



CENTER FOR  
**Dairy** EXCELLENCE

**For Immediate Release**

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**DAIRY FARMS ENCOURAGED TO HOST INTERNS AND APPRENTICES ON THEIR OPERATIONS**

*Producers Who Might Be Looking for Employees Can Apply for Interns or Apprentices*

**Harrisburg, Pa.** – Dairy producers from Pennsylvania and beyond are encouraged to apply to be a host farm in the 2024 On-Farm Internship Program. The program was designed to provide 10- to 12-week on-farm internships and create opportunities for Pennsylvania students to gain practical knowledge, information, and skills on progressive dairy operations. The Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania (PDMP), Pennsylvania Dairymen’s Association, and Dairy Excellence Foundation partner each year to support this program. Host farm applications must be submitted by November 15, 2023.

For dairy producers who are looking for an employee beyond the summer months, the Center for Dairy Excellence is also seeking host farms in Pennsylvania to serve as employers for the Dairy Herd Manager Apprenticeship Program. The program is registered through the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry and requires apprentices to master various competencies over 18 months of employment on a dairy farm. A dairy herd manager requires training beyond a high school education but does not necessarily need a college degree. Dairy farms continue to express challenges in filling this important leadership role within their team, so the Center created this Apprenticeship Program to give Pennsylvania dairy producers the opportunity to develop beginner-level employees into well-qualified candidates to serve in herd management roles. Applications for employer farms are accepted on a rolling basis.

“If you’re looking for an employee who has experience in dairy production and an interest in advancing their skills, both of these programs allow you to help mentor and share your experience with a young professional,” said Michelle Shearer, Workforce Development Manager at the Center for Dairy Excellence. “Interns and apprentices benefit from gaining hands-on experience and being exposed to all aspects of your operation while many host farms benefit from getting a new, outside perspective.”

For the On-Farm Internship Program, host farms will be expected to create goals and areas of focus for the student’s 10-12 week experience. As part of these goals, interns will participate in discussion groups and work closely with their host farm to complete an in-depth research project that benefits the dairy operation.

For the Dairy Herd Manager Apprenticeship Program, employer farms must be willing to expose the apprentice to all aspects of a successful, progressive dairy operation with adequate training and

consultation to master specific competencies in these areas. Farms must also be able to pay the employee a minimum starting wage of \$11.00 per hour with a progressive wage over 18 months that ends with \$16.00 per hour.

See how other dairy producers have benefited from serving as a host farm:

- **Mentor the next generation.** “We enjoy being a host farm for interns because we feel it is important to give a student who is interested in agriculture an opportunity to get hands-on experience. We enjoy getting to know students and working with them for the summer.”  
–Neil Hertzler of Rock Hollow Dairy, LLC in Loysville, Pa.
- **Work with someone who pays attention to detail.** “We enjoyed being a host farm because everyone [on our team] not only taught someone interested in dairy, but we also learned from our intern as well. She focused on helping improve our feeding program, and we have seen great improvements to the program. She was dedicated, determined, and paid attention to even the smallest details.” –Kiersten Foster of Table Rock Farm in Castile, New York
- **Help reevaluate processes and protocols.** “When I was in college 20 years ago, I did an internship. I learned a lot through that internship program, so I decided if I could have an intern here on our farm, it would help the next generation of dairy farmers get involved and show them what we do. We try to find interns who will challenge us and ask us questions about why we do what we do. Our intern was good at that. It helped us reevaluate our processes and what we’re doing.” –Doug Harbach of Schrack Farms in Loganton, Pa.
- **Lighten the workload of other team members.** “Hosting an intern directly benefited our farm in one way by lightening the workload of other team members, giving more opportunity for time off. We also saw the benefits of giving an individual who is seeking a career in agriculture some real-world experience before entering their career.” –Josh Brubaker of Brubaker Farms in Mount Joy, Pa.
- **Gain an outside perspective.** “The on-farm internship program is a great way for us to bring someone new into our operation who can help provide a fresh perspective in areas of our farm. We can also help the interns gain valuable skills and knowledge they can use in the future.” –Jared Kurtz of Kurtland Farms in Elverson, Pa.

For more information about the expectations and requirements for farms that are accepted into either the On-Farm Internship or Dairy Herd Manager Apprenticeship program, visit

[www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/internship](http://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/internship) or

[www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/apprenticeship](http://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/apprenticeship). Contact Michelle Shearer at [mshearer@centerfordairyexcellence.org](mailto:mshearer@centerfordairyexcellence.org) or 570-768-8316 with questions.

On-Farm Internship host farm applications are due by November 15, 2023, and can be submitted online. Applications for the Apprenticeship Program are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Visit [www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/internship](http://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/internship) or [www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/apprenticeship](http://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/apprenticeship) to apply today to serve as a host or employer farm.

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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/](http://centerfordairyexcellence.org/our-foundation/).

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).

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