



For Immediate Release

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[Photos available for download here.](#)

SIXTEEN STUDENTS RECEIVE ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIPS TO SUPPORT FUTURE CAREERS IN DAIRY

PA College Students Were Awarded Student Leader Scholarships

Harrisburg, Pa. – Sixteen 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 and the Pennsylvania Dairymen’s Association for the 2026-27 academic year, each scholarship recipient received \$3,000 to support their undergraduate studies in academic programs that support the dairy industry.

“These 16 scholarship recipients are highly deserving for this competitive scholarship. They each have a strong foundation in the dairy industry and a commitment to expanding on that to find future careers that help advance Pennsylvania dairy,” said Michelle Shearer, Workforce Development Manager at the Dairy Excellence Foundation. “From interests in animal science and dairy genetics to agriculture education and nutrition, we’re continually inspired by the passion the next generation has for their education and the future of dairy farming.”

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 David 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 16 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.

Congratulations to this year’s scholarship recipients:

Jillian Anderson is a sophomore studying ag and extension education at The Pennsylvania State University. Jillian is the daughter of Donald and Angela Anderson of Centre Hall, Centre County. She has extensive, on-farm experience working at her family’s non-dairy operation from a young

age. She is responsible for raising and caring for dairy calves and heifers, including feeding, monitoring health, administering basic treatments, and preparing animals for shows. Jillian also has experience as an associate photographer and has a communications/social media internship at Penn State's Center for Professional Personnel Development – Teach Ag! program. Looking ahead, she hopes to stay involved in the PA dairy industry as an agricultural educator and FFA advisor.

“Receiving the 2026 Student Leader Scholarship is an incredible honor and an affirmation of my passion for the dairy industry. As I pursue a career in agricultural education, this scholarship encourages me to continue developing as a leader and advocate who can inspire future generations to understand and support the dairy industry. I am grateful for this investment that will allow me to further my education and continue preparing for a future in teaching and advocating for agriculture. My continued thanks to the Dairy Excellence Foundation and the Pennsylvania Dairymen's Association for their impact on young dairy enthusiasts.” –Jillian Anderson

Nicole Arrowsmith is a senior studying agribusiness management at The Pennsylvania University. Nicole is the daughter of Thomas and Amanda Arrowsmith of Peach Bottom, Lancaster County. She grew up on her family's dairy operation, Hillacres Pride/Hillacres Jerseys, and has 13 years of active, on-farm experience with milking cows, feeding calves, vaccinating the herd, and making breeding decisions. Nicole is passionate about dairy processing and enjoys working directly with consumers as her family processes their milk to make cheese and gelato. After graduation, she hopes to improve her farm's show program and spread their genetics nationwide through more IVF embryo and live calf sales.

“I am extremely thankful to be a recipient of this scholarship as it assists me in continuing my education. It also allows me to spend more time dedicated to clubs and creating the connections that college provides. Congratulations to all the recipients!” –Nicole Arrowsmith

Kelly Bliss is a senior studying biological engineering at Cornell University. Kelly is the daughter of Timothy and Jacquita Bliss of Huntingdon County. She grew up on her family's small farm, Bliss Acres, which included about 40 Jersey dairy cattle, 40 Angus beef cattle, and a flock of 20 Cheviot breeding sheep. Kelly currently works as a PRO-DAIRY Agricultural Engineering Intern where she conducts lab experiments of acidification additives in manure solids and draws project maps of greenhouse gas emission testing locations in research barns. After graduation, she hopes to return to Pennsylvania as an agricultural engineer and work with farmers to design structures and practices that improve economic efficiency and sustainability.

