



**For Immediate Release**

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**HIGH SCHOOL AGRICULTURE TEACHER RECEIVES SCHOLARSHIP, FREE COURSES AND CURRICULUM AVAILABLE**

*The Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow Program is Free for Teachers and Students*

**Harrisburg, Pa.** – A Pennsylvania high school agriculture teacher was awarded a \$1,000 Educator Scholarship through the Dairy Excellence Foundation’s Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow (DLT) program to fund professional development conferences or workshops. Melanie Berndtson of Wellsboro Area High School in Wellsboro, Pennsylvania received the scholarship for the 2023-24 school year.

“Empowering the next generation of dairy producers starts with support for the educators who are in the classroom and engaging with students every single day,” said Michelle Shearer, Workforce Development Manager at the Dairy Excellence Foundation. “That’s why this Educator Scholarship program is so important. Thanks to contributions made to the Dairy Excellence Foundation, these scholarships directly support agriculture teachers who are passionate about expanding their dairy knowledge and sharing what they learn at these trainings with their students.”

Melanie Berndtson teaches in a single-teacher department that serves over 100 Pennsylvania students each year in a variety of agricultural science courses. She is passionate about hands-on learning to help students learn about food, fiber and natural resources. In addition to taking her students on farm tours at nearby dairy farms, Melanie utilizes the Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow curriculum in her animal science classes to teach basic animal nutrition, judging and other dairy knowledge.

“I feel empowered to have an organization like Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow that serves both my students in tangible ways, but also supports teachers in their own endeavors. I am excited to pursue a professional development opportunity that will help me support students who may have future careers in the dairy industry in an area that I am less familiar with,” Melanie shared. “This experience helps me to be a better teacher, and I am incredibly grateful to DLT for helping to make that possible.”

The [Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow \(DLT\) program](#) is designed specifically to prepare high school students to pursue careers in the dairy industry. Using a three-part model, the program offers online courses and classroom curriculum, on-farm experience opportunities, and annual scholarships for both educators and students. A total of more than 29,500 high school students have been impacted by the DLT program to date. Teachers can register for the free program this school year at [www.dairyleadersoftomorrow.com](http://www.dairyleadersoftomorrow.com).

“Last year we worked with close to 700 high school educators from Pennsylvania and beyond to help prepare high school students for future careers in the dairy industry,” said Shearer. “Whether students grew up on a dairy farm or are discovering their passion for agriculture for the first time, the DLT courses are comprehensive, engaging and interactive. Our hands-on educational experiences take it a step further and allow students and teachers to step foot on a working dairy farm to explore the different career opportunities available to them.”

The DLT curriculum includes four main courses that teachers can incorporate into their classroom instruction or assign to students to complete independently. The courses include:

- **Introduction to Dairy** – By the end of this course, students will be able to describe the economic impact of the dairy industry, know historic events that have impacted the industry, identify different types of housing facilities as well as have a basic understanding of marketing dairy products.
- **Introduction to Dairy Herd Management** – This course provides a broad overview of how to manage a dairy herd. By the end of this course, students will be able to identify important feed types for a cow’s diet, how to interpret DHIA records, and recognize diseases by symptoms and how to treat them.
- **Introduction to Dairy Business Management** – This course provides a broad overview of how to manage a dairy business. By the end of this course, students will be able to perform a SWOT analysis, understand the factors that influence a farm’s profitability, and properly write a business plan.
- **Introduction to Dairy Technologies** – This lesson provides a broad overview of the various technologies our dairy farms use today. By the end of this course, students will be able to identify and explain several types of technologies that farmers are utilizing in their day-to-day operations to enhance the care they provide to their animals.

“I decided to incorporate Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow into my curriculum because it creates hands-on experiences for students to learn about where their food comes from and how animals are treated properly and ethically in the animal science industry,” said Jenna Kibbe, a high school agriculture teacher and DLT user at Cumberland Valley High School in Pennsylvania. “Whether my students come from a farming background or not, they’re really learning the ins and outs of how to care for animals and how to be supporters of the animal science industry in the future.”

Lesson plans and associated resources can be accessed online and downloaded at no cost once educators or students complete the DLT registration. Certificates of Achievement are awarded in Introduction to Dairy, Dairy Herd Management, Dairy Business Management, and Dairy Technologies to students who receive a minimum of 80% on all lesson quizzes and the end of course examinations.

Student scholarship opportunities and on-farm experiences, including a hands-on Exploration Experience and annual Farm Tour, are also available throughout the school year. This year’s Exploration Experience is scheduled for November 10 at Delaware Valley University. This year’s

Farm Tour will take place on two dairy farms in Berks County on October 19 and give students exposure to the wide range of careers in the dairy industry.

To sign up for the Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow program this school year or share with an agriculture educator you know, visit [www.dairyleadersoftomorrow.com](http://www.dairyleadersoftomorrow.com). If you have questions about the program, contact Michelle Shearer at [mshearer@centerfordairyexcellence.org](mailto:mshearer@centerfordairyexcellence.org) or by phone at 570-768-8316.

Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow is a program managed by the Dairy Excellence Foundation and designed specifically to prepare high school students to work in the dairy industry. Learn more at [www.dairyleadersoftomorrow.com](http://www.dairyleadersoftomorrow.com).

**Image:**

Melanie Berndtson



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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/](http://centerfordairyexcellence.org/our-foundation/).

Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow (DLT) is a program designed specifically to prepare high school students to work in the dairy industry. A three-part model program, Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow offers classroom instruction, on-farm experiences and scholarship opportunities. The DLT curriculum includes four main courses: Introduction to Dairy, Introduction to Dairy Herd Management, Introduction to Dairy Business Management, and Introduction to Dairy Technologies. The program is managed by the Center for Dairy Excellence Foundation of Pennsylvania, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, tax deductible organization that is Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) approved. Learn more about the program at [www.dairyleadersoftomorrow.com](http://www.dairyleadersoftomorrow.com).

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