



For Immediate Release

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July 1, 2025

EIGHT STUDENTS BEGIN ON-FARM INTERNSHIPS ON PROGRESSIVE DAIRY FARMS

These Internships Provide Students With On-Farm Learning Experiences This Summer

Harrisburg, Pa. – Eight college students who are pursuing careers in dairy production recently began on-farm summer internships on progressive dairy farms in Pennsylvania and New York. The Dairy Excellence Foundation, the Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania Dairymen’s Association created the program more than 10 years ago to provide hands-on, farm-based learning experiences to the next generation of dairy managers, producers, and professionals in Pennsylvania and beyond.

“Every year, we work to match students with dairy farms that align with their interests and career goals, push them out of their comfort zones, and give them hands-on experience in specific areas of dairy production throughout their internship. This group of interns and host farms is exceptional,” said Michelle Shearer, Workforce Development Manager at the Dairy Excellence Foundation. “Not only are they building on skills they learned in the classroom and gaining experience on different types of dairy farms, these interns are making direct impacts at the farm level with the work they’re doing this summer.”

For 10 to 12 weeks throughout the summer, on-farm interns gain hands-on experience and participate in virtual discussions with one another to network and share their experiences. The internships are designed to give students a full understanding of what it takes to run a successful dairy operation and provide dairy farms with the chance to mentor the next generation of dairy.

“When the internship program started over 10 years ago, we saw the need to have students get out onto progressive dairy farms and apply the classroom skills they were acquiring. We also thought it would be a great way to enhance the labor pool for future employees we would need on our farms,” said Walt Moore of Walmoore Holsteins, a PDMP member and former Dairy Excellence Foundation Board member who is hosting an on-farm intern this summer. “Through the program, the interns infuse a sense of enthusiasm to their host farms, and they bring their own unique interests and skills as well.”

During the internship, students will also conduct a research project that connects to their career interests and benefits their dairy farm's operation. After researching and analyzing various topics, they will present their findings in August at the conclusion of the program.

Congratulations to the following interns who are participating in the program this summer:

- **Shyanne Ackerman – Interning at Rohrer Dairy in Washington Boro, PA**
“I decided to do this on-farm internship because it seemed like a great opportunity to gain more experience on the farm and a great way to spend my summer.”
- **Isabella Anderson – Interning at Ar-Joy Farms in Cochranville, PA**
“I wanted to do this internship to broaden my horizons and network in the dairy industry.”
- **Allison Billard – Interning at Scipio Springs Dairy in Union Springs, NY**
“I’ve worked with animals my whole life. Growing up in a small town, I was heavily involved in 4-H and FFA, showing livestock and developing a strong passion for animal care. I wanted to take the next step and get experience that was just a little different from what I was used to—something more intensive and focused on the professional side of dairy operations. As someone on the pre-vet track planning to work with large animals, this internship was the perfect fit.”
- **Payton Eierman – Interning at Walmoore Holsteins in West Grove, PA**
“I decided to do this on-farm internship because I wanted to gain as much experience as possible prior to applying to vet school. The Dairy Excellence Foundation was more than happy to accommodate to what I wanted to learn and how big or small of a farm I wanted to be on, which made me even more excited for the internship.”
- **Jessica Fleisher – Interning at M.W. Smith Farms in Newport, PA**
“I decided to do this on-farm internship because I want to gain hands-on experience on a larger-scale dairy operation. Most of my previous exposure has been with smaller-scale farms, so I’m excited to learn how things are managed at a higher volume, especially herd health protocols and overall farm logistics. This internship is a chance for me to build on what I already know and further understand the scale and structure involved in running a more complex dairy operation. It’s a critical step toward my long-term goal of working on or managing a professional dairy operation.”
- **Holly Mahala – Interning at Vista Grande Farm in Fleetwood, PA**
“I decided to do this on-farm internship because it is a chance to gain more hands-on experience and management skills to take into my future career.”
- **Hannah Mansfield – Interning at Kreider Farms in Manheim, PA**
“I did not grow up on a dairy, so participating in on-farm internships and working at Penn State's Dairy are the best ways I have found to gain on-farm experience. I have

heard great things about these on-farm internships from classmates, and I wanted to get the chance to experience it for myself! I'm extremely grateful for this opportunity and I look forward to a great summer."

- **Emma McLaughlin – Interning at Schrack Farms in Loganton, PA**

"I began working with dairy cattle in high school and am currently a student live-in and employee at the Penn State Dairy Barns. Through these experiences, I have truly enjoyed working with this species and now hope to pursue a career in the dairy industry. In order to take my interest to the next level, I hoped to find an internship where I could learn a lot more about herd management and experience the daily life of a herd manager firsthand."

Students who are accepted into the program must attend a Pennsylvania university, be a Pennsylvania resident attending an out-of-state school, or be a recently graduated Pennsylvania resident with an interest in dairy production. Host farms may be located within or outside of Pennsylvania, but producers must agree to provide the intern with exposure to all aspects of a successful, progressive dairy operation.

Online applications for host farms and on-farm interns will open on September 1 for the summer of 2026. To learn more, visit centerfordairyexcellence.org/internship or contact Michelle Shearer at 717-788-0298 or by email at mshearer@centerfordairyexcellence.org.

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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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