

# Gain hands-on experience with a Southern Cotton traineeship

The Southern Cotton traineeship program is an inspiring and hands-on experience allowing young people to gain valuable work experience and insight into the Australian agricultural industry. Each year Southern Cotton aims to appoint new local trainees.

A VITAL component of the program is the mentoring each trainee receives from the senior staff at Southern Cotton, including general manager Kate O'Callaghan who sees this as a great opportunity to share knowledge with the next generation.

"I am committed to mentoring and developing the next generation of agricultural professionals," Kate said. "My goal is for young people to realise their potential both personally and professionally. I constantly work on sharing my knowledge and skills with the Southern Cotton team – especially our trainees."

The initiative reflects Southern Cotton's goal to promote goodwill

within the local community and forms a big part of their investment into the future of the cotton industry.

Here's a snapshot of some of the experiences our trainees have enjoyed over the years:

Sophie Washington joined the Southern Cotton team as a trainee weighbridge operator during her 'gap year' in 2014. As a result of her experience with Southern Cotton, Sophie changed her university course to incorporate human resources and is considering rejoining the agricultural industry upon completion of her studies.

Picker data and grower communications comes naturally to trainee Matthew Pete, who joined Southern Cotton as a trainee for his gap year in 2018. So much so, that Matthew has decided to stay on at Southern Cotton and study his degree via distance.

"After working for a local jeweler throughout high school, I really wanted to push myself out of my comfort zone in my gap year and get some experience within a corporate business. I had no idea that I was joining such a dynamic business and team."

"The two best things about the trainee program is the wide variety of experience you're exposed to and the mentoring from the management team," he said.

"I'm grateful to have the opportunity to stay beyond my traineeship and gain valuable experience at the same time as I study."



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Former Seed Logistics Manager, Madison Coelli, thrived throughout her traineeship at Southern Cotton and stayed on in her role, for two seasons. Madison enjoyed the dynamic work life at Southern Cotton and appreciated the opportunity to gain exposure to the agricultural industry.

“Before starting at Southern Cotton I had never considered the agricultural industry – in fact, I had no idea what path I wanted to follow,” Madison said. “Being mentored by Kate really inspired me on a career path firstly in agriculture and now in mentoring young people at TAFE. ”

“I was also thrilled to be awarded the

Trainee of the Year Award at the 2016 Leeton Outstanding Business Awards and the NSW winner and finalist in the Australian Training awards” she added.

Madison’s position included educating the wider community on the benefits of growing cotton, by personally conducting daily tours of the gin and speaking about the industry at community events. Her involvement in the Leeton SunRice Festival Ambassador Competition in 2016 also helped Southern Cotton form a long-term partnership with local youth group SteppinOut4Youth.



“I have thoroughly enjoyed my traineeship and learned so much about the cotton industry and ginning processes. Southern Cotton is the perfect combination of a large business, award winning organisation and local employer.”

— Katie Halden, 2016 Trainee



Laura completed a traineeship in 2016 before starting a degree of Agricultural Business Management at CSU.

“Working at Southern Cotton has allowed me to build many industry relationships which will help me in my agribusiness career. For anyone wishing to develop a career within Agriculture, Southern Cotton can provide excellent opportunities.”

**For more information about a traineeship with Southern Cotton,  
email [careers@southerncotton.com.au](mailto:careers@southerncotton.com.au).**



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