



## For Immediate Release

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### KEYNOTE SPEAKERS ANNOUNCED FOR 2021 VIRTUAL PA DAIRY SUMMIT

*Speakers Have Emerging Voices on Diversification, Sustainability, COVID-19 Impacts and More*

**Harrisburg, Pa.** – In an ever-changing marketplace, dairy producers and allied-industry professionals are searching for strategies to advance their operation and drive performance. During the 2021 virtual Pennsylvania Dairy Summit, four featured speakers will help the dairy industry emerge forward and learn how to connect with consumers, prepare for the long-term implications of COVID-19, grow and diversify their operations, and foster a culture of teamwork and trust on the farm.

Hosted by the Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania and the Center for Dairy Excellence, the 2021 event will be held virtually on February 8-11, 2021. Acclaimed speakers will share actionable advice and real-world experience as well as a virtual tour of the Producer Showcase farm.

“This year has been nothing like what we expected, but we have seen some small victories emerge from it. The dairy industry is continuing to find ways to adapt and pivot in an uncertain marketplace all while leveraging a newfound consumer awareness and sharing our stories more than ever before,” said Jessica Slaymaker, the 2021 Pennsylvania Dairy Summit chair and a dairy farmer from Tioga County. “This coming year’s speakers are from across the nation, and they plan to build on this momentum by motivating attendees to embrace what 2021 has on the horizon, find ways to leverage the industry’s sustainability efforts when telling our stories, and enhance teamwork at the farm level.”

### Learn more about the featured speakers for the 2021 Dairy Summit:

- **Dr. David Kohl** is an academic Hall of Famer in the College of Agriculture at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA. Dr. Kohl is widely respected across the dairy industry for his keen insight into the agriculture industry gained through extensive travel, research, and involvement in ag businesses. His wisdom and engagement with all levels of the industry

provide a unique perspective into future trends.

**Topic:** Dr. Kohl plans to discuss the long-term economic implications of COVID-19 on the dairy industry, what to expect, and how we can prepare for the future.

- **Heglar Creek Dairy**, based near Declo, Idaho, is a five-generation dairy farm with four partners. The Webb family has a dairy and beef operation, farm multiple crops, and have other enterprises including electrical contracting and a dairy chemical and supply company. They have a 1,100-cow barn that is fully robotic and automated, and they milk approximately 2,300 cows. The Webb family attributes their growth and diversification to different generations coming back to the farm and the people with whom they surround themselves.

**Topic:** The Webb family is passionate about their farm's team approach and plans to discuss, as a panel, how working together with hard work and a positive attitude have contributed to their success.

- **Tara Vander Dussen** is a New Mexico native, growing up on her family's dairy farm in Eastern New Mexico. Tara has worked as an environmental scientist for the last nine years on dairy farm projects throughout the southwest. As a project manager, she assists her clients with state and federal regulatory compliance, water conservation, sustainable management practices, and analytical reports. Tara's passion is advocating for modern dairy farming by sharing her story about life on her family dairy through her blog, New Mexico Milkmaid, and her social media platforms. Her online community has more than 40,000 followers.

**Topic:** With sustainability at the forefront of consumers' minds, Tara plans to share strategies for connecting with consumers by telling our sustainability story, highlighting the progress dairy has made, and leveraging our sustainability efforts to market our products.

- **Lee Rubin** is an emerging voice at corporations, conferences and schools throughout the U.S. He holds a bachelor's degree in speech communications with a minor in business from The Pennsylvania State University. Lee played football for the Nittany Lions and not only emerged as a three-year starting free safety, but also became a captain of the team. He has a unique ability to understand and articulate winning principles with clarity and practical application.

**Topic:** Lee will share the five components of extraordinary teams and how dairy teams can make sacrifices to achieve common goals, build trust with open communication, and strive for consistency with focused discipline.

The Pennsylvania Dairy Summit is nationally recognized as one of the best conferences for dairy professionals in all types of production. Transitioned to a virtual platform for 2021, creative

ways to connect and engage will be included throughout the Summit program, including networking opportunities, virtual giveaways, and live music. Sponsorship opportunities are available for businesses that are looking for affordable and effective ways to connect with dairy customers digitally and expand their reach within Pennsylvania and across the nation.

To learn more about this year's virtual Dairy Summit and to view sponsorship opportunities, visit [padairysummit.org](http://padairysummit.org). Contact the Pennsylvania Dairy Summit Business Office with questions at 814-326-5993 or email [info@padairysummit.org](mailto:info@padairysummit.org).

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PDMP is a not-for-profit, farmer-driven organization advancing the State's dairy industry through improved productivity and economic viability with continued stewardship of our animals, environment and community. Programs offered by PDMP are designed by dairy producers for dairy producers. For more information on PDMP, visit their website at [pdmp.org](http://pdmp.org).

The Center for Dairy Excellence is a non-profit organization initiated by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture in 2004. Bringing together people from more than 40 different dairy organizations in Pennsylvania, the Center's mission is to enhance the profitability of the dairy industry by empowering people, creating partnerships, and increasing the availability and use of resources. Learn more at [centerfordairyexcellence.org](http://centerfordairyexcellence.org).