“This scholarship is a reminder of the impact the Pennsylvania dairy industry has made on me and its continued investment in my future. The award will directly support my education to become an Agricultural Engineer, a role where I look forward to working directly with farmers to innovate and improve their operations. I am sincerely grateful for the generosity and continued support of the Dairy Excellence Foundation and the Pennsylvania Dairymen's Association.” –Kelly Bliss

Chloe Bomgardner is a sophomore dual majoring in agribusiness / pre-law and animal science at the Oklahoma State University. Chloe is the daughter of Corwin and Tara Bomgardner of Jonestown, Lebanon County. Growing up near her grandparents' dairy farm, Chloe became passionate about the dairy industry at a young age and went on to work part-time at three different

PA dairy farms along with a local veterinary hospital. She has experience milking, feeding, treating cows, giving breeding shots, and more. She has gained diverse work experience during her college career, including working at the Willard Sparks Beef Research Center and the Payne County Courthouse where she maintains records of all mediations, builds case files, and assigns judges/mediators to cases. Chloe's goal is to eventually work within agricultural policy in Pennsylvania, after heading to law school post-graduation.

"Being awarded the Student Leader Scholarship is an incredible honor that recognizes my passion for the dairy industry and my commitment to its future. Through my studies in Animal Science–Pre Law and Agribusiness, I am working toward a career in the legislative branch where I can help strengthen the dairy industry and provide practical solutions for farmers and agriculturists throughout our state and country. I am thankful for this scholarship as it truly encourages me to continue pursuing opportunities to serve dairy producers and ensure the long-term success of American agriculture." –Chloe Bomgardner

Abigale Bricker is a senior studying ag and extension education at The Pennsylvania University. Abigale is the daughter of Doug and Eileen Bricker of Chambersburg, Franklin County. Growing up, she helped manage various tasks on her family's 80-cow dairy farm, including feeding calves, milking and feeding cows, bedding pens, fixing equipment, and assisting with fieldwork. Abigale was also involved in 4-H for 10 years. In the future, she hopes to promote the dairy industry through her career as a high school agricultural educator and teach animal science courses that allow students to discover why dairy is an important part of the diet.

"I am honored to have been selected as a recipient of the Student Leader Scholarship! It has been a goal of mine to receive this scholarship, and seeing my efforts pay off has been very rewarding. Knowing that my academic and professional development is supported by the Dairy Excellence Foundation and the PA Dairymen's Association, I will continue to make the most of the opportunities offered by Penn State and hope to represent the dairy industry well throughout my career." –Abigale Bricker

Sophie Griswold is a junior studying animal science at Cornell University. She is the daughter of Ken Griswold and Elizabeth Mansfield-Griswold of Chadds Ford, Delaware County. Sophie has interned and worked on various dairy farms in Pennsylvania and beyond, caring for calves, helping with herd management responsibilities and more. She currently works as the student research/lab assistant at Cornell University and collects, preps and analyzes samples for a transition dairy cow nutrition study. Living in a Philadelphia suburb, she has seen the divide between farmers and the public for most of her life and she has been active in Pennsylvania 4-H and the PA Junior Holstein Association. In the future, Sophie hopes to find an on-farm role focused on dairy sustainability, nutrition, and herd health.

"I am extremely honored to be awarded this scholarship. The Pennsylvania dairy industry has shaped my passion for dairy cattle and my future career in the industry. I will always be thankful for my home state and all of the people, places, and opportunities that have paved my journey thus far." –Sophie Griswold

Katelyn Heckman is a sophomore studying animal science at The Pennsylvania State University. She is the daughter of Chris and Tracie Heckman of Kutztown, Berks County. Katelyn currently

works on her grandparents' dairy farm in Hamburg, PA where she helps to milk, make breeding decisions, and diagnose and treat sick cows and calves. She helps manage her family's activity monitoring system and also works with other dairy farmers through her work for DairyOne. After college, Katelyn plans on attending veterinary school to study large animal medicine, specializing in dairy cattle.

