



For Immediate Release

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TWELVE STUDENTS RECEIVE ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIPS TO SUPPORT FUTURE CAREERS IN DAIRY
PA College Students Were Awarded Student Leader Scholarships

Harrisburg, Pa. – Twelve undergraduate students were recently recognized with Student Leader Scholarships, an award intended to encourage and empower the next generation of dairy producers. Supported by the Dairy Excellence Foundation of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Dairymen’s Association and Tröegs Independent Brewing for the 2023-24 academic year, each scholarship recipient will receive \$3,000 to support their undergraduate studies in academic programs that support the dairy industry.

“This is a competitive scholarship program, and these 12 scholarship recipients are highly deserving due to their strong foundation in the dairy industry and their commitment to future careers that help advance Pennsylvania dairy,” said Michelle Shearer, Workforce Development Manager at the Dairy Excellence Foundation. “From interests in agricultural engineering and food science to dairy herd management and nutrition, the passion these students have for their education and agriculture as a whole is inspiring.”

The Student Leader Scholarship program was designed to provide recognition, encouragement, and financial assistance to outstanding students enrolled in dairy-related academic programs—including dairy and animal science, agricultural marketing and business, nutrition, food science, agriculture and extension education, agricultural communications, agricultural engineering, or related fields.

“We continue to support this scholarship program each year because we are committed to helping college students who are passionate about the dairy industry have the financial support they need to find meaningful careers,” said Dave Smith, Executive Director at the Pennsylvania Dairymen’s Association. “It’s important to keep the Pennsylvania dairy industry vibrant and growing, and investing in our next generation and these 12 dairy leaders is a great way to do that.”

To qualify for the scholarship, students must be enrolled in a dairy-related undergraduate major and demonstrate a commitment to pursuing a future career in dairy. One scholarship is specifically designated for an incoming freshman.

“We use a lot of Pennsylvania grain, honey and produce in our beers and at our Snack Bar here at Tröegs,” says founding brother Chris Trogner. “And our cheese collaborations with Caputo Brothers Creamery use 100% Pennsylvania cow’s milk, so our connection to Pennsylvania agriculture already runs deep. These scholarships are a great way to amplify that connection and support the future of the industry.”

Congratulations to this year’s scholarship recipients:

Kelly Bliss is a freshman studying biological engineering at Cornell University. Kelly is the daughter of Timothy and Jacquita Bliss of Huntingdon, Huntingdon County. Growing up on her family's farm, she currently serves as the calf manager and is actively involved in the Huntingdon County Fair where she shows Jersey heifers and Cheviot yearlings. Through her involvement in FFA and the PA Dairy Princess and Promotion Program, Kelly has found her passion for public speaking and advocating for agriculture. She hopes to pursue a career as an Extension agent and continue working with producers and educating the community.

"Throughout my life, I have been amazed by the dedication and perseverance of the Pennsylvania dairy industry. The Student Leader Scholarship will support my effort to dedicate my life to the future of the dairy and agriculture industry as a biological engineer. I am extremely grateful for the Dairy Excellence Foundation, the Pennsylvania Dairywomen's Association, and Tröegs Independent Brewing for investing in students like me." –Kelly Bliss

Lynneah Brady is a senior studying animal science at The Pennsylvania State University. Lynneah is the daughter of Brian and Joanna Brady of Big Cove Tannery, Fulton County. With approximately five years of active experience working on her neighbors' dairy farms, she has learned how to feed calves, milk cows, help with fieldwork, give vaccinations, and help with herd checks and breeding. Lynneah's goal is to become a herd manager and oversee heifer and herd management for a dairy farm. She also hopes to stay active in her community and local 4-H Dairy Clubs to help show consumers the faces behind their dairy products.

"I am so grateful and honored to receive this generous award on behalf of the Dairy Excellence Foundation, Pennsylvania Dairywomen's Association, and Tröegs Independent Brewing. This scholarship allows me to continue gaining valuable knowledge and experience that will equip me with the proper skillset for my future in the dairy industry. I hope to use this knowledge as a way to give back to my community. This scholarship is an important step in allowing me to do that. Thank you to all who made this possible." –Lynneah Brady

Andrea Clark is a freshman studying veterinary technology at the Lancaster County Career and Technology Center. Andrea is the daughter of Mike and Beth Clark of Newport, Perry County. She currently works at a dairy farm and helps manage cow care, including maintaining clean bedding, providing food and water, and monitoring health conditions such as heat cycles, pregnancy, and more. Andrea's passion for animals and desire to pursue a career in the veterinary profession was influenced by her experience working on the farm. She hopes to find a veterinary career that allows her to care for animals and other people, while driving public awareness for agriculture.

