



For Immediate Release

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HIGH SCHOOL AGRICULTURE TEACHER RECEIVES SCHOLARSHIP, FREE COURSES AND CURRICULUM AVAILABLE

The Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow Program is Free for Teachers and Students

Harrisburg, Pa. – A Pennsylvania high school agriculture teacher was awarded a \$1,000 Educator Scholarship through the Dairy Excellence Foundation’s Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow (DLT) program to fund professional development conferences or workshops. Stephanie Balmer of Penn Manor High School in Millersville, Pennsylvania received the scholarship for the 2025-26 school year.

“Empowering the next generation of dairy producers wouldn’t be possible without the educators who are in the classroom and leading students every single day,” said Michelle Shearer, Workforce Development Manager at the Dairy Excellence Foundation. “That’s why this Educator Scholarship program is so important. It directly supports agriculture teachers who are passionate about expanding their dairy knowledge and sharing what they learn at these trainings with their students.”

Balmer, this year’s Educator Scholarship recipient, teaches in a high school agricultural program that has five majors, including General Agriculture, Agricultural Production, Animal Science, Horticulture and Agricultural Mechanics. The program serves 300 students annually, with an active FFA chapter that has approximately 150 members. Balmer follows a three-circle model of agriculture education to help equip students with practical skills, industry-relevant knowledge, and real-world experiences, as well as foster professionalism, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities that are essential for success in the workplace.

Balmer utilizes the Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow Program, specifically the Intro to Dairy Technologies course, in her agriculture mechanics course and incorporates the program’s hands-on learning opportunities, including Exploration Experiences, to help students explore potential careers in veterinary science.

“I am so thankful for this program and receiving this professional development scholarship. This will help me continue my personal commitments to furthering my education. This program has allowed me to share my love for the dairy industry with my students,” Balmer shared. “The DLT program is very user-friendly, and I have found it to be a great asset for educators who are seeking virtual opportunities and credential certifications for their students.”

The Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow (DLT) program is designed specifically to prepare high school students to pursue careers in the dairy industry. Using a three-part model, the program offers

online courses and classroom curriculum, on-farm experience opportunities, and annual scholarships for both educators and students. A total of more than 38,100 high school students have been impacted by the DLT program to date. Teachers can register for the free program this school year at www.dairyleadertomorrow.com.

“Last year we worked with close to 836 high school educators from Pennsylvania and across the United States to help prepare high school students for future careers in the dairy industry,” said Shearer. “Whether students grew up on a dairy farm or are discovering their passion for agriculture for the first time, the DLT courses are comprehensive, engaging and interactive. Our hands-on educational experiences take it a step further. These experiences allow students and teachers to step foot on a working dairy farm to make connections and explore different career options.”

The DLT curriculum includes four main courses that teachers can incorporate into their classroom instruction or assign to students to complete independently. The courses include:

- **Introduction to Dairy** – By the end of this course, students will be able to describe the economic impact of the dairy industry, know historic events that have impacted the industry, identify different types of housing facilities as well as have a basic understanding of marketing dairy products.
- **Introduction to Dairy Herd Management** – This course provides a broad overview of how to manage a dairy herd. By the end of this course, students will be able to identify important feed types for a cow’s diet, how to interpret DHIA records, and recognize diseases by symptoms and how to treat them.
- **Introduction to Dairy Business Management** – This course provides a broad overview of how to manage a dairy business. By the end of this course, students will be able to perform a SWOT analysis, understand the factors that influence a farm’s profitability, and properly write a business plan.
- **Introduction to Dairy Technologies** – This lesson provides a broad overview of the various technologies our dairy farms use today. By the end of this course, students will be able to identify and explain several types of technologies that farmers are utilizing in their day-to-day operations to enhance the care they provide to their animals.

Lesson plans and associated resources can be accessed online and downloaded at no cost once educators or students complete the DLT registration. Certificates of Achievement are awarded in Introduction to Dairy, Dairy Herd Management, Dairy Business Management, and Dairy Technologies to students who receive a minimum of 80% on all lesson quizzes and the end of course examinations.

Student scholarship opportunities and on-farm experiences, including hands-on Exploration Experience events and an annual Farm Tour, are also available throughout the school year. This year’s Exploration Experiences are scheduled for October 22 and November 20. This year’s Farm Tour will take place in Cumberland County on November 18 and give students exposure to the wide range of careers in the dairy industry.

To sign up for the Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow program this school year or share 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.

Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow is a program managed by the Dairy Excellence Foundation and designed specifically to prepare high school students to work in the dairy industry. To learn more about how you can support this scholarship fund or donate to provide DLT Exploration Experiences and Farm Tours to more students, visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/donate.

Image:

Stephanie Balmer



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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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