"I am extremely grateful to have received this scholarship. Receiving this scholarship not only helps my education, but it also is incredible to be able to be recognized for my accomplishments and time in the dairy industry." –Katelyn Heckman

Carter Hissong is a freshman studying agricultural science at The Pennsylvania University. He is the son of Rodney and Amy Hissong of Mercersburg, Franklin County. Carter grew up on his family dairy farm, Mercer Vu Farms Inc, with two locations, 70 employees, 4,000 cows, 3,000 head of youngstock, and 5,000 acres between the two locations. He has been exposed to many aspects of the dairy, recently rebuilding a corn planter, taking part in a heifer weighing project, and helping chop corn silage, alfalfa, and triticale. After graduation, he hopes to return to his family farm and continue to grow the farm and contribute more high-quality dairy products.

"This scholarship contributes to my opportunity of furthering my education in agriculture. Thank you to the Dairy Excellence Foundation and PA Dairymen's Association for supporting me in continuing my education with the goal of returning home to continue my family's dairy operation." –Carter Hissong

Sara Kennedy is a senior studying animal science and nutritional sciences at The Pennsylvania State University. She is the daughter of Jon and Amanda Kennedy of Columbia Cross Roads, Bradford County. Sara manages the daily care of cattle leading up to local, state, and national shows at Ken-Am Holsteins. She also served as a nutrition intern for Penn State Football Performance, an intern at the Center for Dairy Excellence, and is currently an animal science teaching assistant. In the future, Sara hopes to stay involved in the Pennsylvania dairy industry through promotion and advocacy. After recognizing how closely dairy production and the nutritional value of dairy products are connected, she wants to use her career to help the public understand these two important aspects.

"I am incredibly grateful for this scholarship. Not only does it help me continue my education, but it also supports my goal of serving Pennsylvania dairy farmers throughout my career. My education is essential in helping me communicate the nutritional value of dairy products to consumers and advocate for the hardworking farmers who produce them." –Sara Kennedy

Hannah King is a junior studying animal science at The Pennsylvania State University. She is the daughter of Brent and Rachel King of Belleville, Mifflin County. Hannah grew up working back and forth on her grandparents' dairy farm and her parents' poultry and beef farm. She has gained a wide range of experience working on various dairy farms, including interning on a 1,200 cow dairy farm in New York and working as an assistant herdsman at Kish-View Dairy in Pennsylvania. She has been responsible for treating sick cows, breeding, culturing milk samples, herd management, and more. After graduation, Hannah hopes to pursue a career in dairy consulting, specifically in genetics.

"I'm so honored to receive this scholarship from such inspirational organizations that help to make sure the Pennsylvania dairy industry thrives. I plan to use this scholarship money to fund my education, go on to my career, and give back to the dairy industry that's given me so much."

–Hannah King

Anna Longenecker is a sophomore studying agribusiness management at The Pennsylvania State University. She is the daughter of Douglas and Yvette Longenecker of Williamsburg, Blair County. Anna gained experience from a young age on her family's dairy farm, feeding calves and milking cows. As she got older, she shifted to working in the farm's financial office, and at college, she works at the Penn State Butcher Block where she cuts meat, prepares products and assists customers. She hopes to return to her family's business after graduation and manage the financial and business aspects of the dairy.

"I am incredibly thankful to be a recipient of the Student Leader Scholarship. As someone who is passionate about the future of the dairy industry, this scholarship means more than financial support. It is an encouragement to continue growing as a leader and giving back to the industry that has given so much to me. I sincerely appreciate this investment in my education and future."

–Anna Longenecker

Makenna Mase is a freshman studying animal science and agribusiness at The Pennsylvania State University. She is the daughter of Garrett and Maggie Mase of Cochran, Crawford County. Makenna has been active on her family's dairy farm, feeding and milking cows, and also works as a milker on a Pennsylvania dairy farm. She served as youth ambassador for the National Brown Swiss Association from 2025-2026, managing youth activities, writing articles and more. Throughout her college career, she plans to take full advantage of internships, dairy judging, and other learning opportunities to explore multiple parts of the dairy industry while building meaningful connections.

"It is such an honor to receive this specific scholarship; not just because of the respected board of reviewers, but the accomplished group of student peers I have the opportunity to share it with."

