

**TRACER STUDY IN RESPECT OF THE EXTENT THAT THE MIT BURSARY FUND/SCHEME SECURE POSITIVE
CONTRIBUTION TO THE MEAT INDUSTRY**

By

MIT BURSARY COMMITTEE

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INTRODUCTION:

The Meat Industry Trust (MIT) is a discretionary Trust and accordingly, is entitled to fund various objectives of interest to the industry, such as the granting of bursaries for the purpose of furthering education relating to the red meat industry and the benefiting of the red meat industry in general whilst promoting the livestock welfare. In that regard, the MIT makes available R300 000 annually for six bursaries for post graduate studies in fields related to red meat at South African Universities. The objective of the scholarship is to provide an opportunity for deserving candidates to obtain a Masters or Doctorate Degree in some aspect of red meat that will enable them to contribute to the improvement of the Red Meat Industry of South Africa.

Who may apply?

The scholarship is open to citizens of the Republic of South Africa, who have qualified for admission to a Masters or Doctoral Degree at a recognized tertiary institution.

Value of the scholarship

The value of the scholarship is R50 000 per annum. This amount is payable in two instalments and will be forwarded to the University. The first instalment will be paid after receipt of proof of acceptance as well as registration at the University. The second instalment will be paid after receipt of a document from the supervisor that satisfactory progress is being made. The awarding of a scholarship is not regarded as a guarantee that the allocation will again be made in successive years, but will depend on proof of progress, as confirmed by the supervisor, and re-registration at the University. The final intended value of the scholarship is R100 000 for two consecutive years in the case of a Masters' degree and R150 000 for three consecutive years in the case of a Doctors degree.

Obligations of recipients

The successful candidate must study under the leadership of a recognized supervisor at the University concerned. A formal contract must be signed by both parties; the Meat Industry Trust and the student.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY:

This is a case study conducted by the MIT BWC in 2013 and is conceptualised against the backdrop of a general lack of researched data on the MIT funding impact, despite its existence which spans over a period of 5 years since its inception in 2009 under the MIT. It was thus felt that it has become increasingly urgent to embark on a desk top study that would help the MIT in its future planning as the statutory agricultural funding body, in a manner that would ensure strategic intervention into and support for the sector for an enhanced long term, sustained positive impact.

The objective of this Tracer Study will be to assist in the impact evaluation of MIT funds that have been allocated to the bursary scheme. Recognizing that - like every project this evaluation will be tailored to a unique context which seeks to inform the MIT Trustees through the tracing and following up MIT bursars and graduates with the aim of evaluating their progress from the time of inception up to the time they get jobs. It is envisaged that the findings of the study will add value to the MIT decision making process of equitable distribution of the funds for better participation by all (would be) deserving students. Thus, the study will trace and investigate the impact of the MIT bursary scheme on the recipients through interrogating answers to the following questions:

1. Investigate and confirm whether or not the MIT is getting value/benefit for stakeholder funds invested in the bursary scheme.
2. If not, the MIT would have to investigate and consider alternative/best ways to spend industry funds or To find out what the focus should be on in terms of training intervention for maximum benefit to the meat industry?
3. To question whether or not this is the best way of utilising the funds or the level at which to focus in terms of funding learners.

METHODOLOGY:

As mentioned above, the team had hoped to study the entire period since the inception of the scheme. However, for feasibility reasons and due to lack of reliable data, the team has resorted to focus on the period that covers the term starting from the current group of students of 2009 to 2014. The study team has done everything possible to track the previous bursars with no success. In that regard, they came to a

conclusion of resorting to study only the current cohort of students that are still being funded and busy with their studies and those that can be traced. Thus the sample being studied is reflected in *Table 1*. And *Table 2*. This information will serve as the basis for continuation of the tracer study in the years to come. The study covered only the funded disciplines of the RMRD SA. The study used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Numerical and narrative data was be collected and used to analyse results. For descriptions and interpretation words, numbers and groups will be used to elaborate findings. As instrument, a questionnaire was used for the study with the questions outlined below:

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS:

a. What were the objectives/goals of offering these bursaries

The objective of the scholarship is to provide an opportunity for deserving candidates to obtain a Masters or Doctorate Degree in some aspect of red meat that will enable them to contribute to the improvement of the Red Meat Industry of South Africa. Also, it is envisaged that the bursary will contribute to the furthering of education relating to the red meat industry and the benefiting of the red meat industry in general whilst promoting the livestock welfare.

b. When did the program start/year?

