



For Immediate Release

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HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS INVITED TO TOUR THREE PA DAIRY FARMS ON OCT. 20

The Farm Tour Will Take Place in Columbia and Luzerne Counties With Both In-Person and Virtual Options Available

Harrisburg, Pa. – High school students are invited to learn about multiple career opportunities in the dairy industry during the annual Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow Farm Tour. Offered both in-person and virtually on Wednesday, October 20, the day-long event gives high school students a firsthand look at Pennsylvania dairy farms and exposure to different careers available within the dairy industry. Students will meet farmers and industry professionals from two dairy farms and one creamery in Columbia and Luzerne County, Pennsylvania and will be able to ask questions about today’s dairy farming practices and career opportunities.

“We are excited to welcome high school students and teachers to two dairy farms and one creamery that have strong roots and deep family histories in eastern Pennsylvania,” said Michelle Shearer, Workforce Development Manager at the Dairy Excellence Foundation. “We are offering this year’s farm tour both in-person and virtually. Whether you are looking for an experiential learning opportunity outside the classroom, or an engaging educational experience to watch from the classroom or at home, this is a great opportunity for high school students to explore the wide range of careers in the dairy industry.”

One of the stops on the tour will be Four-Zag Hill Farm, a fourth-generation dairy farm in Columbia County with approximately 70 cows. Students will learn about the farm’s commitment to environmental sustainability and its conservation and nutrient management plans. They will also get to see the farm’s compost bedded pack barn, which includes bedded pack to keep the cows comfortable, manure storage, and natural ventilation. Students will hear from the owner, Rosalie Zaginaylo, who has experience with business planning and financial management in addition to dairy production.

Whitenight Family Farms, a 30-cow dairy in Columbia County, is another stop on the tour. As a former teacher, Melissa Whitenight began developing their dairy herd and working on the family farm full-time more than 10 years ago. In addition to milk, the Whitenight family sells cheese and raw milk and are working to build a milk bottling facility on the farm. Students on the tour will gain exposure to the value-added side of the dairy industry, including the process of bottling and capping milk, selling it in stores, and exploring new markets.

Students will also get to stop at Milkhouse Creamery in Luzerne County for lunch and ice cream. Owned by Paul Dagostin, the family has had roots in the dairy industry since the 1920s. With an on-site processing plant and several small-batch ice cream shops in the area, the family processes their own milk and ice cream mix. Students will learn about dairy processing and how the family creates a variety of dairy products, including flavored milks and fresh ice cream.

“This is an interactive way for students to get a firsthand look at three modern dairy businesses and speak directly with dairy professionals who have extensive experience,” Shearer added. “Students will get to explore different types of business models—including an on-farm milk bottling facility and a milk and ice cream processing plant— and ask questions to speakers throughout the tour.”

Students and teachers must register for the in-person Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow Farm Tour by October 1. Locations for bus pick-up will be finalized at the end of registration. To register for the in-person tour, [email Michelle Shearer](mailto:Michelle.Shearer@centerfordairyexcellence.org) or call 570-768-8316 with questions.

To join the virtual farm tour, visit www.dairyleadersoftomorrow.com/farm-tour for connection details. The live stream will begin at approximately 9 a.m. on Wednesday, October 20 and will be streamed directly from the farms in different segments throughout the day.

Visit www.dairyleadersoftomorrow.com/farm-tour to learn more about the educational, on-farm experience. The Farm Tour is funded by the Dairy Excellence Foundation.

Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow is a curriculum designed specifically to prepare high school students to work in the dairy industry. Managed by the Dairy Excellence Foundation, the program provides dairy business and herd management courses to high school educators and students interested in a dairy production career.

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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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