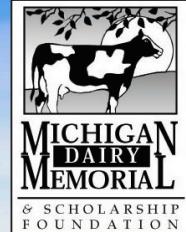




# MICHIGAN DAIRY MEMORIAL AND SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER • ISSUE 22  
DECEMBER 2025



## MDMSF Scholarships Fund: At A Glance

Thanks to the generous support of donors, the Michigan Dairy Memorial and Scholarship Foundation (MDMSF) at Michigan State University (MSU) is proud to highlight an impressive list of scholarships:

- \$3,000 to first-year students
- \$3,500 to sophomores, juniors and seniors
- **Glenn and Anne Lake Scholarship** – \$8,500
- **Russel Erickson Scholarship** – \$6,000
- **Donald and Valera Murray Scholarship** – \$5,000
- **Harold and Lillian Gremel Scholarship** – \$5,000 for a student in veterinary school
- **Red and Edna Cotter Purina Memorial Scholarship** – \$5,000 for a student in veterinary school (preference to those with international interest)
- **John and Barbara Dilland Scholarships** – \$5,000 for students majoring in Agribusiness Management
- **Jack and Betty Barnes International Scholarship** – scholarships for international experiences

- **Archie Studer Scholarship** – \$5,000 for a student with interest in dairy breeding or production
- **Nick Bellows Scholarship** – \$5,000 for a student with interest in dairy promotion
- **Velmar Green Scholarship** – \$5,000 for a second-year student in the Dairy Management Program of the Institute of Agricultural Technology
- **George and Shirley Hazle Scholarship** – \$5,000 for a student with a strong 4-H background
- **Gary and Carolyn Trimmer Scholarship** – \$5,000 for the MMA Food Systems Fellowship intern or a veterinary student pursuing a career in bovine medicine
- **Dan First Scholarship** – \$5,000 for a student with demonstrated community involvement and a passion for innovation in the dairy industry

*Funding for the MDMSF scholarships comes from generous donations from individuals, firms and corporations wishing to honor those members of the dairy industry who have performed distinguished services for Michigan's dairy industry.*

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# Matthew Wood

Dear Michigan Dairy Memorial Scholarship Foundation members and friends,

As we approach the close of another year, I am honored to reflect on the accomplishments and ongoing efforts of the Michigan Dairy Memorial Scholarship Foundation. The past 12 months have brought both challenges and triumphs, and our shared commitment to Michigan's dairy industry continues to inspire progress and growth.

One of our proudest achievements this year has been our continued support for students at Michigan State University pursuing careers in dairy science and related fields. Through scholarships and educational programs, we have helped foster the next generation of dairy leaders, ensuring that Michigan's rich tradition of excellence in dairy continues for years to come.

The foundation has also been active in recognizing outstanding contributions to the industry. This year, we celebrated several individuals whose passion and dedication have made a lasting impact. Their achievements underscore the importance of community, stewardship and innovation in the dairy sector.

Looking ahead, the foundation remains committed to its mission of honoring the past, supporting the present and shaping the future of Michigan's dairy industry. We invite all members and supporters to stay engaged by attending events, contributing to our scholarship fund or volunteering their time and talents.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to our board members, donors, volunteers and the entire Michigan dairy community for their unwavering support. Your efforts ensure that the legacy of the Michigan Dairy Memorial Scholarship Foundation continues to thrive, making a positive difference for producers, students and consumers alike.

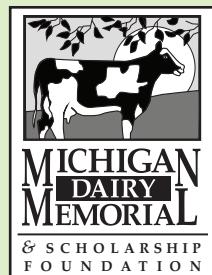
Wishing you all a prosperous new year.

Sincerely,

Matt Wood

President, Michigan Dairy Memorial Scholarship Foundation

**In this issue** we are featuring Michigan Dairy Memorial and Scholarship Foundation scholarship recipients from both the 2024-25 academic year and the 2025-26 academic year. In total \$294,000 has been awarded to scholarship recipients during the two years. Thank you for your continued support of the MDMSF and the scholarship recipients.



# Larry Chapin

Larry Chapin, M.S., served as a research assistant and farm liaison in the Department of Animal Science at Michigan State University from 1976 to 2017.

