



**For Immediate Release**

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**HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS INVITED TO LEARN ABOUT DAIRY TECHNOLOGY AT EXPLORATION EXPERIENCE ON APRIL 27**

*Students Will Explore Automation and Robotics on Oakleigh Dairy Farm*

**Harrisburg, Pa.** – High school students in eleventh and twelfth grades who are interested in technology and dairy farming are invited to this year’s Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow Exploration Experience. The day-long event will be held on Thursday, April 27, 2023 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Oakleigh Dairy Farm in Mercersburg, Franklin County. Hosted by Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow in partnership with Lely and Fisher & Thompson, students will learn about various technologies and advancements in the dairy industry and see how Oakleigh Dairy Farm uses robotics on a daily basis.

“The technology available in the dairy industry is evolving every day, and there are a variety of new career options that might interest students who are interested in technology, automation and robotics,” said Michelle Shearer, Workforce Development Manager at the Dairy Excellence Foundation. “This event is a great way for high schoolers to explore some of these career possibilities, see this type of technology in action, and learn directly from dairy professionals.”

During the day-long event, high school students will get a firsthand look at the automation on Oakleigh Dairy Farm and learn from professionals who specialize in automation and robotics in milk, feed, and manure management. They will learn about robotic milking, automated feeding, and automated barn systems. Students must be accompanied by an adult.

“I have brought students to the Exploration Experiences for the past two years. By talking to people in the industry, they can see real-world applications of the careers we talk about in class. Maybe they will find a different career they weren’t even aware of,” said Raylene Russell, a high school teacher and FFA advisor at Juniata Valley High School.

To participate in the Exploration Experience event, students are required to submit a brief application by April 20. Only 20 students will be accepted to participate in the event on a first-come, first-served basis. Students who are interested in applying for the event must meet the following expectations:

- Must be in grades 11 or 12
- Should have an interest in dairy and technology
- Must have a chaperone/advisor travel with them

The Exploration Experience event is free, and lunch and snacks are provided. Participants must provide their own transportation.

“I think the Exploration Experiences are such a great program to explore careers and find different ways to include your passion into a job or whatever you’re going to do in the future,” said Mackenzie Coffman, a high school senior at Juniata Valley High School and previous Exploration Experience participant.

To apply for this year’s event and learn more about the experience, visit [www.dairyleadersoftomorrow.com/exploration-experience](http://www.dairyleadersoftomorrow.com/exploration-experience). If you have questions, contact Michelle Shearer at [mshearer@centerfordairyexcellence.org](mailto:mshearer@centerfordairyexcellence.org) or by phone at 570-768-8316.

The Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow Exploration Experiences began in 2017 and offer high school students the opportunity to utilize formal education skills in hands-on, experimental learning experiences. These experiences give students the opportunity to apply skills they learned in the classroom in real-world settings, engage in STEM learning through agricultural-focused areas, explore potential career opportunities, and cultivate a network of industry professionals.

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. A three-part model program, Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow offers classroom instruction, on-farm experiences, and scholarship opportunities. Learn more at [www.dairyleadersoftomorrow.com](http://www.dairyleadersoftomorrow.com).

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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/).

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](http://www.dairyleadersoftomorrow.com).

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