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Media Contact: Emily Barge, 717-346-0849; ebarge@centerfordairyexcellence.org
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NINE STUDENTS BEGIN ON-FARM INTERNSHIPS ON PROGRESSIVE DAIRY FARMS

These Internships Provide Students With On-Farm Learning Experiences This Summer

Harrisburg, Pa. – Nine college students who are pursuing careers in dairy production recently began on-farm summer internships on progressive dairy farms in Pennsylvania and New York. The Dairy Excellence Foundation, the Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania Dairymen’s Association created the program more than 10 years ago to provide hands-on, farm-based learning experiences to the next generation of dairy managers, producers, and professionals in Pennsylvania and beyond.

“This year’s on-farm internships are exposing college students to all aspects of dairy production and processing. We worked hard to match the interns with dairy farms that align with their interests and career goals, push them out of their comfort zones, and give them hands-on experience in specific areas of dairy production and processing,” said Michelle Shearer, Workforce Development Manager at the Dairy Excellence Foundation. “Through projects and relationships with their host farms, these interns are making direct impacts at the farm level and building connections within agriculture that will last a lifetime.”

For 10 to 12 weeks throughout the summer, on-farm interns gain hands-on experience and participate in virtual discussions with one another to network and share their experiences. The internships are designed to give students a full understanding of what it takes to run a successful dairy operation and provides dairy farms with the chance to mentor the next generation of dairy.

“When the internship program started over 15 years ago, we saw the need to have students get out onto progressive dairy farms and apply the classroom skills they were acquiring. We also thought it would be a great way to enhance the labor pool for future employees we would need on our farms,” said Walt Moore of Walmoore Holsteins, a PDMP member and Dairy Excellence Foundation Board member who is hosting an on-farm intern this summer. “Through the program, the interns infuse a sense of enthusiasm to their host farms, and they bring their own unique interests and skills as well.”

During the internship, students will also conduct a research project that connects to their career interests and benefits their dairy farm's operation. After researching and analyzing various topics, they will present their findings in August at the conclusion of the program.

Congratulations to the following interns who are participating in the program this summer:

- **Paige Abruzzese – Interning at Musser Run Jerseys in McVeytown, PA**
“I choose to do this internship because I really liked that it's on the farm and being able to learn new skills. I'm hoping to learn the all-around skills that are needed on a dairy farm during a typical day and the different tasks that you need to do.”
- **Kelly Bliss – Interning at Wellwyn Farm & God's Country Creamery in Ulysses, PA**
“I chose to pursue this on-farm internship because I knew it would be a great way to gain experience on an operation that is different from my family's farm as well as apply the knowledge from my classes to hands-on applications. I hope to gain a better understanding of the function of an on-farm creamery, develop skills in digital farm data management, and gain knowledge about conservation practices such as rotational grazing.”
- **Gavin Brophy – Interning at Walmoore Holsteins in West Grove, PA**
“I wanted an immersive, hands-on experience within the commercial dairy industry. The countless opportunities involved with this internship support my passion for dairy farming and will build upon my agricultural knowledge. I hope to connect and network with other peers who intend on supporting the future of dairy in Pennsylvania. I want to build upon my problem solving, teamwork, and time management skills in a professional setting.”
- **Lillian Corbett – Interning at Canon Dairy Farm in West Middlesex, PA**
“I decided to do this internship to get hands-on experience working in the dairy industry and to see the day-to-day activities that happen on a farm. Dairy has always been a passion of mine, but because I come from a non-agricultural area, I never had the opportunity to get exposure to it prior to attending Penn State. I'm hoping to understand the benefits and struggles that dairy farmers undergo, so I can spread awareness and promote the industry in the most positive way possible.”
- **Alexander Coursen – Interning at Hemdale Farms in Seneca Castle, NY**
“I chose this internship to gain more experience from other farms and see how other people in the industry do things. I'm hoping to learn how to better use information that the robotic milkers give and to learn how to work on them.”
- **Calvin Dechow – Interning at Furnace Hill Holsteins in Lebanon, PA**
“I decided to do the internship because I wanted to gain more on-farm experience. I hope to learn more about what it's like to not only work on a working dairy farm but

also experience the management practices that are involved in running a farm.”

- **Darcy Heltzel – Interning at Vale Wood Farms in Loretto, PA**
“I’m looking for experience that relates to my passions of food and animal science. This on-farm internship provides me with the perfect opportunity to explore my interests and gain real industry experience. Having worked on my family's dairy farm for most of my life, I am looking forward to a different environment to help me gain new perspectives about the dairy industry. Additionally, I hope to learn more about how I can integrate my love of dairy foods and animal science together.”
- **Isabella Johnson – Interning at Schrack Farms in Loganton, PA**
“I wanted to be hands on and have a different experience than last summer while still being able to breed cows and do reproductive work every day. I’m hoping to gain reproductive management skills that pertain to working on a large dairy.”
- **Adria Russell – Interning at Kulp Family Farm in Martinsburg, PA**
“This seemed like the perfect opportunity to venture out of my comfort zone into the production side of the dairy industry. I’m hoping to gain knowledge that will help me solidify my future plans and wisdom to take back to my own farm.”

Students who are accepted into the program must attend a Pennsylvania university, be a Pennsylvania resident attending an out-of-state school, or be a recently graduated Pennsylvania resident with an interest in dairy production. Host farms may be located within or outside of Pennsylvania, but producers must agree to provide the intern with exposure to all aspects of a successful, progressive dairy operation.

To learn more, visit centerfordairyexcellence.org/internship or contact Michelle Shearer at 717-788-0298 or by email at mshearer@centerfordairyexcellence.org.

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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/.

Center for Dairy Excellence Foundation ▼ 2301 North Cameron St., Harrisburg, PA 17110

▼ 717-346-0849 ▼

www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/our-foundation/