Raised in Louisiana, Larry developed an early interest in biology and zoology, which grew into a passion for agriculture while raising beef cattle and horses on a hobby farm and working with a local veterinarian. He pursued his education at Oklahoma State University and Mississippi State University, earning a Bachelor of Science in general agriculture and a Master of Science in animal physiology from Mississippi State, where he studied the effects of heat stress on reproduction in dairy cattle.

Larry began his MSU career in 1976 in the Animal Reproduction Laboratory in the Department of Dairy Science, supporting research on hormonal control of reproduction, growth and lactation in cattle. He worked closely with Dr. Edward Convey, Dr. H. Allen Tucker, Dr. Miriam Weber Nielsen and Dr. George Smith, collaborating with dozens of graduate students, staff and faculty. He helped plan and conduct research projects, analyze data and prepare manuscripts, and also managed the MSU Dairy Farm's environmental research facilities.

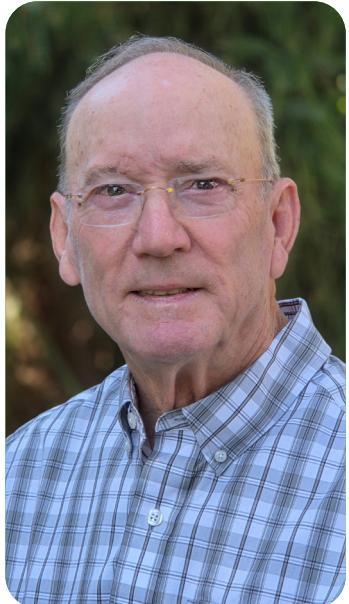
In 2007, Larry became the farm liaison for the Department of Animal Science, ensuring that MSU's facilities remained compliant with evolving animal care regulations and research requirements.

Throughout his career, Larry co-authored 134 scientific publications, including 80 abstracts, 54 peer-reviewed journal articles and one book chapter. His dedication earned him the MSU Distinguished Staff Award.

Beyond campus, Larry was deeply involved in volunteer and youth programs. He served on the committee for the Ingham County 4-H Therapeutic Riding Program, judged and moderated 4-H Dairy Quiz Bowls and Dairy Days competitions, evaluated 4-H Animal Science Communication Contests, and presented at 4-H Dairy Camps and Veterinary Science Camps.

Larry and his wife, Julie, of 43 years, live in Portland, Michigan. They have one son, a daughter-in-law and two grandchildren. In retirement, Larry enjoys bird-watching, traveling and spending time with family and friends.

For his decades of service to Michigan State University and his lasting impact on research, education and youth engagement, the Michigan Dairy Memorial and Scholarship Foundation is proud to honor Larry Chapin as a Foundation Honoree.





## Kevin Dill

Kevin Dill grew up on a 540-acre diversified crop and livestock farm in Linn County, Missouri, which included a 100-cow dairy herd. His passion for dairy cows led him to the University of Missouri-Columbia, where he earned both a bachelor's and a master's degree in dairy science. While completing his graduate studies, he also taught undergraduate students as part of his assistantship responsibilities.

After graduate school, Kevin joined Michigan State University as coordinator of the two-year Agricultural Technology Dairy Program. In this role, he recruited students, developed curriculum, supervised summer placements on commercial dairies across the Great Lakes states and Northeast, and taught courses in herd management, nutrition and farm management. He also coached MSU's dairy cattle judging teams, further strengthening his connection to the industry.

While leading the Ag Tech Dairy Program, Kevin completed his Ph.D. in animal science in 1991, researching management factors that most affect milk production in commercial dairy operations. He gained additional hands-on experience collecting and analyzing DHIA data from 44 participating Michigan dairies.

Following his Ph.D., Kevin joined Purina Mills Inc. as a dairy technical consultant, supporting operations across Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas and Oklahoma. After relocating to Michigan, he expanded his role to include Indiana and Ohio — training Purina sales staff and co-op and dealer nutritionists, and collaborating with herd veterinarians and other advisors to enhance herd performance. He remained in this position for 18 years and served on the Tri-State Dairy Nutrition Conference planning board, in addition to contributing to Michigan State's large animal program curriculum review.

