



For Immediate Release

Media Contact: Emily Barge, 717-346-0849; ebarge@centerfordairyexcellence.org

February 13, 2024

2024 PENNSYLVANIA DAIRY INDUSTRY AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED *Kurtz, Leslie, Reed and Springer Were Recognized at the 2024 PA Dairy Summit*

Harrisburg, Pa. – At this year’s Pennsylvania Dairy Summit, the Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania, Center for Dairy Excellence, and Pennsylvania Dairymen’s Association awarded four dairy professionals with the 2024 Pennsylvania Dairy Industry Awards. The annual awards program recognizes dairy professionals who showcase leadership, service, and excellence across the state’s dairy industry.

All applications were reviewed by an awards committee of dairy producers and industry professionals. Nominees were evaluated for their contributions to the industry and letters of support from their peers and fellow dairy producers.

“There was an excellent pool of nominees for this year’s Dairy Industry Awards. These four individuals were selected for the impact they are making not only on today’s dairy industry, but the future of our industry,” said Emily Barge, Communications and Marketing Manager at the Center, who oversees the award program. “They are dedicated, forward-thinking dairy professionals who represent our industry’s commitment to service, innovation, and excellence. We enjoyed celebrating their accomplishments last week at the Dairy Summit.”

Congratulations to the following dairy professionals who were honored at the 2024 PA Dairy Summit:

Timothy and Jared Kurtz of Kurtland Farms in Elverson, Pa., received the Pennsylvania Distinguished Dairy Producer Award. Kurtland Farms is a fourth-generation family dairy farm that is over 100 years old. Timothy Kurtz has been farming for 40 years, and his son, Jared, has been farming in partnership with him for the last 10 years. Located on a busy road in Chester County, they are always connecting with their community and contributing a favorable impression of dairy farming. Tim and Jared actively serve the Pennsylvania dairy industry through several leadership positions. Tim has served as a Land O’Lakes Region Delegate and a Board Member for American Dairy Association North East (ADANE) and the Center for Dairy Excellence. Jared is currently a Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania (PDMP) Board Member, and their farm received the Berks County Conservation District Farm of the Year Award.

The Kurtz family is progressive and driven by innovation, incorporating a robotic milking system several years ago. With multiple springs on their farm that serve as a headwater for the Conestoga River, they believe practical stewardship farming is important. To properly care for their land and the water on their farm, they are 100% no till and cover crop on the 275 acres they farm. They also installed stream bank

fencing in all pastures, routinely inject manure (drag line and tank) on over 200 acres of the closest fields, partnered with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay to plant over 350 trees in a Riparian Forest Buffer along a portion of the stream, utilize a manure solids separator to recycle manure solids as bedding, and installed a covered manure lagoon.

Tim and Jared regularly host training tours in partnership with the PA Academy for Animal Care and Control (human society police officer training and continued education). They have also hosted “Breakfast on the Farm” events for their community and participated in various “Fuel Up to Play 60” events with ADANE to promote dairy nutrition in schools.

“We believe it is our role as a highly visible dairy farm in our community to be leaders in dairy promotion, education, and agricultural stewardship and husbandry. We have many eyes on our farm every day, so it is vital that we farm in the best ways possible with our land, animals, and neighbors all in mind,” said Jared Kurtz. “Many things have changed over the years, but our family has stayed committed to the dairy and agriculture community despite the demographics changing around us.”

Amy Yeiser Leslie, Director of Industry Relations at American Dairy Association North East, received one of the Pennsylvania Dairy Service Awards. Amy Yeiser Leslie is the Director of Industry Relations for American Dairy Association North East and has been with them for nine years. Her impact and commitment to the dairy industry spans through a six-state territory, covering nearly 8,500 farms. Her responsibilities range from spokesperson training to key leader to youth development. She manages sponsorships, activities and programs with the PA Farm Show, the Calving Corner, PA Dairy Summit, Ag Progress Days, Maryland State Fair, PA Dairy Princess Program, All-American Dairy Show, and more.

Through her involvement in the dairy industry, which was sparked during her college years at The Pennsylvania State University and internship at the Center for Dairy Excellence, Amy has developed deep-rooted relationships with farmers and industry representatives. She strives to boost dairy’s reputation with consumers on their behalf. In her role, Amy works to empower dairy farmers to be confident spokespersons and also works with young dairy advocates as they begin their journey in the dairy industry. She has been involved with the Calving Corner at the PA Farm Show since its first year in January 2018 along with other consumer-facing, dairy events throughout the Commonwealth.

“The Pennsylvania dairy industry has so much to provide to our customers, and I am proud to be a connecting force between our farmers and consumers. Growing up a suburban ‘city kid,’ dairy farmers took a chance on me and never hesitated to answer all of my way too many questions. Dairy farmers care about the next generation of their animals, of their land, of our industry and of our consumers,” Leslie shared. “I see my work as a small way of paying it forward to those future dairy enthusiasts and industry members as we work together to ensure dairy’s success and relevance in the marketplace.”