"I am very honored and grateful to be a recipient of the Student Leader Scholarship. Reflecting on my journey and involvement in the dairy industry, I saw the support and encouragement of friends and family and how God has guided and continued to provide for me. I am excited to continue this journey and to advocate, support, and encourage others as I have been." –Andrea Clark

Katerina Coffman is a junior studying animal science at The Pennsylvania State University. Katerina is the daughter of TJ and Elaine Coffman of Petersburg, Huntingdon County. She lived on and worked on three different dairy farms throughout her childhood and continues to gain exposure to other dairy management styles by working at the Penn State Dairy and completing an on-farm internship at Brubaker Farms last summer. The internship helped Katerina expand her herd management skills, learn about reproductive anatomy, and gain experience breeding cattle. This past semester, Katerina served as a research fellow in the House Republican Agricultural and Rural Affairs committee. She hopes to find a career in the dairy industry as an Extension agent or agricultural attorney after graduation.

“The Dairy Excellence Foundation has played an integral role in building my professional portfolio through internship opportunities as well as financing my education. By receiving the Student Leader Scholarship, I am grateful to divert my energy from worrying about paying for school to focusing on my academics. Thank you to the supporters and donors for helping launch me into the future of dairy.” – Katerina Coffman

Alex Empet is a freshman studying dairy production and management at SUNY Cobleskill. Alex is the son of Rick and Dana Empet of Kingsley, Susquehanna County. Growing up on his family’s dairy farm, he is the sixth generation of his family to farm and has experience with all aspects of dairy production – from daily calf and heifer care to milking, feeding and cropping. Alex helped his family with the decision-making process for installing an SCR herd monitoring system and now uses the technology to help manage their heifer breeding program. He is actively involved in showing dairy cows in 4-H and at the Premier Junior Holstein Show. Alex hopes to find a future career working in the dairy industry at the farm level.

“As a sixth-generation dairy farmer, it is an honor to receive funds from these organizations. Thanks to your generosity, I can continue my education and family’s involvement in dairy farming. I look forward to being a dairy advocate as I prepare for a future career in the dairy industry.” –Alex Empet

Darcy Heltzel is a freshman studying food science at Iowa State University. Darcy is the daughter of Andrew and Jennifer Heltzel of Martinsburg, Blair County. Growing up on her family’s fourth-generation dairy farm, Darcy is responsible for core animal care responsibilities and co-owns a small herd of meat and dairy goats. She has been active in FFA and currently serves as the Pennsylvania Alternate Dairy Princess. Darcy hopes to find a career as a food scientist to use her passion and understanding of the dairy industry to develop innovative products and advocate for dairy.

“Being awarded this scholarship is a great reminder to me of the generosity of the dairy community. I have grown up in the dairy industry all my life, and it has given me so much. I plan to use this scholarship to help secure a career in food science so I can give back to the industry that is my passion.” –Darcy Heltzel

Madelynn Hoffman is a sophomore studying animal science at Cornell University. Madelynn is the daughter of Curt and Psuche Hoffman of Manheim, Lancaster County. With over 15 years of experience working on her family’s dairy farm, Madelynn helps administer medications and vaccinations, makes breeding decisions, helps manage their robotic milking program and more. She currently interns in a research lab and studies transition cow management. Madelynn is passionate about providing veterinary care to dairy cows and hopes to work as a veterinarian or specialize in reproduction after graduation.

“I want to express my gratitude to the scholarship committee for selecting me for this scholarship. Being awarded this scholarship allows me to pursue an education in agriculture and follow my passions, which would not be possible without their support.” –Madelynn Hoffman

Kendal Jenkins is a junior studying animal science at The Pennsylvania State University. Kendal is the daughter of James and Tracy Jenkins of Columbia Crossroads, Bradford County. She has 10 years of experience working on her family’s 60-cow dairy farm and also completed an on-farm internship on a 1,200-cow dairy operation. Kendal is interested in dairy research and serves as the undergraduate president of ADSA while also beginning an honors thesis on dairy cattle fertility. After graduation, Kendal hopes to contribute to the dairy industry through a career as a dairy herd manager or agricultural lender.

