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**Dairy**EXCELLENCE

**For Immediate Release**

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**2021 PENNSYLVANIA DAIRY INDUSTRY AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED**

*Behrer, Breneman, Ebert, and Raney Were Recognized at the 2021 Virtual Dairy Summit*

**Harrisburg, Pa.** – At this year’s virtual Pennsylvania Dairy Summit, the Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania, Center for Dairy Excellence, and Pennsylvania Dairymen’s Association awarded four dairy professionals with the 2021 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.

“Last year was anything but average, but the dairy industry persevered with creativity, a renewed perspective, and an unwavering focus on community. This year’s award recipients represent all of these traits, and each are making noticeable impacts on the future of dairy,” said Dave Smith, Executive Director at the Pennsylvania Dairymen’s Association. “These four individuals should be proud of their accomplishments and innovation over the last year and their exceptional leadership during such a challenging time.”

Congratulations to the following dairy professionals who were honored at the 2021 PA Dairy Summit:

**Allen and Mike Behrer of Willow Behrer Farms LLC in Huntingdon County received the Pennsylvania Dairy Innovator Award.** Allen and Mike are being recognized for their innovation in employee management and training on Willow Behrer Farms LLC, a fifth-generation dairy farm in Spruce Creek, Pennsylvania. In addition to their creative approach to employee training, Allen and Mike have also entered into a unique partnership with a neighboring herd to maximize efficiency and resource use for both operations.

With employee training being a challenge on many of today’s dairy farms, Allen and Mike have created and implemented innovative training videos and protocols to help their employees learn about animal handling best practices, understanding of daily farm tasks, safety protocols, and more. This idea was spurred by their partnership with the neighboring farm to unite the workforce and create consistency in procedures. Their training videos are offered in both English and Spanish, and have sparked interest from other Pennsylvania dairy farms that are interested in implementing similar tools on their operations.

Their innovative employee management tools have also led to renewed pride in a job well done, improved communication, and enhanced workforce performance.

**The Breneman family of Franklin View Farms in Lancaster County received the Pennsylvania Distinguished Dairy Producer Award.** A second-generation dairy farm owned by Earl, Jim and Nelson Breneman, the family is being recognized for their proactive approach to finding opportunities to contract milk and feed ingredients as well as manage health, production, and reproduction. Started in 1954 with 37 acres and 8 cows, Franklin View Farms is now home to 750+ cows and 550 acres.

This growth allows multiple family members, representing different generations, to work together on the dairy operation. Each brother has clearly outlined responsibilities, and the younger generation is also involved in raising calves and heifers and building equity for the future of the family's dairy business. The Breneman family remains creative and focused on building a strong succession plan for the next generation.

**Rick Ebert, President of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, received one of the Pennsylvania Dairy Service Awards.** Rick is being recognized for his exceptional service and dedication to the Pennsylvania dairy industry. As the President of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau (PFB) since November 2014, Rick has given years of service at the local and state level. Prior to his role as President, Rick led the Westmoreland County Farm Bureau and served as vice chair of PFB's Young Farmer and Rancher Committee (now Young Ag Professionals). Ebert also led PFB's Dairy State Committee and presented testimony before the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board on behalf of dairy farmers across the state.

Currently, Rick chairs the Pennsylvania Friends of Agriculture Foundation, a charitable organization supported by Pennsylvania Farm Bureau. He was elected to the American Farm Bureau Federation Board of Directors in January 2016 to represent the Northeast Region and was named a member of the Executive Committee in January 2020. He was appointed to serve on the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture in March 2020. Ebert served on AFBF's Trade Advisory Committee from 2016 to 2020. In addition, he is a member of the Board Council at Nationwide, a Fortune 100 insurance and financial services company.

In addition to serving as guest speaker at a wide range of industry events, Rick is an active leader in his community and has received several awards and recognition. Rick operates Ebert Family Farms in Blairsville, Westmoreland County. The farm's 80 registered Holsteins are milked twice daily and the milk is shipped to Pittsburgh-based Turner Dairies.

**Ken Raney, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Holstein Association, received one of the Pennsylvania Dairy Service Awards.** Ken is being honored for his service and involvement in a wide range of dairy organizations across the state. As Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Holstein Association, he has served the organization for 35 ½ years. The organization's active membership at the grassroots level enables them to offer educational and social activities, sales opportunities, international marketing and youth programs.

Ken works with the Association's membership, both at the local level and with the state's standing committees. He helps manage yearly conventions and local meetings and has an active role in the Junior program, which has grown in scope and participation over the years. Ken also manages the Association's

finances and the export/quarantine/farm business. He is always willing to give people and ideas a chance to succeed.

Ken has also had opportunities to work with the All-American Dairy Show, University of Pennsylvania Veterinary School Board of Overseers, Pennsylvania Dairyman's Association and Penn State Ag Council.

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.

For more information about the awards program, visit [www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/awards](http://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/awards) or call the Center at 717-346-0849.

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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).

The Pennsylvania Dairyman's Association is a non-profit organization with a focus on supporting Pennsylvania dairy farms, agricultural scholarships, youth programs and educational programs across the state. Learn more at [padairymens.com](http://padairymens.com).

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).