Dr. Brian Reed of Agricultural Veterinary Associates received one of the Pennsylvania Dairy Service Awards. Dr. Brian Reed has been a dairy veterinarian with Agricultural Veterinary Associates, LLC since July 1987, shortly after graduating from the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine. Since that time, he has served dairy farm families with veterinary services in the practice’s core coverage area of Lancaster, Lebanon, Berks and Dauphin counties. Since becoming an owner in 1989, Dr. Reed has helped grow and manage the practice and helped recruit, manage and develop veterinarians serving the agricultural communities, particularly the dairy industry. After practicing for 10 years, Dr. Reed enrolled in the MBA Program at Lebanon Valley College, graduating with his MBA degree in 2001. Since that time, he has worked with well over 150 dairy farms on projects including renovations and expansions,

feasibility studies, strategic business planning, helping young farmers get started, and many generational farm transition projects.

Within the state of Pennsylvania, Dr. Reed has been actively serving the dairy industry throughout his career. He was part of the original Dairy Task Force, founding treasurer (2004-2011) and board member for the Center for Dairy Excellence (2004-2015), and commissioner for the Animal Health and Diagnostic Commission since 2007, serving as the vice-chair since 2014. Dr. Reed has also served on the board of directors for Ephrata National Bank and its parent company since 2013. Dr. Reed also works as a dairy farm consultant with the Center for Dairy Excellence to provide farm transition and transformation services to dairy farm families.

On the national level, Dr. Reed has represented Pennsylvania's veterinary and dairy interests while serving the American Association of Bovine Practitioners (AABP), the national organization for cattle veterinarians. He has served as Treasurer, Finance Chair and member of the Executive Committee from 2008-2013 and again from 2020 – present. He has been involved with the planning and implementation of USDA NIFA grants to teach early career veterinarians business management skills.

“I care deeply about my community/clients, their families, their animals and their success in business – however they define success,” Dr. Reed said. “What drives me every day is the opportunity to work with hardworking and dedicated farm families, being invited onto their farms and into their homes, and to help them in their businesses and in their lives. I derive great satisfaction from helping others to achieve their personal and business goals.”

Dr. Hayley Springer, Extension Veterinarian at Penn State Extension, received the Pennsylvania Dairy Innovator Award. Dr. Hayley Springer, Associate Clinical Professor Extension Veterinarian, at Penn State University provides science-based information at all levels to improve the dairy industry as well as to educate the public. Dr. Springer received her DVM from Iowa State University in 2010 and her MS in Biomedical Sciences in Physiology from Iowa State University in 2008. Her areas of expertise include Calf Health, Infectious Diseases of Livestock, Beef Quality Assurance (BQA), Antimicrobial Resistance, Pre-Harvest Food Safety and One Health. As a dairy innovator, she devotes a large portion of her time to educating beef and dairy producers across the Commonwealth.

She provides this type of producer education through presentations, publications, and other events across the industry through her role as an Extension veterinarian. Dr. Springer also completes field investigations to assist Pennsylvania veterinarians in addressing herd-level animal health issues across the state. For several years, Dr. Springer has played a key role in the Animal Care Workshops for dairy producers hosted by the Center for Dairy Excellence and partners. From educating producers on biosecurity to walking them through Antimicrobial Resistance, she has helped over 500 dairy producers better their operations. Dr. Springer also assists the Pennsylvania Beef Council in conducting BQA trainings that benefit both beef and dairy producers, and she has traveled across Pennsylvania to assist beef and dairy producers in understanding the changes in antibiotic purchases.

Dr. Springer also educates the next generation of dairy and the general public. From STEM programming at the PA Calving Corner and youth programs such as the Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow Exploration Experience at Penn State to a discussion with a physician's group about antibiotic stewardship in animal agriculture, Dr. Springer is dedicated to educating others.

“I believe the PA dairy industry brings together an incredible array of stakeholders, each with their own strengths,” Dr. Springer shared. “The future of the industry will depend on continuing to strive for excellence and having an open mind to change. My ‘why’ is to help others see the ‘why’ behind changes that may be difficult, but are needed, for the future of the dairy industry.”

The Dairy Industry Awards are offered annually to Pennsylvania residents. Qualified applicants stay in the nomination pool for three years after being submitted for consideration. Nominators can update the nomination each of the two years following their original submission. Once a candidate is honored as a winner in an award category, they or individuals representing them are not eligible to win in any other category for two subsequent years. Nominations for next year’s award program will open in the fall of 2024.

For more information about the awards program, visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/awards or call the Center at 717-346-0849.

###

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 www.centerfordairyexcellence.org.

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.

The Pennsylvania Dairymen’s Association is the oldest dairy group in Pennsylvania. The Dairymen’s Milkshake is the top-selling food item at the Food Court. The Pennsylvania Dairymen’s Association has been supporting “Fill a Glass with Hope®” with agriculture partners, Feeding PA, American Dairy Association North East, corporate partners and food banks since 2015. Over the past three years, the PA Dairymen have donated more than \$1.4 million to programs including The Calving Corner; agricultural and educational projects; initiatives and scholarships; the Fill A Glass with Hope® fresh milk campaign for neighbors in need; the Choose PA Dairy consumer education and awareness campaign; the PA Farm Bureau Mobile Ag Education Lab that travels to schools; and the PA Dairy Princess and Promotion Program. Their philanthropic efforts build a brighter future for all Pennsylvanians. For more information, visit www.padairymens.com.