



Meat: Ade Ariantika

PROJECT ENGINEER,
Oakey Beef Exports Pty
Ltd (QLD)

Since Ade (pronounced Ah-day) Ariantika, 23 was seven years old, she knew she wanted to be a mechanical engineer like her dad. Growing up in Jakarta, she had dreams of making it big in either manufacturing or petroleum. “If you do your best, ultimately you will be rewarded one way or another,” she says.

A Queensland University of Technology Mechanical Engineering graduate, with honours, Ade is now based in Queensland’s Darling Downs region working for one of Australia’s largest beef processing plants. Her employer, Oakey Beef Exports Pty Ltd, employs more than 750 people from Oakey, Toowoomba and the surrounding districts.

During her three years, Ade’s career has been fast tracking, having worked as Oakey Beef’s Environmental Officer and Graduate Engineer, she is now the Project Engineer and has managed projects ranging from \$20,000 to \$3 million.

Part of Ade’s Mechanical Engineering degree required her to complete a work placement and when she saw an advert for a company-based project at Oakey Beef’s rendering plant, Ade jumped at the chance to work on the feasibility study.

Prior to this, she did not know anything about the red meat processing industry. However once she entered her first red meat processing plant, she was surprised at how high tech, clean and comfortable the working environment was.

“Some of my university friends tried to discourage me from coming out to Oakey but I was going into this with the expectation of learning something. Once I got here, it changed my mind completely. My perceptions were completely wrong and flipped 180 degrees.”

Compared to her friends, Ade says her career has progressed more rapidly thanks to the growing opportunities in the red meat processing industry. As one of the top 10 Australian exports commodities for decades, the red meat processing industry provides high levels of job security and the opportunity to grow.

“Unlike gas or mining, which goes through economic cycles, I’m in a very stable career and still have many opportunities to continue to learn on the job. The added bonus is everyone is very friendly too. I consider the people at Oakey Beef to be like a second family to me.”

Whether you’re a student, already working in another industry in Australia or a migrant, Ade believes that the red meat processing industry provides an enriching experience in terms of skills and knowledge. From cattle handling, engineering, quality assurance and finance, through to professional butchering, supply chain, logistics, information technology and procurement, the career options are endless.

And the best part of it, according to Ade, is that she is able to apply her passion in engineering by doing her job. For her, it is a win-win solution that she is very grateful for.

Apart from the job stability, what Ade finds rewarding is the flexibility in her work/life balance. The plant has a number of shifts offering different working hours, enabling its workers to spend time doing other things. For young families, the flexibility can mean more time to spend together. In Ade's case, she uses her spare time to focus on her MBA studies.

Another benefit of working in the meat processing industry is the broad networking opportunities.

"Through my different projects I have met so many professionals outside of my industry – such as people in Queensland Rail, farming communities and even politicians. The ability to meet people in other industries is much broader than what I thought was possible."

Ade insists that like the rest of the industry, at Oakey Beef, staff are nurtured to develop and bring out the best in their abilities, themselves and ultimately, the community. She also values the challenges she faces in her role that allow her to absorb as much knowledge as she needs, transfer it into numbers and analysis, and use this to find a feasible solution. The end result means that Ade is able to take control of her own project from design, fabrication, installation, and commissioning.

"Oakey Beef Exports has raised me from a stiff, fresh graduate to become an adaptive, applicable engineer with a focus on overcoming problems by looking at different perspectives. It is a combination of economic, technical, and practical, which I believe benefits everyone."

For those considering a role in the meat processing industry, Ade recommends taking the leap into a great industry with unlimited career opportunities.

"I've found that once you're on the job, you'll learn where your passions really are," she says. "This approach works well in the industry as it helps you develop where you want to be, and there are opportunities to grow. You will be surprised at where you can go."

The next time you eat red meat, have a think about the variety of people who got it onto your plate. It's thanks to people in all sorts of roles – from HR managers, boners and slicers or IT professionals to engineers, apprentices and microbiologists. It could even be the result of Ade's handiwork.

www.ampc.com.au/resources/careers
#Meatyourfuture #Meatyourcareer
#Meatyourpartners #Meatyourindustry

"I'm in a very stable career and still have many opportunities to continue to learn on the job."