In 2014, Kevin joined Purina's dairy technical leadership team, where he led company-wide dairy nutrition training and supported operations in Mexico and China. He concluded his career as director of technical innovation, overseeing product development, before retiring in 2025.

Kevin's professional affiliations included 38 years with the American Dairy Science Association and 34 years with the American Registry of Professional Animal Scientists. He was known for his ability to use on-farm data to solve complex challenges, often "following the cows" to identify practical, real-world solutions. Producers and nutritionists alike valued his insight, focus and dedication to continuous improvement in the dairy industry.

Kevin resides in Wildwood, Missouri, with his wife of more than 30 years, Tina. They have four adult children: daughters Maggie, Emma and Cora, and son D.J.

For his lifelong dedication to advancing the dairy industry and supporting producer success, the Michigan Dairy Memorial and Scholarship Foundation is proud to recognize Kevin Dill as a Foundation Honoree.

# Gerald Surbrook

Gerald Surbrook was raised on a farm and devoted his life to agriculture as a dairy farmer in Rives Junction, Michigan. After graduating from Jackson High School in 1956, he enrolled in the dairy short course at Michigan State University. A year later, he married his wife of 65 years, Barbara, and together they began farming in 1959. The couple raised two children, Rick and Cheri, and their family has since grown to include seven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

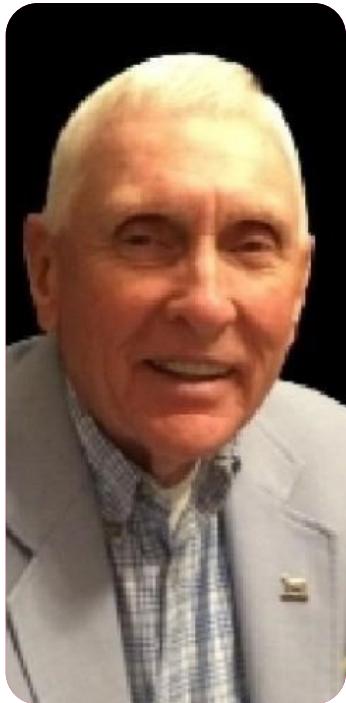
For many years, the family's Grand Valley Farm operated as a dairy and crop enterprise, milking 120 cows. Today, the Surbrook legacy continues with son Rick and grandson Jim managing the 800-acre operation, producing corn, soybeans, wheat and alfalfa.

Throughout his career, Gerald was an active leader and advocate for the dairy industry. He served on the boards of the Michigan Milk Producers Association and the Michigan Animal Breeders Cooperative, and as a trustee for the Michigan Livestock Exchange. His commitment to community service was equally strong — he volunteered as a firefighter, served as Rives Township supervisor and trustee, and was a member of the Jackson County Soil Conservation District Board and the Jackson County 4-H Fair Board.

Gerald's leadership and dedication earned him numerous honors. In 1984, he received the Farmer's Week Distinguished Service Award and was named Michigan State University Dairy Farmer of the Year. In 2016, he was recognized as a 50-year member of the Michigan Milk Producers Association, followed by a tribute from the State of Michigan Governor's Award in 2017. He was inducted into the Michigan Farmers Hall of Fame in 2018.

An avid collector of antique dairy farm memorabilia, Gerald enjoyed sharing his passion with others, often opening his home to school groups eager to learn about the history of agriculture.

For his lifelong commitment to his community and the dairy industry, the Michigan Dairy Memorial and Scholarship Foundation is proud to recognize Gerald Surbrook as a Foundation Honoree.



# 2024-25 MDMSF scholarship recipients



L-R (back):  
Brianna Hill,  
Riley Baker,  
Ross Kelsey,  
Rhiaana Bruursema,  
Elizabeth Hyman,  
Chloe Steiner,  
Clea Moore,  
Amy Kern

L-R (front):  
Sadie Brearley,  
Brielle Herner,  
Laken DuRussel,  
James Link,  
Adalee Thelen,  
Ava Mitchell,  
Lauren Ringewold ,  
Bette Eggink,  
Callie Loew,  
Jaylin Dilsaver,  
Brianna Armbruster,  
Grace Brown,  
Clarissa Hill,  
Ella Cloud-Schneider,  
Cecelia Brandt

## SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS 2024 - 2025

## Named Scholarships

**Adalee Thelen,**

a Fall 2024 graduate in Animal Science from St. Johns, received the Glenn and Anne Lake Dairy Memorial Scholarship. During her undergraduate program, she completed internships focused on milk quality and genetics and worked on an area dairy farm. She also participated in the Michigan Junior Holstein Association, the MSU Dairy Club, Dairy Challenge and dairy cattle judging. Since graduating, Adalee now works as a herd management specialist for Roberts Dairy Service.

