

Presentation made by Tim Eyes at the 2011 BBM Awards evening.

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen.

My name is Tim Eyes and as Bill has said I am a Graduate of Tocal Agricultural Collage and the first person to receive the BBM Agricultural travel scholarship.

I would like to start by thanking BBM and also Tocal for this life changing experience. It has done just that, changed my life.

To be honest when Bill first came to us all and talked about this opportunity it was not something I thought I could do. Being a country boy leaving my postcode is big much less going to the UK.

But, with plenty of encouragement from Tocal staff and my family I put my application in and got the gig. So, off I went to the UK for 2 months in July this year.

It started with a long drawn out flight into London for a week of sightseeing and jet lag recovery. This was also when I had to really start planning where I would go next. It ended up being an overwhelming and eye opening week in France which resulted in my first farm visit to a dairy where sign language was the main form of communication. Still it amazed me how even with a language barrier as farmers, we knew what each other was saying.

Did I eat frogs legs or snails I hear you ask. NAY I ate horse.

Then I headed back to England to continue my UK farm tour. I was lucky enough to come across some lovely people that really enjoyed hearing about Australia, our culture and our funny accents. A real high light for me was going to their small and large country shows that were so different to ours with royals and official parties being the highlight of many of them. Prince Charles and Camilla at the Yorkshire Show and Princess Anne at the Dunfries show in Scotland.

My itinerary took me from Luton England to Scotland where I visited many of the tourist sights. Next I went to Northern England and the "Great Yorkshire Show". This show is the biggest in the UK with a visit from Prince Charles and Camilla. It had everything agricultural you could think of. This was a great way to get a feel for the country style of the UK. Even for an everyday person with no agricultural interest I would recommend a visit to the Great Yorkshire Show for your next trip.

I met some great farmers and then headed to a 15<sup>th</sup> Century farm house based in York. I was really shown some UK weather with wet miserable days most of the time. This resulted in animal health problems but it was good for me to see what the farmers there have to deal with every winter. With so much wet weather who would have thought people would have too much water for most of the year!

After this stint in England it was off to Lockerbie Scotland for what was going to be a week and ended up being three weeks. I was on one of the largest farms in the country but the farm was not owned by the farmer but by a wealthy businessman that had inherited the property. I loved it here even with my first morning there being a 3.30am start for a 1 hour trip in the tractor on the motor way at 30kms an hour to get to the sales. This is unheard of here and I couldn't believe they did it every week for 3 months of the year. I showed cattle and met and talked with Princess Anne at one of the country shows. I drove all sorts of machinery for these people and I was blown away by how friendly and welcoming they were.

However, it did come to an end and off I went to Wales for an experience that you won't see coming....

I was being let into one of the most exclusive and secretive industries in the UK agriculture industry. Semen collection. The farm or factory was on the edge of Rathin, a small town in Wales and had limited access and no signs. They had close to 100 bulls penned up separately in huge sheds. They had only been on grass when they were born. Once again it was a week of early starts so that the semen could be frozen and ready to be couriered to another place to be sorted into different sexes. I won't go into too much detail but to be given the opportunity to harvest from the best dairy bull in the world was very exciting and daunting when you have close to a ton of bull jumping up to be harvested and once it is done you are holding a quarter of a million pounds worth of semen. The company would produce around 2 million straws a year and each straw would average 75 pounds if not more. These are big dollars and it is really amazing to think that calves will be born here in Australia using this product that I helped harvest. I did find this very intensive and it made me think again about how lucky we are here to have open spaces to support cattle without putting them in sheds.

As travelling goes I was close to the end of my trip and spent my last week avoiding London while the riots were on. I visited the biggest machinery assembly plant in the world JCB.

Then on the 27<sup>th</sup> of August it hit me that I was about to sit on a plane for 24 hours and the fact I had been in the UK for 2 months and made some lasting friendships and business contacts.

I now own my own business running farms for people on the Central Coast and in the Hunter Valley. I also manage a cattle show team for a large stud and travel over Australia showing them. I returned full of ideas and confidence looking forward to a career in Agriculture.

Once again thank you BBM very much for this life changing experience and thankyou all for your time tonight.