



Young People Excited About Opportunities Awaiting in Dairy

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Editor's Note: This is a special feature from the Center for Dairy Excellence exclusively for the *Farmshine* newspaper.

One of the unique aspects of Pennsylvania's dairy industry is that many of our farms are multi-

generational. Often the first, second and third generations, or even the fourth, fifth and sixth, all work together on the dairy farm.

These families are dedicated to keeping the dairy farm growing for future generations, and I marvel at their ability to keep their passion for farming growing with each generation.

Pennsylvania is fortunate to have many young people who are excited about the future of Pennsylvania's dairy industry, despite its challenges. Some grew up on those multi-generational farms, and others caught their passion for dairying from neighboring farmers or others excited about dairy.

Last month's Pennsylvania Dairy Summit was evidence that we have a bright future in dairy.

Each year the Pennsylvania Dairy Stakeholders and the Pennsylvania Dairymen's Association provide "Future Dairy Leaders" scholarships for young people "Future Dairy Leaders" scholarships to attend the Summit for young people under the age of 25 who are interested in a dairy-related career.

This year the groups awarded 49 scholarships to high school students, college-aged students and to beginning dairy producers.

In this week's CDE page in the *Farmshine*, we featured comments from three of the scholarship winners about why they are excited about a career in the dairy industry.



Recognizing the 2010 Summit Future Dairy Leaders

PETER YODER

Penn State Junior, Belleville, Mifflin County

Peter comes from a 135-cow dairy farm in Belleville where he is the third generation to farm. He is a junior studying animal science. After graduating, he plans to pursue a career as a herdsman or in a dairy-related career, possibly nutrition, before eventually returning home to farm.

Why are you excited about a career in dairy? "I think it is both challenging and rewarding. I like the entrepreneurial aspect of it and the idea of the individual farm. You are your own boss and manager.

"It is also a very competitive industry, but I believe in Pennsylvania we work together. It is the lifestyle of growing up and working on the farm that I really enjoy."

What value did you get out of the summit?

"The interaction with people there was very valuable. I got to talk with both the students and the farmers who were also attending. That was very important.

"Listening to the speakers was also helpful. I really liked Bill Curley, who spoke about milk pricing, and the dairy farmers who shared their thoughts on how to survive in today's industry."

How do you plan to use the information? "First of all, coming away from the summit gave me a positive attitude about my family farm and the industry as a whole.

"Listening to the dairy farmers who shared their stories and offered management ideas was very valuable as I plan for my future, and the presentation from Bill Curley helped peak my interest in risk management."

SARAH WICHARD

Penn State Junior, Newville, Cumberland Co.

Sarah grew up on an 80-cow dairy that her father sold in 2009 to pursue a career as a pastor in VA. Sarah shows dairy cows and is studying animal science and business management at Penn State.

Why are you excited about a career in dairy?

"Growing up on a dairy farm has helped illustrate the unique aspects of the dairy industry. There are always challenges, but there are also upswings to make it all worthwhile. We can celebrate those upswings and good times.

"The dairy industry is also always changing, and there are a lot of changes coming down the road on how we handle our cows and how we portray ourselves to the public.

"As an industry, we are willing to make those management changes so we can keep providing the food demanded from us. We are always looking forward to what the consumer needs, and it is a sign that we are not getting stuck in any ruts."

What value did you get out of the summit? "The biggest value I took away was in the aspect of marketing. Bill Curley spoke about markets and the necessity of being able to sell what you produce. Sometimes it seems like we just produce and forget that, somewhere down the line, those products must be marketed.

How do you plan to use the information? "First off, the information helps me at school because I can bring some very practical information to projects I am working on.

"The conference also helped me gain a new perspective as a student about the dairy industry. It gave me insight on marketing, animal welfare, and consumer perceptions. And it even will help as I make management decisions about our own cows.

DAVID SATTAZAHN

Dairy Farmer, Fleetwood, Berks County

David grew up on a dairy farm and now has a small milking herd at a rented facility in Fleetwood. David's wife Katie works off the farm but helps on weekends and evenings when she can.

Why are you excited about a career in dairy?

"There are many reasons to be excited about a career in dairy. We enjoy working with the cows, which are all registered, and I enjoy trying to improve the cows through breeding. We also hope to generate added revenue through showing and marketing them.

"I also like the lifestyle — it's the lifestyle Katie and I want to raise a family in. You get to work with people involved in agriculture, who share common values. Although it can be rigorous and long hours, it is worth it. It is a unique way to be involved with your family.

What value did you get out of the summit? "It was an opportunity to network with other people and to meet with various vendors and other producers. I am one of the young "starting-out" producers, so that was really beneficial.

"We also attended a breakout on alternative energy, and I learned a lot during that. Some of the larger sessions in the ballroom were good to expand our views and to get a broader look at the macros in dairy. It helps broaden our horizons."

How do you plan to use the information? "My twin brother Doug and I are planning an expansion at the farm where I grew up so we could both work with my father Dennis. I learned about things we can do that will allow us to be more profitable in the long run.

I also learned that we need to be more proactive on getting the word out to dairy farmers on how we present the image of dairy farming to the public. It is important that we be mindful of animal welfare and environmental issues.

The Pennsylvania Dairy Summit is hosted each year by the Pennsylvania Dairy Stakeholders and the Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania. The Center for Dairy Excellence is a supporting partner in the event, along with Penn State Dairy Alliance and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

For more information about the PA Dairy Summit, visit www.padairysummit.org.

For more information about the center, visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org or call 717-346-0849.

