



For Immediate Release

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[Photos available for download here.](#)

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 and the Pennsylvania Dairymen’s Association for the 2025-26 academic year, each scholarship recipient received \$3,000 to support their undergraduate studies in academic programs that support the dairy industry. A reception was recently held at Tröegs Independent Brewing to recognize these students.

“These 12 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 veterinary medicine and dairy genetics to animal science and dairy processing, 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 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.

Congratulations to this year’s scholarship recipients:

Nicole Arrowsmith is a senior studying agribusiness management at The Pennsylvania State University. Nicole is the daughter of Tom and Amanda Arrowsmith of Peach Bottom, Lancaster

County. She grew up on her family's dairy operation, Hillacres Pride/Hillacres Jerseys, and has 12 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.

"Receiving this scholarship is a huge blessing as it will aid me in continuing my education and contribute to my future in the dairy industry. It is also an honor to be recognized alongside these fellow outstanding dairy youth." – Nicole Arrowsmith

Chloe Bomgardner is a freshman dual majoring in agricultural communications 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 also served as the Pennsylvania FFA State President and hopes to eventually find a career in agricultural communications or ag law while managing her own farm.

"Being awarded the Student Leader Scholarship is an incredible honor that recognizes my passion for the dairy industry and my commitment to its future. At Oklahoma State University, I will use this opportunity to grow in agricultural communications and animal science so I can help the dairy industry thrive through innovative storytelling, outreach, and impactful social media engagement."
– Chloe Bomgardner

Sarah Diehl is a senior studying dairy science at Virginia Tech University. Sarah is the daughter of Joe and Kristin Diehl of McVeytown, Mifflin County. She grew up on her family's dairy farm, Musser Run Jerseys, and helps manage newborn calves, fresh cows, herd checks and more. Sarah's goal is to become a large animal veterinarian and serve farmers and their livestock to the best of her ability – helping them to achieve their herd health goals and strive to ensure that agriculture persists for future generations.

"For me, receiving this scholarship means that the hardworking individuals I've always looked up to and who inspired me to pursue a career as a large animal veterinarian, are supportive of my endeavors and willing to place their trust in me. For this, I am extremely honored and grateful. I hope that one day, I can give back to the farming community as a veterinarian." – Sarah Diehl

Chelsea Empet is a freshman studying animal science at The Pennsylvania State University. She is the daughter of Richard and Dana Empet of Kingsley, Susquehanna County. Chelsea is actively involved on her family's dairy farm and helps oversee the daily care, vaccinations and management of the heifers and calves on the farm. She participates in the Susquehanna County 4-H and Junior Holstein Club, and she hopes to pursue marketing and public relations to impact consumers' viewpoints on agriculture.

"I am grateful and honored to receive this scholarship to help offset the costs of attending Penn State University to obtain a degree in Animal Science and Business. I greatly appreciate the generosity of the sponsoring organizations of this scholarship which give back to youth like me who are passionate about the agriculture industry." – Chelsea Empet

Danielle Heltzel is a freshman studying animal science at The Pennsylvania State University. She is the daughter of Andrew and Jennifer Heltzel of Martinsburg, Blair County. As the fifth generation on her family's dairy farm, Piney Mar Farm, Danielle has been actively involved with treating animals, feeding calves and managing environmental factors to promote good herd health. She also works at her local large animal veterinary office, Dairyside Veterinary Services. Danielle hopes to become a large animal veterinarian and work in underserved, rural areas where farmers have little access to veterinary care.

"Being awarded this scholarship is a true honor, and I am incredibly grateful for the support and belief in my potential. This opportunity allows me to pursue my passion for agriculture and take meaningful steps toward building a career that will give back to the dairy industry, as it has given to me. With this generous support for my education, I hope to make a lasting impact in the world of agriculture." – Danielle Heltzel

Darcy Heltzel is a junior studying food science and international agriculture at Iowa State University. She is the daughter of Andrew and Jennifer Heltzel of Martinsburg, Blair County. Growing up on her family dairy farm, Piney Mar Farm, Darcy developed a wide range of skills – including operating TMR mixers, identifying herd health problems, vaccinating calves and more. She has learned the "why" behind farm practices and food processing, gaining experience with the cheesemaking process at the ISU Creamery. Darcy hopes to contribute to research and product development to ensure animal agriculture industries can continue to produce high-quality foods and farmers can share their stories.