The program started in 2009. Due to the inability to find appropriate records, we reported on what we could find.

c. How many learners have been funded over the years?

Thirty seven (37) students have been funded over a period of five years. However, only thirty three (33) could be traced.

d. Who were they? Race? Gender? Universities/Institutions? Provinces?

Please see Table 1. For this information. However, the summary below gives further Information of interest:

RACE		GENDER	
BLACK	WHITE	FEMALE	MALE
16	21	25	12
37		37	

UNIVERSITY	No of Bursars	PROVINCE
University of Pretoria	17	Gauteng
University of Fort Hare	8	Eastern Cape Province
University of Free State	6	Free State Province
University of Stellenbosch	5	Western Cape Province
University of Johannesburg	1	Gauteng Province
TOTAL	37	

e. What programmes did they follow?

MSc. & PhD Nutrition,

MSc. & PhD Food Science,

MSc Production Management,

MSc & PhD Animal Science,

MSc & PhD Agricultural Animal Science,

PhD Microbiology,

MSc & PhD Vet Science,

MSc & PhD Food Science

MSc & PhD Meat Science

MSc Agricultural Science,

PhD Animal breeding & genetics,

PhD Animal welfare and Meat Science,

MSc. & PhD Agricultural Economics

PhD Biochemistry

f. How much was spent per learner/ per year? Total amount spent over the period?

The value of the scholarship is R100 000 for a Masters' degree and R150 000 for a Doctors degree. The amount is payable in terms of R50 000 per year for two consecutive years for a Master's degree and for three consecutive years for a PhD degree. The total amount spent thus far, according to the financial records, is **R 3 725 000.00** broken down as follows:

2009=R400,000.00;	8 Students
2010=R550,000.00;	11 Students
2011=R675,000.00;	14 Students
2012=R700,000.00;	14 Students
2013=R700,000.00;	14 Students
2014=R700,000.00;	14 Students

The annual figures stated above (2009 to 2014) give the number of students funded in a particular year plus new students.

g. Other resources invested in the bursary scheme (e.g. visits to students and admin)?

Study visits to the various institutions are conducted annually to market the bursary to new students, to check on the progress of the recipients and to clarify and iron out any possible or unforeseen problems relating to the bursary.

h. How many students completed? How many failed? How many dropped out? What were the reasons?

All the bursars completed their studies. Some completed in record time, while others took the required period to complete. Only two students asked for extension of time due to unforeseen delays. That, however, did not have any financial implications on the part of the MIT Bursary scheme. No students failed or dropped out of their studies.

i. Where are the graduates now? What are they doing/ in which sectors?

All the traceable graduates are employed in the food or meat related industry. Tables outlining where and what they are doing are attached as Table 1. and Table 2. Qualifying students that were funded for masters' degrees completed and proceeded to their PhDs.

j. What reasons do those that are not in the sector, but completed, give for not being in the sector?

There are only three students that are not doing work that is red meat industry or research related.

- One is employed by the Namibian Livestock Industry.
- The other is the Sensory and Innovation Manager at McCormick South Africa. The company manufactures spices, herbs and flavouring for retail, commercial and industrial markets. In South Africa the company focuses on spices and seasoning for the snack and fast food industry.
- The third one is the Assistant Manager Research & Development Foods South Africa, Unilever. He deploys savoury and spreads innovations into the South African market - cascading technical knowledge to customer teams and business partnering with marketing to ensure communication to consumers is robust and addresses the needs of our consumers. He is also on the Unilever Future Leaders Program, an accelerated leadership development program.

k. Have they all submitted copies of their Theses?

They have all submitted their reports to the MIT Bursary Working Committee. In fact, there are stringent requirements that have been put in place through policy and a signed agreement, to ensure that recipients' progress is closely monitored. The yearly awarded amount is paid out in two equal amounts each year. Payments will be subject to the correct completion of reporting procedures outlined below:

The first payment each year is subject to submission of proof of registration at the academic institution for the academic year and a written progress report from the mentor confirming that the student is qualified to begin or continue with his/her studies.

