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June 20, 2023

FIVE STUDENTS BEGIN SUMMER ON-FARM EXPERIENCES ON PROGRESSIVE DAIRY FARMS

The Internships and Externships Provide Students With On-Farm Learning Experiences

Harrisburg, Pa. – Five college students who are pursuing careers in dairy production recently began on-farm summer learning experiences on progressive dairy farms in Pennsylvania and beyond. The Dairy Excellence Foundation, the Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania Dairymen’s Association created the program more than 10 years ago to provide hands-on, farm-based learning experiences to the next generation of dairy managers in Pennsylvania through internships and externships.

“These on-farm learning experiences allow college students to be exposed to all aspects of dairy production. In many cases, these internships and externships help enrich a student’s dairy experience, solidify their passion for the industry, and shape their specific career goals,” said Michelle Shearer, Workforce Development Manager at the Center for Dairy Excellence. “Through research projects and mentorship with their host farms, these students are expanding on their classroom knowledge and building industry connections that will last a lifetime.”

For 10 to 12 weeks throughout the summer, on-farm interns gain hands-on experience and participate in virtual discussions with one another to network and share their experiences. The internships are designed to give students a full understanding of what it takes to run a successful dairy operation and provides dairy farms with the chance to mentor the next generation of dairy.

“Our employee [who helps manage our herd] did an internship when she was in college, and that’s what brought her back to the farm from another job. We thought this would be a good way to give back to help other students understand farm practices. It has definitely been a win-win for our intern and our farm,” said Glenn Kline of Y-Run Farms, LLC, one of the host farms in this year’s program.

During the internship, students will also conduct a research project that connects to their career interests and benefits their dairy farm’s operation. After researching and analyzing various topics, they will present their findings in August at the conclusion of the program.

Through on-farm externships, students who do not have in-depth experience with dairy production have the opportunity to learn from dairy producers on various Pennsylvania operations. By spending time at multiple farms, externs gain exposure to a variety of dairy management structures, types of herds, and business models.

Congratulations to the following interns and externs who are participating in the program this summer:

- **Mikayla DeReinzi – Interning at Noblehurst Farms in Linwood, New York**
“My purpose for this on-farm internship is to learn to be a dairy farmer so I can better understand clients when I am eventually a large animal veterinarian.”
- **Cameron Goodyear – Interning at Eleven Farm in Elliottsburg, Pennsylvania**
“I chose to do this internship because I want to expand my knowledge about the dairy industry. This hands-on opportunity will give me the chance to round out my experience. Being an intern on a robotic dairy has come with a new learning curve for me, but I'm loving the concept and convenience of them. I'm blessed to have this experience, and I'm excited to see what the next few weeks have in store.”
- **Ryan Parker – Interning at Tauer Dairy in Hanska, Minnesota**
“I decided to participate in the on-farm internship to further my knowledge in the dairy industry. I've been involved in the dairy industry for 5+ years, however my knowledge is limited compared to how much there is to know. My host farm is a progressive dairy and much larger than I am used to. I've only been here for a short amount of time, but I've learned so much already. I'm thrilled to be a part of this experience that will play an important role in my future.”
- **Amanda Peirson – Extern at various Pennsylvania dairy farms**
“I accepted this externship because it is a great way for me to get dairy experience. Coming from a non-dairy background, this experience has allowed me to get hands-on with every aspect of the dairy industry.”
- **Rebecca VanBlargan – Interning at Y-Run Farms, LLC in Troy, Pennsylvania**
“I wanted to do the on-farm internship in order to learn as much as I can about dairy. The hands-on experience really drew me to this internship, and I am excited to learn as much as possible on a bigger dairy farm than I have been on before.”

Students who are accepted into the program must attend a Pennsylvania university, be a Pennsylvania resident attending an out-of-state school, or be a recently graduated Pennsylvania resident with an interest in dairy production. Host farms may be located within or outside of Pennsylvania, but producers must agree to provide the intern with exposure to all aspects of a successful, progressive dairy operation.

To learn more, visit centerfordairyexcellence.org/internship or contact Michelle Shearer at 717-346-0849 or by email at mshearer@centerfordairyexcellence.org.

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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/.

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