



## Case Study

2013 Chris Lehmann  
Trust Young Achiever  
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RECIPIENT

### **Sophie Gulliver** **Technical Specialist** **AgBiTech Pty Ltd** **Warra QLD**

Sophie Gulliver is a young scientist with a passion for insects, agriculture and innovation. After graduating from a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture degree at Sydney University in 2009 with First Class Honours and the University Medal, Sophie headed to the Darling Downs in Queensland where she started her cotton and agricultural career.

Sophie joined AgBiTech in 2011 as its Technical Specialist. Her role involves providing technical, extension and sales support for the company's product range, management of the research and development program for new and existing products and quality control oversight at AgBiTech's production facilities.

Sophie's main area of interest is the biology, ecology and management of the *Heliothis* caterpillar, the cotton industry's number one insect pest. Sophie is involved in projects investigating new ways to control *Heliothis* and other devastating caterpillar pests, to meet a growing community and global desire for fewer pesticides.

"Australia leads the way in sustainable agriculture and I want to ensure that our cotton growers have access to an increasing range of tools that allow them to continue to grow profitable cotton crops for as long as possible," Sophie said.

Sophie has a number of diverse cotton projects underway, including an industry funded, collaborative research project with Peter Gregg (UNE) on Magnet. This project is investigating moth busting as an alternative or supplement to pupae busting.

As part of the Gateway Schools to Agribusiness program, Sophie has developed the "Caterpillar Classroom" initiative, which distributes *Heliothis* rearing kits and provides online technical support and a discussion forum for participating teachers and students. The kits will be used in primary and secondary schools as a practical way to understand and enjoy science. She is also working on a website project called "Primary Roots" to encourage young people from both rural and urban backgrounds to consider careers in agriculture. The website provides an audio-visual snapshot of the diversity of careers available within agriculture and demonstrates what current agricultural employees do on a day to day basis in a range of workplace settings (e.g. the field, laboratory or office).

Sophie spent the 2012/13 cotton season working alongside researchers in the insectary at the Australian Cotton Research Institute's Resistance Monitoring Program, giving her a comprehensive understanding of Bollgard III and how these technologies are developed.

Sophie is regularly involved in shed meetings to interact with growers regarding pest management options and has developed a wide cotton industry network in a relatively short period of time.

Sophie would like to expand her knowledge by examining *Heliothis* in different crops all over the world, on the way to her ultimate career goal of becoming an internationally recognised expert in *Heliothis* and other devastating caterpillar pests.

