

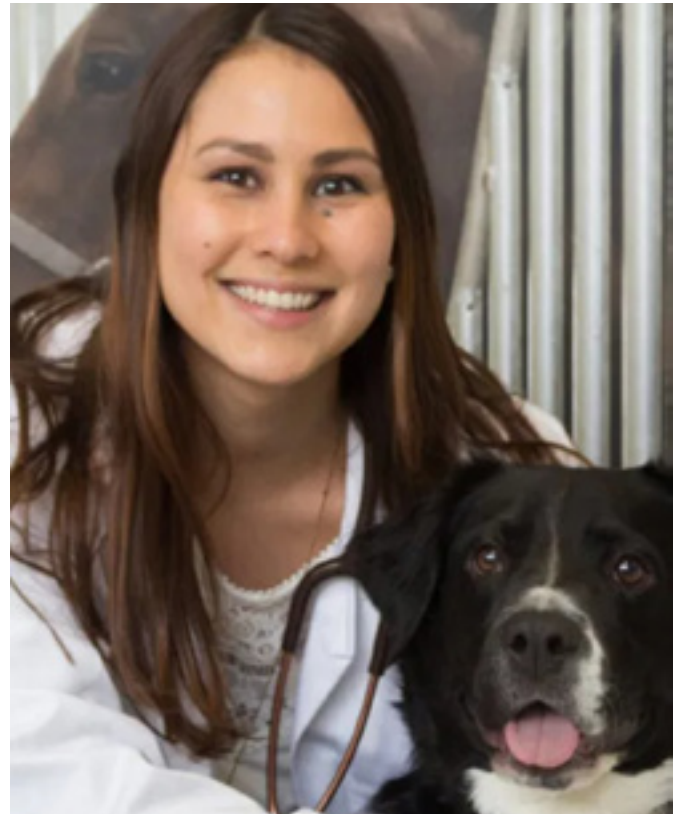
Being part of a lamb's first breath is exhilarating and magical

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One of the most valuable experiences I received in vet school was definitely during my first year when I was able to spend two weeks at a Suffolk sheep farm in the West of Ireland. Going into the two weeks, I expected to just be completing a requirement for sheep husbandry & lambing experience. However, I left those two weeks having gained so much more than checking off a requirement – I gained invaluable experience along with unforgettable memories and a lifelong relationship.

Staying with the family and working with them was truly the best way to gain hands-on experience about what it entails to farm sheep. From dusk to dawn, we had shifts to watch and care for the sheep. From feeding to cleaning to waiting for the water bags to drop! There was plenty of work to do, but also time to enjoy the little moments, such as watching a lamb suckle for the first time. We worked hard throughout the days and nights, but still found time to enjoy calm evenings together by the fire.

I will forever remember the overnight winter shifts we completed, bundling up in layers with a



thermos of tea and/or coffee in hand, sandwiches and biscuits kept close by for snacks. Throughout the night, we kept an eye on the ewes and see if any of them were showing signs of labor. And before the sun rose, one of us would be lucky enough to awake the others and be a part of the next lambing. Though it was hard work, it was all worth it. And being a part of a lamb's first breath was exhilarating and magical.

Having this opportunity to work at a sheep farm truly helped me gain a greater understanding of the industry and definitely helped me become more educated in sheep husbandry & veterinary care. My confidence handling & managing sheep, especially experience with lambing, greatly improved. Without an opportunity to spend time at a sheep farm, my vet school experience would have looked totally different!