team.

Today, under the stewardship of Public Trust and guided by the Howard Estate Advisory Board, Josiah's legacy continues to shape the land – and the lives – of those who work and study at Smedley.

Smedley Station is a self-funded training facility, operating as a commercial farm to support its core educational mission. Situated in Tikokino, Central Hawke's Bay, the 5,660-hectare property is home to approximately 30,000 stock units and employs a dedicated team committed to cadet development.



Supportive learning environment

Smedley is powered by people who care – from our cooks in the kitchen preparing delicious meals that fuel cadets for a busy day on the farm, to the team working alongside them on the land.

Our team includes a full time training manager, block managers, a maintenance and fencing manager, and a workshop manager, who all bring strong practical expertise and a commitment to developing young people.

Cadet wellbeing is a priority at Smedley. We are committed to a safe and supportive working and learning environment in which everyone thrives. Across the year, trained wellbeing and health and safety experts work with our cadets to support their personal development, reinforcing our focus on building character as well as capability.

Meet Greg

Smedley Station is led by Station Manager Greg Crombie, who has 30 years of farm management and leadership experience.

Greg took over the top job at Smedley in 2025. He says he was drawn to the scale and history of the station, but it was Smedley's purpose that really mattered – developing young people into the farmers of tomorrow.

Greg has farmed all his life and always wanted to teach. At Smedley, he gets to do both. He lives on station with his partner and is a proud father of five.

“

Smedley has always been about preparing young people for lifelong careers on the land. My focus is on keeping that tradition strong while making sure our cadets are ready for the challenges of modern farming, whether that's in the form of a changing climate, changing technology or changes in society.



Public Trust oversight

Public Trust's role as trustee is to oversee the ongoing management of the estate. This includes governance and corporate support, including the employment of farm employees, agreeing the farm's annual budget, paying expenses, health and safety oversight, and making decisions in consultation with the Howard Estate Advisory Board.

Howard Estate Advisory Board guidance

Smedley is governed under the Howard Estate Act. The Advisory Board advises Public Trust on the running of the farm. Members are appointed by the Governor General, with the assistance of Public Trust's responsible Minister, being the Associate Minister of Justice.

The Advisory Board's strength has always been the strong local representation from Hawke's Bay organisations, including A&P Societies, Federated Farmers, Hawke's Bay Secondary School Principals' Association, Rural and Urban Local Bodies and Chambers of Commerce, as well as the Smedley Ex-Cadets Association.

“ Smedley Station has a unique position within New Zealand's agricultural landscape. It's got a long-standing reputation for producing cadets who are not only work ready but also well prepared for further education and leadership in the rural sector. It's an accelerated development programme that sets them up for life.

Conrad Wilkshire, Chair of the Howard Estate Advisory Board.



Maintaining connections with our cadets

The Smedley tie represents more than achievement – it's a lifelong connection to the Smedley community. We stay in touch as you build your career beyond our top gate.

Ex-Cadets Association

The Smedley Ex-Cadets Association is an integral link between the history of the Station and present day community. The aim of the Association is to provide a link for past cadets to maintain contact with each other and build networks across New Zealand and abroad.

More than 760 young farmers have graduated from Smedley since the training programme began in 1931. Membership covers a vast array of year groups and members are regularly invited to meet through reunion events such as dinners and dog trials.

For information, please contact Tom Addis: excadets@smedley.co.nz, phone 021 280 4069.

The Josiah Howard Foundation

The Josiah Howard Foundation is a charitable organisation dedicated to preserving the unique character and heritage of Smedley Station, while supporting the ongoing development of its alumni.

Established in 2003, the Foundation provides scholarships to former cadets to assist with leadership development, career progression and business growth. It also offers practical financial support where required. Working in partnership with the Ex-Cadets Association, the Foundation helps strengthen connections across the Smedley alumni network and supports continued engagement with the Station.

The Foundation is guided by the enduring vision of Josiah Howard, honouring his significant bequest and ensuring his values and principles continue to influence the people of Smedley and future generations of cadets. Through donations and bequests, it is building a sustainable funding base to support cadets and ex-cadets, foster strong alumni connection, and to preserve Josiah Howard's legacy.

For information, please contact Stuart Pearse: email stuart.pearse@forsythbarr.co.nz, phone 027 378 4588.



Smedley Station and Cadet Training Farm

1153 Smedley Road, Tikokino, RD 4, Waipawa, Central Hawke's Bay 4274
Phone: 06 856 5725 | smedley@publictrust.co.nz | www.smedley.ac.nz

