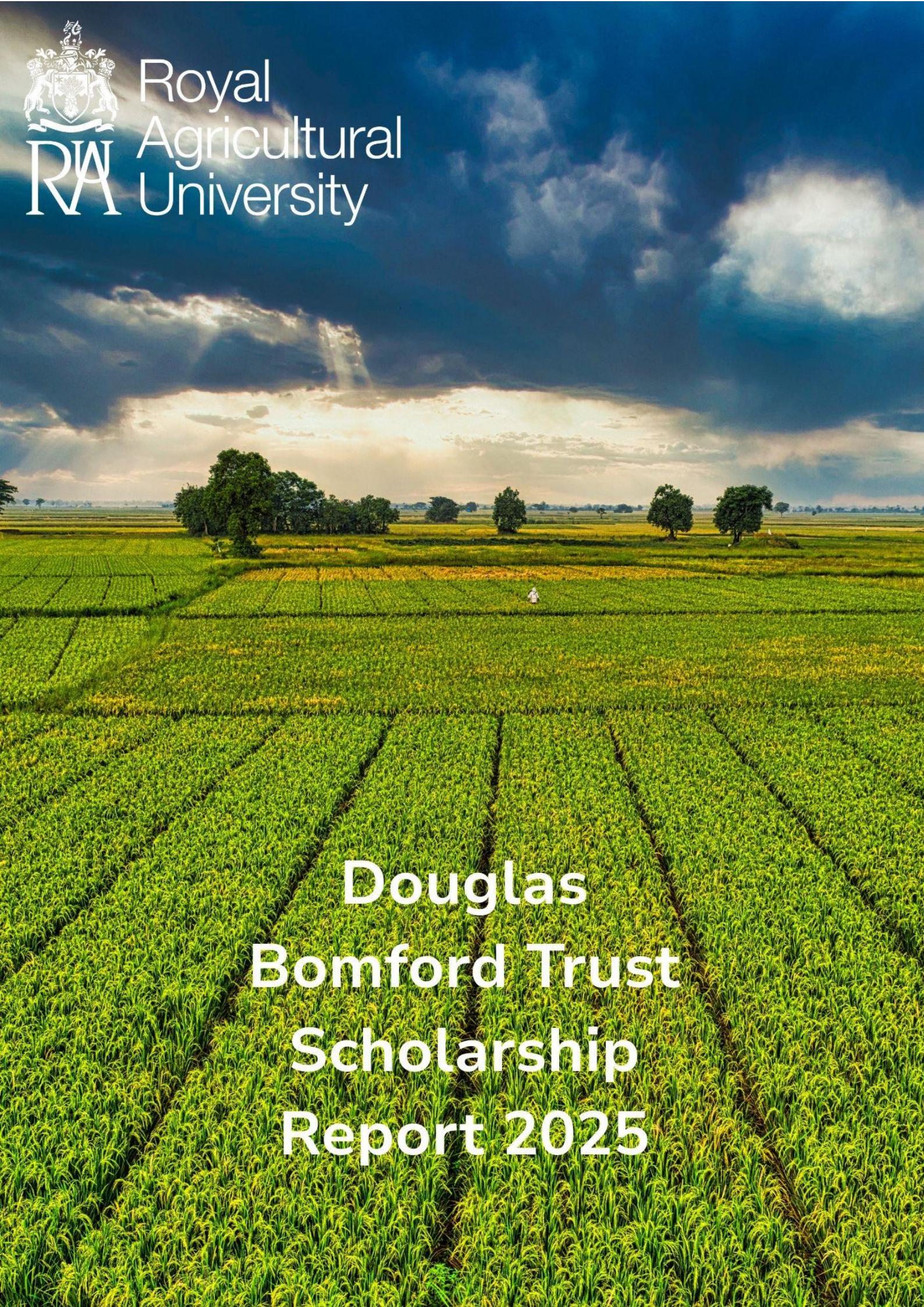




Royal
Agricultural
University

A wide-angle, aerial photograph of a vast agricultural landscape. The foreground is filled with the vibrant green of a rice paddy field, showing distinct rows of crops. In the middle ground, a lone figure stands in the distance, providing a sense of scale to the immense field. The background features a line of mature trees and a horizon under a dramatic sky. The upper half of the sky is filled with heavy, dark clouds, while the lower half shows bright, golden sunlight breaking through, creating a powerful contrast.

Douglas
Bomford Trust
Scholarship
Report 2025

Harriet Rothwell, Class of 2025, BSc (Hons) in Agriculture



The Douglas Bomford Trust's generosity was primarily used to support and facilitate my final year dissertation. My dissertation was titled, "A study into the reduction of synthetic Nitrogen fertiliser usage, whilst maintaining the yield and nutritional value of maize forage." and was awarded with a First. The study's main aim was to assess the effectiveness of reduced synthetic nitrogen fertiliser rates as well as the capability of biological nitrogen fixing crops to supply adequate nitrogen; both measured using a crop trial of KWS EXELON (forage maize). The effectiveness of my treatments was measured through N readings using a N tester, tissue analysis, and post-harvest forage analysis. The analytical results I gained from the intensive laboratory testing allowed me to carry out several statistical tests on my results, providing me with greater accuracy in results and therefore I was able to confidently address my hypotheses.