“I am extremely grateful to have received this scholarship. I am passionate about the dairy and agricultural industry, and this scholarship will allow me to continue down this path. I hope that it will allow me to continue to thrive in the dairy community and in my academics.” –Kendal Jenkins

Katheryn Longenecker is a sophomore studying animal science at The Pennsylvania State University. Katheryn is the daughter of Doug and Yvette Longenecker of Williamsburg, Blair County. She has 10 years of experience working on her family’s 3,000-cow dairy farm and is heavily involved in calf care, herd management and the milking parlor. Knowing that proper nutrition can advance and maximize production, and valuing the advice she has received from industry professionals over the years, Katheryn hopes to assist dairy producers after graduation by working as a nutritionist.

“I am honored and grateful to receive this scholarship and can’t wait to see the doors it opens for me. As someone who has grown up in the dairy industry, I’m excited to use this scholarship to pursue my passion for animal agriculture and make a positive impact.” –Katheryn Longenecker

Vannika Rice is a senior studying animal science at Cornell University. Nika is the daughter of Dave and Terella Rice of Williamsburg, Blair County. Growing up on her family’s dairy farm, she was part of her family’s transition from a conventional farm to a grazing, seasonal farm with a creamery. Nika has vast experience feeding calves, managing pastures, treating cows, delivering calves, selling their products at farmers’ markets and more. She also served as the Pennsylvania Alternate Dairy Princess and is passionate about communicating the importance of agriculture. Her dream is to help manage her family’s pastures for the benefit of the environment and their animals while creating on-farm experiences for people all over the world.

“I am inspired to finish off my senior year with the hard work and dedication farmers show every day. I am excited to enter the industry that has come together to support me.” –Nika Rice

Charles Sebright is a junior studying agricultural engineering at Purdue University. Charles is the son of Robby and Jayne Sebright of East Berlin, Adams County. He has 12 years of experience working on his family’s dairy farm where he helps manage crop input purchases and oversees precision agriculture management practices and daily animal feeding operations. Charles gained experience as a process engineer through an internship at Turner Dairy Farms’ processing plant. He also recently obtained a patent for a novel fire-resistant soy-based drywall, utilizing waste generated from the animal food industry. Charles hopes to find a career that helps dairy producers become more efficient and sustainable through engineering innovation.

“This scholarship eases my financial burdens and allows me to focus on finding where I can have the greatest impact on the agricultural industry. Thanks to the generosity of the Dairy Excellence Foundation and all of its donors, I will be able to achieve my goals faster than ever.” –Charles Sebright

Katelyn Taylor is a senior studying agricultural science at The Pennsylvania State University. Katelyn is the daughter of Brett and Laura Taylor of Allenwood, Union County. She has been actively involved on her family’s farm for over 15 years and has a diverse range of experience, including helping to manage three broiler chicken barns, caring for their dairy calf and heifers for show, and assisting with their cow-calf Angus operation. She is passionate about finding a career serving the dairy industry as a financial advisor or sales and marketing professional to help farmers embrace new innovations while maintaining sustainable practices.

“This scholarship is a representation of how the dairy industry is supporting the next generation of dairy enthusiasts. Receiving this scholarship shows how passionate our mentors in the industry are to see us

succeed. I'm very grateful for all the opportunities the Foundation and its partners have provided for me during my college career.” –Katelyn Taylor

Visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/scholarships to learn more about the Student Leader Scholarship program and how to support the scholarship fund. Contact Michelle Shearer at mshearer@centerfordairyexcellence.org or 570-768-8316 with questions.

Images:

[Photos available for download here.](#)

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About the Dairy Excellence Foundation

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/.

About the PA Dairymen's Association

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.

About Tröegs Independent Brewing

Founded in Pennsylvania in 1997 by brothers John and Chris Troegner, Tröegs Independent Brewing is driven by a sense of adventure and curiosity. From the beginning, the brewery has been built by family, friends and kindred spirits who share a love of great beer.

Tröegs is widely known for award-winning beers like Perpetual IPA, Troegenator, Nugget Nectar and Mad Elf, as well as its experimental Scratch Series. Tröegs started working in earnest with local ingredients back in 2002 with the debut of holiday favorite Mad Elf. Today, the brewery buys about 25,000 pounds of local honey and 250,000 pounds of Pennsylvania-grown barley every year. Tröegs also works with a local creamery to create beer cheeses made with 100% Pennsylvania cow's milk.

“We’re drawn to people with a sense of adventure,” says co-founder John Trogner. “And we think they’re drawn to Tröegs.”

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www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/our-foundation/