–Makenna Mase

Haylee Mullen is a freshman studying animal science at The Pennsylvania State University. She is the daughter of Nathan and Nicole Mullen of Lebanon County. Haylee has worked on her family's dairy farm for the past five years, milking cows, cleaning calf pens, giving vaccinations and more. She also works at a neighboring dairy farm and plans to be an advocate for PA dairy farmers through her county fair, royalty programs, school clubs, or sports teams during her college career. Haylee's future career interests include managing feed rations or caring for animals medically.

"Receiving this scholarship helps to ease the financial burden of pursuing my college education. I am grateful for the opportunity to continue developing the skills and experience needed to serve the agricultural community and contribute to an industry that is so important to me." –Haylee Mullen

Joleigh Nailor is a sophomore studying animal science at The Pennsylvania State University. She is the daughter of Jason and Sherisa Nailor of Mechanicsburg, Cumberland County. Joleigh has grown up on her family's dairy farm where they milk about 80 Holstein and Milking Shorthorn cattle, have about 150 replacement heifers and calves, and farm about 300 acres. She has developed the farm's calf protocols, has helped develop a show program for some of their Milking Shorthorn

heifers, breeds cows, and treats basic illnesses. With a passion for dairy genetics and cattle reproduction, Joleigh hopes to find a future career in genetics to support the Pennsylvania dairy industry.

“I am incredibly grateful to be a recipient of the 2026 Student Leader Scholarship. This support will help offset the cost of attending Penn State University and allow me to focus more fully on my education and involvement in campus organizations. I am thankful for the donors who continue investing in the next generation of agriculture and creating opportunities for students like me to grow and find our place in the dairy industry. Your commitment to supporting youth makes the future of agriculture bright, and I am honored to be part of it.” –Joleigh Nailor

Breann Poole is a senior studying animal science and agribusiness at Northwest Missouri State University. She is the daughter of Eric and Jennifer Poole of Mt. Pleasant, Westmoreland County. She grew up on her family’s two dairy operations in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Breann helps manage the herd, manages the farm’s record-keeping, and helps market their cattle genetics. She currently works at the University’s dairy farm, where she is involved in overall herd health, genetic selection, and management. After graduation, Breann plans to join the LLC of her family’s farm, Poole Farm LLC. Her goal is to help make the farm sustainable for the future and a true representation of Pennsylvania’s dairy industry.

“The Student Leader Scholarship has made a great impact on me as both a student and a dairy advocate. I can’t thank the Dairy Excellence Foundation and PA Dairymen’s Association enough for supporting my future career goals within the agriculture industry. I hope to be able to give back to the dairy industry that has given me so much in my own life and to always be an enthusiast for the farmers who work tirelessly every day to put fresh dairy products in our fridges!” –Breann Poole

Charlotte Wallace is a junior studying dairy science and ag education at Delaware Valley University. She is the daughter of Scot and Jennifer Wallace of Leesport, Berks County. Charlotte has gained experience on multiple Pennsylvania dairy farms, overseeing milkings, training new employees, assisting in the maternity area, supporting calf care, mixing and delivering feed rations, and more. She also works as a designer florist at a flower shop. Through her experiences working on dairy farms, Charlotte has developed a strong passion for the dairy industry and a love for continuous learning. She hopes to pursue a career as an agricultural educator after graduation.

“Receiving the Student Leadership Scholarship is an incredible honor and a meaningful investment in my future. As a student at Delaware Valley University studying Agricultural Education and Dairy Science, this scholarship recognizes my passion for the dairy industry, leadership development, and agricultural advocacy. This support will help me continue my education and prepare for a career where I can positively impact both the dairy community and the next generation of agricultural leaders.” –Charlotte Wallace

Visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/scholarships to learn more about the Student Leader Scholarship program and how to support the scholarship fund. Applications for next year’s scholarships are expected to open on May 1, 2027. Contact Michelle Shearer at mshearer@centerfordairyexcellence.org or 570-768-8316 with questions.

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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.

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