



By Camellia Aebischer

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Piñata fosters skills building

Australian company Piñata Farms is helping support final-year uni students in south-east Queensland



UQ's School of Agriculture and Food Sciences (l-r) tutor, Janine Basha, students William Hudson and Alice Freemantle and lecturer and course coordinator, Dr Phil Currey

Four students at the University of Queensland's (UQ) School of agriculture and Food Sciences will review Piñata Farms' management reporting systems.

The students are undertaking the task as part of the final component in their Bachelor of Agribusiness degrees, and Piñata are among nine other south-east Queensland businesses participating in the activity.

"A collaboration such as this fosters career pathways into agribusiness and helps us identify potential employees," said Chris Jones, Piñata Farms' chief financial officer. "Project outcomes also offer fresh perspectives into how we might improve as a business."

Jones added that the company had been keen to put together some non-financial metrics to use as a benchmark for KPI's.

The four students, Alice Freemantle, William Hudson, Glenn Denham, and Yoko Lathouly, commenced the 13-week programme in August and will present a report in late October.

"The purpose is to enable students to put into practice what they've learned in the previous three years," explained Phil Currey, lecturer in agribusiness at the School of Agriculture and Food Sciences at UQ.

"They are referred to a business, they present as consultants and are expected to use their skills to research a problem

set by the client and then share their findings and recommendations.

"The objective is to create opportunities for students to be employable by applying theory in a real-world environment," he said.

Piñata Farms hired 2016 UQ graduate Reannan Schultz after participating in a similar project in her final year. The company said it has a longstanding relationship with UQ's School of Agriculture and Food Sciences.