The second payment is subject to written confirmation by the mentor to be received no later than 31 July that the student is making satisfactory progress with his/her project.

The above requirements are augmented by the study visits that are carried out by the BWC Members to allocated Institutions for the purpose of monitoring progress.

These measures ensure that no student progress falls between the cracks or is unaccounted for.

l. What has been done with the findings from their studies or new knowledge generated by the studies?

The students have all published papers from their dissertations and thesis. Some have presented papers in Red Meat Research Conferences while others published peer reviewed scientific articles in accredited journals, published peer-reviewed books, chapters in books. There are also those who presented national and international conference contributions, while others won conference contribution awards.

Now that the MIT has built a website, the BWC will take decisions on which information, achievements and developments pertaining to the bursars and graduates will be posted on the website including their research papers.

m. Did the sector benefit? If so how?

Yes the sector benefited. Since it was envisaged that the knowledge gained by the graduates will contribute to the improvement of the Red Meat Industry of South Africa, which has been achieved as those that have been employed by the sector are contributing positively through the knowledge, skills and values they have acquired.

n. Are the accomplishments worth the resources invested?

From the analysis of data thirty three (33) learners out thirty seven (37), which constitute 89.2% of learners that were funded throughout the five (5) years of the study period have been able to be contact to establish where they are and what they are doing. Of the thirty three (33), no funding was lost due to failure or dropping out. One can safely conclude the same about the 10.8% that cannot be traced, as the results are generalizable.

o. Have the objectives been achieved? To what extent? If not, what are the contributing factors?

Yes the objectives have been achieved and exceeded as all the traced students are contributing to the Meat Industry Sector. Those who have completed their studies have been absorbed by the sector except for one who is still job hunting. The knowledge and expertise gained through their research will contribute to the enhancement of the Red Meat Industry of South Africa as was anticipated.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Need for effective document/records management or better organised filing system

MIT should invest on a cost effective System, be it Document Management System or Information Management System. If any one of the systems had been in place, the Tracer Study would have been easier, quicker, more meaningful and informative.

Access to information was the major serious challenge to the quick finalization of the study. Any cost effective or simple organised filing system could be in place, further studies could be made easy by up to date information for an updated Impact Study report.

POSSIBILITIES FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION:

- Transformation of lives, particularly of families of black recipients from the previously disadvantaged groups;
- Factors contributing to stronger participation of some universities and dismal participation of others (particularly previously disadvantaged institutions that in rural areas).
- Separation and categorisation of students that were funded for Masters' only, Masters and PhD and PhD only.
- Follow up on students that couldn't be traced to get a full impact assessment

CONCLUSION:

The objectives of the bursary fund were predominately focused of the contribution and improvement of the Red Meat Industry. The bursary achieved its objectives as outlined in its policies. However, positive additional unarticulated achievements can also be attested to. Thus, in line with the government agenda of transformation the following can be highlighted:

- The most significant beneficiaries from the bursary scheme are females which were twenty seven (25), 67.6% against their male counter parts which were only thirteen (12), 32,4%.
- There were 16 black recipients which constitute 43% of the beneficiaries when compared to 21 Whites which constituting 57% of the total recipient population. This definitely shows a significant improvement from the past practise of white majority recipients.
- In terms of recruitment and funding, of the five (5) institutions with funded students, the University of Fort Hare, a previously disadvantaged institution has the second largest number of bursary recipients, eight (8) after the University of Pretoria which has the largest number of bursary recipients (17). That also shows a significant improvement in terms of shift to focus on Previously Disadvantaged institution.

It can therefore be safely concluded that the MIT is getting value for stakeholder funds invested in the bursary scheme. It can find comfort on the fact that the bursary fund is one of the best ways to spend industry funds. With the recommended information and document control systems in place, it would be possible to conduct further studies to verify the impact of the training intervention for maximum benefit to the meat industry?

At the moment, there is no doubt of whether or not this is the best way of utilising the funds or the level at which to focus in terms of funding learners.

The report should be regarded as a living document as it is able to be updated as outstanding information is received from sources. The obtainable data as reflected in Table 1. and 2. will serve as the basis for continuation of the tracer study in the years to come.

