



For Immediate Release

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October 15, 2024

AG EDUCATORS IN PENNSYLVANIA AND BEYOND RECEIVE BACK-TO-SCHOOL BOXES FROM DAIRY LEADERS OF TOMORROW AND INDUSTRY SPONSORS

More Than 250 Back-to-School Boxes Were Sent to Ag Educators With Personal Messages

Harrisburg, Pa. –Thanks to support from industry sponsors and individual donors, the Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow (DLT) program sent more than 250 back-to-school boxes to agriculture educators this August. The boxes were part of an initiative to share positivity, encouragement and support to agriculture educators in Pennsylvania and beyond at the start of the school year. The DLT Program is managed by the Dairy Excellence Foundation to help prepare high school students to work in the dairy industry through industry-recognized courses, scholarship opportunities, and on-farm experiences.

“Agriculture teachers are laying the foundation for the next generation to learn about the role farmers have in our communities. We wanted to come up with a way to show our appreciation for agriculture educators at the start of the school year and share some positivity and words of encouragement for all they do to mentor, inspire and support their students,” said Michelle Shearer, Workforce Development Manager at the Dairy Excellence Foundation. “We are amazed at the generosity and support from both our sponsors and the individuals across the agriculture and dairy industries who helped us send more than 250 boxes to kick off the school year.”

The back-to-school boxes included office supplies, gift cards, stress “cows,” candy, and personal messages from the individuals and businesses that donated to send boxes to educators. Many dairy producers sent boxes to agriculture educators in a nearby district, thanking them for their work and encouraging them to reach out if they want to tour or connect with a working dairy farm. Many parents and neighbors sent boxes to their adult children or friends who are ag educators to share positivity at the start of the school year.

Several businesses and organizations participated by making a donation and asking the Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow team to choose teachers in their county to receive boxes as a way to express their appreciation.

“One of the major initiatives for the Lancaster County Ag Council is ag education, especially educating our youth. With that in mind, the ag educators in Lancaster County play a very important role in the agricultural education process of Lancaster County youth,” said Greg Kirkham, Executive Director of the Lancaster County Agriculture Council, one of the sponsors for the boxes. “The teachers were very appreciative of the thoughtfulness of all involved in providing this recognition to them. I have heard from many who expressed how opening the box eased some anxiety when preparing for the new school year – not to mention the practicality of several items enclosed in the box. Lancaster County Agriculture Council is happy to participate in this program.”

In addition to the Lancaster County Agriculture Council, sponsors for the back-to-school boxes included Allied Milk Producers, American Dairy Association North East, Berks County Department of Agriculture, Herbein + Company, King Construction, New Holland Agriculture, Penn State Extension, Pennian Bank, Pennsylvania FFA Foundation, Pennsylvania Friends of Agriculture Foundation, Petersheim's Cow Mattresses LLC, Reinford Farms, Versant Strategies, and more than 200 individuals who made a donation to send boxes to educators in their community.

"Thank you so much for the box of goodies and sweet note. It means more than words can say and was such a kind surprise. The program and I are so blessed to have people like you in our community," shared Carissa Clevon, an agriculture educator from Wisconsin who received a box.

All proceeds from the campaign benefitted agriculture educators and the Dairy Excellence Foundation, which manages the Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow program. The DLT curriculum is available at no cost to high school educators thanks to support from sponsors and donors. The DLT program includes four main courses: Introduction to Dairy, Introduction to Dairy Herd Management, Introduction to Dairy Business Management, and Introduction to Dairy Technologies. Teachers can incorporate these courses into their classroom instruction or assign to high school students to complete independently.

DLT lesson plans and associated resources can be accessed online and downloaded at no cost once educators or students complete the DLT registration. Scholarship opportunities and on-farm learning experiences are also available to teachers and students who are enrolled in the program.

To learn more about the back-to-school box campaign and how to get involved next year, visit www.dairyleadersoftomorrow.com/send-a-box.

To share the Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow program with an agriculture educator you know, visit www.dairyleadersoftomorrow.com. If you have questions about the program, contact Michelle Shearer at mshearer@centerfordairyexcellence.org or by phone at 570-768-8316.

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The Center for Dairy Excellence Foundation of Pennsylvania is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, tax deductible organization that is Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) approved. Established in 2010, the foundation's mission is to build and invest in programs that cultivate and empower the next generation of producers, consumers, and advocates for the Pennsylvania dairy industry. Learn more at centerfordairyexcellence.org/our-foundation/.

Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow (DLT) is a program designed specifically to prepare high school students to work in the dairy industry. A three-part model program, Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow offers classroom instruction, on-farm experiences and scholarship opportunities. The DLT curriculum includes four main courses: Introduction to Dairy, Introduction to Dairy Herd Management, Introduction to Dairy Business Management, and Introduction to Dairy Technologies. The program is managed by the Center for Dairy Excellence Foundation of Pennsylvania, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, tax deductible organization that is Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) approved. Learn more about the program at www.dairyleadersoftomorrow.com.

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