"I am incredibly grateful to have received this scholarship. Organizations like the Dairy Excellence Foundation and its partners continually remind me of how generous and supporting the dairy industry is. I look forward to utilizing my education in food science and experiences in dairy processing to continue to bolster the hard-working farmers that make nature's nearly perfect beverage: milk!" – Darcy Heltzel

Sara McNichols is a senior studying animal science at The Pennsylvania State University. She is the daughter of Mary and Timothy McNichols of Scranton, Lackawanna County. Sara has over 14 years of active, on-farm experience on her family's dairy farm. She has been responsible for feeding youngstock and lactating cows, raising her own calves and heifers, and processing milk to make products for their on-farm creamery. After graduating with her undergraduate degree, Sara plans to attend veterinary school to study food animal medicine and work with livestock through the remainder of her career.

"The Dairy Excellence Foundation, the Pennsylvania Dairymen's Association and Tröegs Independent Brewing ensure strength in the roots of such a valuable industry that takes part in feeding the world. I am grateful and honored to receive this award to assist in the financing of my further education where I will gain the knowledge for the betterment of this industry. The generosity of these organizations does not go unnoticed, and I am appreciative for all that they have done and will continue to do." – Sara McNichols

Breann Poole is a sophomore studying animal science with a pre-veterinary track 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. She hopes to become a large animal veterinarian and stay involved on her family's dairy operation.

"Being involved in the dairy industry has given me a passion, and I am glad this passion led me to the Dairy Excellence Foundation. The Student Leadership Scholarship will give me the resources to continue my education and focus on finding a way to give back to this industry that has given me so much in my own life. I am extremely thankful for all the opportunities that the dairy industry continues to give me." – Breann Poole

Sara Reed is a junior studying animal science at The Pennsylvania State University. She is the daughter of Erin and Leonard Reed of Columbia Cross Roads, Bradford County. Sara has lived and worked on her family's dairy, Ravineside Farm, for the last seven years and has worked with her family to grow and develop their Jersey herd. She helps manage the feeding program, makes mating decisions, and guides herd health. Sara has a passion for dairy genetics and hopes to find a career where she can connect with farmers who manage breeding programs and help them meet their goals.

"Being chosen as a 2025 Student Leader Scholarship recipient has truly strengthened my confidence as I continue pursuing a future in the dairy industry. This recognition reminds me that I am supported by a passionate and dedicated community of individuals who believe in the next generation of agricultural leaders. I am deeply grateful for the generous support provided by the donors, the Dairy Excellence Foundation, and other partners. I look forward to giving back to this incredible industry." – Sara Reed

Ainsley Sellers is a sophomore studying animal science at The Pennsylvania State University. She is the daughter of Kraig and Meranda Sellers of Lebanon, Lebanon County. Ainsley grew up on her family's dairy farm and has been actively involved in identifying and treating sickness, analyzing feed rations to increase milk production, and interpreting breeding sire summaries to enhance herd genetics. She hopes to become a dairy robotics technician that installs and maintains the different types of robots used on farms to help make dairy farming easier and more sustainable for families.

"Being awarded this scholarship allows me to focus more on school, clubs, and the countless opportunities that come with them. It provides the financial support I need to explore different avenues within the agricultural industry and helps me pursue the career I'm passionate about. I am truly thankful for this support as I continue to follow my passion for the dairy industry." – Ainsley Sellers

Sara Stoltzfus is a sophomore studying animal science at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She is the daughter of Duane and Andrea Stoltzfus of Berlin, Somerset County. Sara grew up on her family's dairy, Pennwood Farms, and has served as the farm's assistant calf manager. She also gained experience managing social media during a summer internship at a local farm, and she currently works at the University's Livestock and Equine Education and Research Farm. Sara has a passion for communicating with the public and sharing the story of dairy farming, so she has been taking communication and agricultural leadership courses in addition to her animal science classes.

“I am extremely grateful for this award. I always try my hardest to be a leader towards others and being chosen for an award as such is very rewarding and encouraging.” – Sara Stoltzfus

Natalie Yoder is a junior studying agribusiness management at The Pennsylvania State University. She is the daughter of Michael and Maria Yoder of Belleville, Mifflin County. Natalie has 11 years of experience working on her family’s dairy, Dryhouse Farm, and has been responsible for calf care, routine vaccines, milking protocols, and more. She is passionate about pursuing a career in marketing or promotion within the dairy industry to educate consumers about the quality product that farmers work so hard to produce.

“I am incredibly grateful to be selected as a recipient of the Student Leader Scholarship. This generous support plays a meaningful role in helping me pursue a future career in the dairy industry, a field I am deeply passionate about. Thank you to the donors and organizations who make this scholarship possible. Your investment in students like me empowers the next generation of agricultural leaders, and I am honored to be a part of that mission.” – Natalie Yoder

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, 2026. 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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