



## For Immediate Release

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### **FARM STAPELS TO BE FEATURED IN PRODUCER SHOWCASE AT PA DAIRY SUMMIT**

*Attend Six Dynamic Keynote Sessions and Breakout Sessions in Four Timely Tracks*

**Harrisburg, Pa.** – Whether you're at the peak of your career in the dairy industry, or just getting started, dairy producers and industry professionals are invited to the two-day Pennsylvania Dairy Summit on February 4-5 in Grantville, PA. With this year's theme of "True North," the Dairy Summit is nationally recognized as one of the best conferences for networking, education, and inspiration. Join more than 300 dairy professionals who want to commit to their True North through dynamic keynote sessions, have meaningful conversations with colleagues and friends, and attend timely breakout sessions to gain new ideas and proven strategies they can immediately apply at the farm level. Hosted by the Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania and Center for Dairy Excellence, registration fees for dairy producers are set to be as affordable as possible.

Brody Stapel of Farm Stapels in Wisconsin will lead the producer showcase keynote session, "Forging Ahead with Innovation: A Producer Showcase." As the 2024 Young Dairy Farmer of the Year, Stapel will share how he and his family have been forging ahead with innovation, rolling up their sleeves, and making their dreams a reality.

When brothers Brody and Jory returned to their family's farm, Farm Stapels in Howards Grove, WI, they were filled with enthusiasm and energy and had one thing in mind: opportunity. Opportunity to raise their families on a farm, opportunity to work for themselves and bring about their own success, and opportunity to be part of our country's food security. In 2025, exactly 430 days after returning home from a conference that inspired them to start bottling their own milk, they dug the foundation of their new creamery.

"If someone wants to find their True North with all the noise and change in our industry, I think it starts with knowing your purpose. On our farm, moving into beef and on-farm milk processing taught us that when you're clear on why you're doing something, the next steps feel less overwhelming. Purpose steadies you, and passion keeps you moving," Stapel shared. "Diversification brings plenty of highs and lows — markets shift, customers change, and you're learning as you go. But if your decisions line up with your long-term goals for your family, your cows, and your land, it's much easier to stay on track. Keep checking your compass and make sure you're building something that truly serves your farm and your community. When you do that, the noise fades and the path forward becomes a lot clearer."

In addition to Stapels, the Summit will feature five additional keynote sessions, including:

- **Owning Your Future Is Not DNA-Driven with motivational speaker, Michael Hoffman.** Success is not genetic. You'll never find 'success' in your DNA. Full of energy and storytelling, Hoffman plans to define what success actually means – and how it involves owning your choices, shifting your culture, contributing your best daily, and finding your true north in a business where change is a constant factor.
- **Inspiring Pathways to Profitability: A Producer Panel with Summit Level Dairy, Merrimart Farms, and Fair Hill Farms.** The path to profitability is different for every single dairy farm family. Hear from three dairy producers from different sized dairies who will share their own unique approach to profitability and how they have remained focused on their goals for the farm, the family, and the business.
- **World Without Cows: A Deep Dive Behind the Scenes with movie producers Michelle Michael, Brandon Whitworth and Dr. Holder Vaughn.** This year, a feature-length documentary called *World Without Cows* will have its Pennsylvania debut on the Dairy Summit stage. The documentary explores the complexity behind a seemingly simple question: Are we better off in a world without cows?
- **Controlling Your Own Destiny: A PA-Proud Business Showcase with Painterland Sisters and Taylor Chip Cookie.** With both of these independent, PA-proud businesses being included on Forbes' 30 Under 30 List, learn how these business owners and entrepreneurs are controlling their own destiny in the midst of rapid growth, navigating a competitive marketplace, expanding dairy's footprint, and staying true to their Pennsylvania roots.
- **The Road Ahead: FMMO Reform & Dairy Pricing with Sara Dorland, Ceres Risk Management.** What's next for dairy pricing? What does the road ahead like? As we head into 2026, a year likely to bring global expansion and a temporary milk surplus, staying grounded in your long-term purpose becomes even more critical.

The 2026 Dairy Summit will also feature four breakout session tracks, including an entire Discussion track for peer-to-peer roundtable discussion groups, designed for dairy producers in all types of production and industry professionals in a wide range of career paths. View a preview of each track:

- **The Discussion Track:** *Getting to the Golden Girl Era facilitated by Dr. Jim Lawhead.* How long should you keep aging cows in your herd? As you continue to move northbound with cow longevity, what does the "golden girl" era look like for your herd? And how do you get there? Join others to exchange ideas, discuss opportunities, and hear what's working to get those girls to that "golden girl" era.
- **The Fundamentals Track:** *Heifer Feeding Strategies That Make a Difference with Dr. Mac Campbell and Alyssa Dietrich.* When it comes to heifer nutrition, success begins with the end in mind. Think reverse engineering. If you want age at first calving (AFC) to be 21 or 22 months old, it's important to have an "end" weight and frame modeled into your growth system. Learn about the data that can help you discover your farm's "sweet spot" for AFC, insight on nutrient intake, and more.
- **The People Track:** *Discussing the "Undiscussabull" with Elaine Froese.* Once you deal with the "bull" in the middle of the room, it becomes easier to talk about tough issues such as farm transfer, employee management, and business partnerships. A VT study found that farm family

businesses that communicate were 21% more profitable. One could make the case that communication is a risk management tool. Learn ready-to-apply tips on taking charge and asking for what you need, how to dissect resistance, and how to really be present and listen to what others are telling you.

- **The Analytics Track:** *Drilling Into the ROI: Getting the Most Out of Your Technology* with Dr. Melissa Cantor, Alan Waybright, Walt Moore and Alan Davis. It's easy to get distracted by the volume of new technology and the sales pitches promising huge efficiency gains. This noise can obscure your real goal. The only way to find your True North is to hone in on the single, most critical metric you are trying to move on your farm. During this producer panel discussion, learn how to find the technology that leads to a return on investment (ROI) for your dairy. Hear from all perspectives, including a producer who uses robotic technology, a producer who decided robots weren't for him, and a producer who invested in cow collars to monitor health and activity.

Visit [www.padairysummit.org](http://www.padairysummit.org) to view the full program and register today. Producer discounts will automatically be applied during the registration process. Contact the Pennsylvania Dairy Summit Business Office with questions. Call 814-355-2467 or email [info@padairysummit.org](mailto:info@padairysummit.org).

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PDMP is a not-for-profit, farmer-driven organization advancing the State's dairy industry through improved productivity and economic viability with continued stewardship of our animals, environment, and community. Programs offered by PDMP are designed by dairy producers, for dairy producers. For more information on PDMP, visit their website at [pdmp.org](http://pdmp.org).

The Center for Dairy Excellence is a non-profit organization initiated by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture in 2004. Bringing together people from more than 40 different dairy organizations in Pennsylvania, the Center's mission is to enhance the profitability of the dairy industry by empowering people, creating partnerships, and increasing the availability and use of resources. Learn more at [centerfordairyexcellence.org](http://centerfordairyexcellence.org).