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SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED TO HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES IN DAIRY LEADERS OF TOMORROW PROGRAM

The Scholarships Recognize Students Who Are Advancing Their Education in Dairy-Related Fields

Harrisburg, Pa. – Three students from Pennsylvania and Massachusetts were recently awarded scholarships through the Dairy Excellence Foundation’s Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow (DLT) Program. Evan Espenshade of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Madison Mowrer of Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania, and Jordyn O’Brien of Hampshire County, Massachusetts were recognized with the scholarships after completing and passing at least one of the Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow certification exams and associated coursework during their high school careers. As college freshmen for the 2025-26 school year, all three students received a \$3,000 scholarship to support their academic studies in dairy-related fields.

“These students all have unique experiences in the dairy industry, and they are extremely passionate about making dairy a part of their future careers. From the time they have spent caring for cows on their family dairy operations to the leadership roles they have embraced throughout high school, these students already have an active role in the dairy industry,” said Michelle Shearer, Workforce Development Manager at the Dairy Excellence Foundation. “Now college freshmen, they are expanding on the knowledge they gained throughout their high school Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow courses and applying it to their career goals. We enjoy being able to recognize their hard work and dedication with these scholarships each year.”

Congratulations to these students:

Evan Espenshade is a freshman studying animal/dairy science at The Pennsylvania State University – Wilkes-Barre. He is the son of Matt and Charlene Espenshade of Bainbridge, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Evan served as the State Reporter for the Pennsylvania FFA Association, and served on the board of directors for the Pennsylvania Guernsey Jr. Breeders Association. Throughout high school, the DLT program helped Evan expand on what he was learning in his animal science classes with direct dairy knowledge that matches his career goals. As the eighth generation on his family’s dairy farm, Evan hopes to one day return to the farm and help modernize the operation and make it sustainable for generations to come.

"Growing up working on my family's eighth-generation dairy farm has built a strong passion I have for the industry. To know that organizations such as the Dairy Excellence Foundation are helping to support young people and promote the dairy industry truly means so much. Agriculture is an ever-growing industry and the knowledge of the advancements being made will help guide our family's farm into the next generation," Evan shared.

Madison Mowrer is a freshman studying animal science at The Pennsylvania State University. She is the daughter of Nate and Erica Mowrer of Petersburg, Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania. Madison has been actively involved in her local 4-H program, hosting farm tours on her family's dairy farm for elementary students to explore calf care, sustainability and more. The DLT program allowed Madison to discover different careers in the dairy industry during her senior year of high school and helped her find her passion for dairy promotion. Her goal is to continue exploring different sectors of the industry and become actively involved in dairy organizations to find a meaningful career path.

"I am extremely grateful to have been chosen as one of the Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow scholarship recipients. With this scholarship, I can further my education in agriculture and give back to programs like these, which have been so gracious towards me. Thank you for your kindness and generosity," Madison said.

Jordyn O'Brien is a freshman studying dairy management at SUNY Cobleskill. She is the daughter of Stephen and Julie O'Brien of Belchertown, Hampshire County, Massachusetts. Jordyn served as a state officer for the Massachusetts FFA Association, and competed in the Dairy Evaluation contest at the National FFA Convention. During high school, the DLT program helped shape Jordyn's perspective of the dairy industry by sharing in-depth details on what it takes to own and operate both large-scale and small-scale operations. Jordyn hopes to find a career in dairy genetics and raise her own herd of cows with strong production and genetics.

"Being awarded this scholarship means the world to me. Not only will it help me towards my academic achievements, but it also shows the value of the dairy community. This support encourages me to continue working hard towards the future, where I can make a lasting impact on agriculture and advocate for the industry I love," Jordyn said.

The Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow program is managed by the Dairy Excellence Foundation and impacts more than 38,100 high school students each school year. The goal of the program is to prepare high school students to work in the dairy industry through classroom instruction, independent studies and virtual learning, on-farm experiences, and scholarship opportunities.

To qualify for the scholarship, students must be enrolled in a college or university beginning in the fall following their graduation from high school. This year's recipients were selected based on their academic performance, evidence of leadership, character and integrity, and their commitment to pursuing a future career in dairy.

To learn more about the Dairy Leaders of Tomorrow scholarship program, visit www.dairyleadersoftomorrow.com or contact Michelle Shearer at mshearer@centerfordairyexcellence.org or 570-768-8316. The 2026 scholarship application will be available on March 1, 2026.

Images:

Evan Espenshade



Madison Mowrer



Jordyn O'Brien



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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/.

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.dairyleadertomorrow.com.

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