I was incredibly lucky to have my family support my ambitions and offer the use of land at our home farm to complete my crop trial on, as well as their help during the process. However, my great ambition and eagerness to complete the trial, unfortunately didn't cover the high cost. Therefore, after receiving the scholarship, I used it towards set up materials, seed, chemical sprays such as fertilisers and herbicides, testing costs of tissue and forage analysis.

I feel immensely proud and privileged to have been able to conduct my own crop trial to support my final year dissertation, which was heavily supported by the Douglas Bomford Trust whom I am so grateful to have been introduced to by my dissertation supervisor Karen Rial-Lovera. During my initial interview with the trust, I was presented with questions around the use of the scholarship and my general passion for the agricultural industry as well as my desires for postgraduation.

The trial enabled me to apply knowledge I had learnt during my lectures at the RAU as well as during my placement with Yara International. Being able to apply the knowledge I had led me to develop a much greater understanding of the trial process, maize as a crop, fertilisers and nutritional influences on crop development and nutritional impacts on a forage fed maize crop. Completing my dissertation and having hands on involvement has massively increased the confidence I have in my knowledge which I will take forward into my career within the agricultural industry.

Harold Amiss, Class of 2027, Studying BSc (Hons) Agriculture

Earlier this year I was extremely grateful to be awarded the Douglas Bomford Trust Scholarship. The scholarship was £1,000, which I decided would be best spent on learning new skills to improve my employability in agriculture, especially in areas of aspects of agriculture I would like to work in after I have completed my course at the Royal Agricultural University.

The first opportunity I took was to use the money to take a two-day LANTRA chainsaw maintenance and cross cutting course at the John Oldcare rural skills centre. The course covered a range of aspects of chainsaw use, such as basic safety, legislation, basic maintenance and sharpening and practical use. As I had not previously worked with chainsaw it was a very informative and useful course. It has already helped me in a number of ways. On my home farm in Cornwall my family has recently started an agro forestry project through Forest for Cornwall funding. Part of this funding requires maintaining the trees planted and hedgerows. The course has meant I have been able fulfil the role of maintaining the trees, through removing dead and damaged branches. I have also used the skills I have gained when fencing areas of the farm with this year's capital grants, by being able to cut back hedgerows to make way for new fences, cutting posts to size and mortising strainer joints. The course has also been useful as I have been able to gain a job part time in Tetbury with a company run by alumni which specialises in British timber framed buildings. My role will include cleaning and maintaining equipment, stacking wood and cutting firewood. This shows how the course, funded by the scholarship, has already gained me employment where I can further expand my experience and skill set.



I chose to spend the remainder of the money from the scholarship on a British Wool beginner machine shearing course in Oxfordshire. The scholarship not only covered the cost of the course, but also for the shearing handpiece, combs and cutters, and travel costs to get to the site. Over the space of 2 days, I learnt how to properly maintain and operate a shearing handpiece and machine. This included how to assemble the handpiece correctly so as to not harm the sheep I was shearing. I also learned how to sharpen and oil the handpiece. Before starting shearing, I was taught how to properly hold and handle the sheep so as to not stress them and to not injure myself. All of this gave me the knowledge to shear safely over the 2 days. Afterwards, I carried on shearing at home, where I cleaned flystruck sheep, and helped shear the flock alongside the regular shearing gang. This means, if I keep practising, I will be competent enough to take the next level of course next year. I found this course

especially enjoyable and interesting as after university I would like to start shearing, possibly in Australia or New Zealand.

The scholarship has been very useful in allowing me to take courses and give me opportunities for the future that I may not have been able to afford if not for the generosity of the Trust. I hope to carry on using the skills I have gained to experience as much of a varied and useful career in agriculture as possible.

Dhaval Bhoi, Class of 2025, BSc (Hons) in Agriculture

Dhaval Bhoi, is a recipient of the Douglas Bomford Trust scholarship. He received funding towards BASIS courses. This is an organisation that sets standards for the agricultural, pesticide, and fertiliser industries. These courses provide professional certification and are designed for individuals who sell, advise on, or use pesticides, fertilizers, and other related products. The courses focus on areas like crop protection, environmental impact, and soil health.



I'm truly grateful to the trust for the scholarship and their support in my work and educational journey. The course will enhance my knowledge about the integrated weed and pest management to develop automated systems, contributing sustainably towards it. I am currently undertaking postgraduate study at the University of Greenwich.

Although I haven't yet been able to enrol myself into the BASIS courses targeted at pest and weed management, I plan on using the scholarship towards the BASIS courses during the holidays, when I will not have to prioritise the seminars and research projects.

My experience at the Royal Agricultural University has been transformative, and your support has played a direct role in enabling these achievements. It was the Trust's confidence in my potential that has enabled me to fully embrace every opportunity and develop into the researcher I aspire to become. Knowing that a respected organisation believed in my work and aspirations fuelled my motivation and strengthened my resilience during the most demanding stages of my degree. The support of the RAU and the Douglas Bomford Trust in my career has enabled me to:

- Publish the first research paper on honey-bee sentience,
- Contribute to doctoral-level research projects,
- Conduct my own field trials and laboratory studies,
- Attend key industry events such as the London City Food & Drink Conference,
- Achieve the Vice-Chancellor's Top Academic Achiever Award, and
- Finalist for the 2025 LBEL Awards.