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DAIRY EXCELLENCE FOUNDATION RECOGNIZES ON-FARM INTERNS *Students Learned About Dairy Farm Management and Business Practices*

Harrisburg, Pa. – The Center for Dairy Excellence Foundation, Pennsylvania Dairymen’s Association and Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania congratulate nine outstanding undergraduate students who completed on-farm internships during summer 2018. The purpose of these internships was to give students the opportunity to gain hands-on experience with a host farm that is committed to mentoring and teaching the next generation.

“The On-Farm Internship Program provides students with the experience to prepare them for future careers in dairy production and the allied industry,” said Heidi Zimmerman, dairy resource coordinator with the Center for Dairy Excellence. “It is a tremendous learning opportunity for the students and can be equally rewarding to the farms that participate.”

Participating students received \$3,000 to supplement compensation from their hosting dairy farm. The program provides farms with highly skilled interns interested in dairy production and offers the students an internship competitive with those offered by allied industries.

“Hosting an intern this summer was a beneficial addition to our operation,” said Joe Zug, owner of Zugstead and intern mentor. “The On-Farm Internship Program is a great way for undergraduate students to experience first-hand the abundant opportunities in production agriculture. Not only do they grow in their dairy knowledge, but host farms have bright students on board at their farms; it’s a successful experience for all involved.”

Consideration is given to students with an interest in dairy production who attend a Pennsylvania university or are residents of Pennsylvania attending or recently graduated from an institute of higher education. Selection of internship participants is based on an application and interview with prospective farm hosts. Farms may be located within or outside of Pennsylvania, but the farm manager(s) must agree to provide the intern with exposure to all aspects of a successful, progressive dairy operation.



"I thought I knew cows; but before this, I was in the little leagues. Now I'm in the major leagues," said Stephanie Takitch, intern at Zugstead. "This internship, along with my host farm and mentor, have helped me have a new look on dairy. This internship gives a real-time view of the operations; it's unique and hands-on. It takes you to the heart of the Pennsylvania dairy industry."

After the interview, farms and students set goals for the summer and created a project around a specific focus area. Students were also paired with a mentor throughout the summer and participated in monthly calls with their mentor and other interns participating in the program. Students were encouraged to attend industry related events throughout the summer, and as a final project, gave a formal presentation about their internship experience to the On-Farm Internship Committee.

"This program is a great experience to get out of your comfort zone," said Colton Pifer, intern at Mason's Chrome View. "You aren't just learning the basics, like training cows, but you're learning to fit into a team and work with others. Though it's not the same environment as other businesses, it is still crucial to learn the business fundamentals because it is a serious occupation. You'll work with people with different beliefs that come from different cultures, and you learn to be a team with them."

This year's interns include:

Mekel Chard, a senior studying dairy science at Delaware Valley University, interned at Reinford Farms, owned by Brett Reinford of Mifflintown. Mekel resides in Doylestown.

Kelly MacRae, a junior studying animal science at Penn State, interned at Apple Shamrock Farms, owned by Josh Waddle of Townville. Kelly resides in Grove City.

Victoria Meyers, a senior studying livestock science and management at Delaware Valley University, interned at Furnace Hill Holsteins, owned by Joel Krall. Victoria resides in Pennsburg.

Mary Brooke Payne, a senior studying large animal science at Delaware Valley University, interned at Dakin Dairy, owned by Mario Soto of Myakka City, Florida. Mary resides in Fairfield.

Colton Pifer, a senior studying agribusiness at Delaware Valley University, interned as Mason's Chrome View, owned by Paul Mason of Nottingham. Colton resides in Telford.

Kate Sabino, a senior studying art history at Wesleyan University, interned at Moo-Echo Dairy, owned by Neil and Kilah Hertzler of Loysville. Kate resides in Titusville, New Jersey. Her internship was a partnership with the Pennsylvania Association of Sustainable Agriculture.



Abby Sterner, a senior studying dairy science at Delaware Valley University, interned at Brook-Corner Holsteins, owned by Reid and Diane Hoover of Lebanon. Abby resides in Barto.

Stephanie Takitch, a senior studying animal science at Penn State, interned at Zugstead, owned by Joe Zug of Mifflintown. Stephanie resides in Latrobe.

Danielle Varner, a senior studying dairy science and agribusiness at Delaware Valley University, interned at Misty Mountain Dairy, owned by Mark Mosemann of Warfordsburg. Danielle resides in Shirleysburg.

To learn more about the On-Farm Internship program, visit the "Students & Educators" tab at centerfordairyexcellence.org and select "On-Farm Internships" from the menu. Questions regarding the program should be referred to Brittany Haag by phone at (717) 346-0849 or via email at bhaag@centerfordairyexcellence.org.

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Established in 2010, 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. The foundation was created to develop and support programs for both the Center for Dairy Excellence and other Pennsylvania dairy organizations which educate, cultivate, and inspire a thriving and sustainable Pennsylvania dairy industry. Learn more about the foundation at centerfordairyexcellence.org.