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## **Secretary of Agriculture: Dairy Innovation Fuels On-Farm Resiliency and STEM Careers**

**Harrisburg, PA** – The [All-American Dairy Show](#) returned to Harrisburg this weekend, featuring four days of showing competition, youth programming and dairy innovation to the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex and Expo Center in Harrisburg.

The 2021 show runs September 18-22, featuring more than 550 national competitors in 22 individual contests exhibiting more than 1,200 of the finest dairy cattle in the industry.

"The All-American Dairy Show showcases the best of Pennsylvania agriculture," said Secretary Redding. "It is a show where competitive spirit drives genetics and industry innovation, but it also serves as an opportunity to learn. From youth engagement to educational programming, the All-American Dairy Show displays the best of cows and people, and it continues to drive the industry forward."

All-American Dairy Show exhibitors demonstrate how genetics has advanced the dairy industry, increasing milk production, herd health and longevity. Exhibitors, like Jason Frye of [Pleasant Lane Farms](#), continue capitalizing on technology to strengthen their family's 60-cow dairy farm and on-farm creamery.

In 2019, Pleasant Lane Farms reconstructed their operation and on-farm business plan to safeguard the farm's future for the next generation. The Frye family constructed a new barn equipped with a robotic milker, atmospheric climate control to regulate barn temperature and cow brushes to promote cow comfort. The barn directly supplies the on-farm cheese processing facility, which received a \$364,082 Pennsylvania Dairy Investment Program grant to support marketing and value-added processing equipment investments.

Today, the creamery at Pleasant Lane Farms processes 15,000 to 25,000 pounds of milk and produces more 1,700 to 2,900 pounds of cheese each week.

"The use of technology in our dairy and cheesemaking operations has enabled us to future-proof our small dairy for the next generations," said Frye. "We are excited to see our next generation of kids show passion and excitement for the dairy industry and exhibit at the Junior All-American Dairy Show."

Pennsylvania's dairy industry supports 53,300 jobs and contributes \$14.1 billion to the commonwealth's economy annually. Dairy innovation is fueling STEM careers, creating opportunities in food science, engineering, business and animal science.

To ensure agriculture's prosperity for food to remain available, accessible and affordable, we need to grow a new generation of agriculturalists.

Pennsylvania faces an agricultural workforce shortage, that at one point estimated a deficit of 75,000 workers as farmers retire and new technology-based positions become available. In recognition of workforce needs, the Wolf Administration created a 15-member Commission for Agriculture Excellence and proceeded to invest heavily in the future of the industry through Pennsylvania Farm Bill Programs such as the Ag & Youth Grant Program, Farm to School Program and Farm Vitality Grant Program.

"As we think about the future of agriculture and our dairy industry here in Pennsylvania, addressing our workforce challenges remains a top concern and prioritized item for us," said Stephon Fitzpatrick, Commission for Agriculture Education Excellence Executive Director. "With fewer students and people choosing farming as a career, the incorporation of technology and new innovations in our dairy industry could prove an asset in not only sparking interest to pursue careers in agriculture but also, economic vitality."

Parents and caregivers of children are encouraged to seek out opportunities for hands-on agriculture experiences to foster an early appreciation of this life-sustaining industry. Careers in agriculture offer opportunities in science, technology, engineering, management and traditional farming. It's meaningful work that provides food to families across the commonwealth and the world.

Opportunities to explore dairy and agriculture include:

- Visit one of Pennsylvania's more than 100 county agricultural fairs
- Enjoy ice cream on a farm at a [Pennsylvania Ice Cream Trail](#) creamery
- Visit local farms that provide farm tours, like [Pleasant Lane Farms](#), near you
- Grow young minds with a visit to a [Pennsylvania garden or arboretum](#)
- Enroll your child in a [Pennsylvania 4-H](#) program near you
- Visit a [Pennsylvania farmers market](#), many of which offer agritourism experiences
- [Pick-your-own](#) apples or pumpkins
- Experiment at home with [DIY STEM activities](#)

For more about the show, including a complete [schedule](#), and to sign up for a daily wrap-up of events, photos and show results, visit [allamerican.pa.gov](#).

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