**Brianna Hill,**

a Fall 2024 graduate in Animal Science from Gregory, received the Russel Erickson Dairy Memorial Scholarship. While at MSU, she participated in the Dairy Club, Dairy Challenge, Collegiate Farm Bureau, dairy judging and dairy research, and completed internships in dairy genetics and on two dairy farms. She was also active in 4-H and the Michigan Junior Holstein Association. Since graduating, Brianna now works as a herd manager on a dairy farm.

**Lauren Ringewold,**

a Spring 2025 graduate in Animal Science from Battle Creek, received the Donald and Valera Murray Dairy Memorial Scholarship. She earned her state FFA Degree and has worked on dairy and beef farms. While at MSU, she completed internships in animal health and nutrition and participated in the Dairy Club and Dairy Challenge. Lauren now works as a technical specialist in animal health.

**Jenna Naber,**

a junior in Animal Science from Holland, received the John and Barbara Dilland Dairy Memorial Scholarship. She has interned in dairy reproduction, dairy research and on a dairy farm, in addition to serving as president of Sigma Alpha and participating in the Dairy Club and Dairy Challenge. After graduation, Jenna plans to work in dairy consulting.

**James Link,**

an Animal Science junior from Alto, received the John and Barbara Dilland Dairy Memorial Scholarship. While at MSU, he has interned on dairy farms and served as an officer in the MSU Dairy Club and MSU Wrestling Club. James plans to work on his family farm after graduation.

**Riley Baker,**

an Animal Science junior from Coldwater, received the Archie Studer Scholarship. During college, he has interned on dairy and swine farms and works at the MSU Dairy Farm. He serves on the FarmHouse executive board and participates in the Dairy Club and Dairy Challenge. After graduation, he plans to work in dairy herd management.

**Jaylin Dilsaver,**

a junior in Animal Science, is the recipient of the Nick Bellows Scholarship. She has interned on several dairy farms and participates in the Dairy Club and Dairy Challenge. After graduation, Jaylin plans to work in dairy nutrition.

**Rhianna Bruursema,**

a junior in Animal Science from West Olive, is the recipient of the George and Shirley Hazle Dairy Memorial Scholarship. She has worked on a dairy farm and at a veterinary clinic as she prepares for a career in dairy consulting. Rhianna participates in the Dairy Club and Block and Bridle Club.

**Ross Kelsey,**

a first-year student in Agribusiness Management from Blanchard, is the recipient of the Dan First Scholarship. He participated in 4-H and FFA and works in precision planting and equipment operation. During high school, he started his own landscaping business. Ross plans to work in agricultural sales.



**Katrina Beaton,**

a third-year Veterinary Medicine student from Traverse City, is the recipient of the Red and Edna Cotter Scholarship. She has worked at several veterinary clinics and plans to work in food animal medicine in northern Michigan.

**Cecelia Brandt,**

a third-year Veterinary Medicine student from Cedar Springs, is the recipient of the Harold and Lillian Gremel Scholarship. She has worked on a dairy farm, completed the Food Systems Fellowship with the Michigan Milk Producers Association and interned with the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. She serves as secretary of her class and as vice president of MSU's Food Animal Club.

**Collin DeKam,**

a second-year Ag Tech Dairy Management student from Falmouth, is the recipient of the Velmar Green Scholarship. He has worked on a commercial dairy farm and the MSU Dairy Farm and participates in the MSU Dairy Club. Collin plans to return to his family farm after graduation.

**Riley Simmonds,**

a first-year Veterinary Medicine student from Bath, is the recipient of the Gary and Carolyn Trimner Scholarship. Riley has interned at two veterinary clinics and at Charles River Laboratories and completed the Food Animal Systems Fellowship with the Michigan Milk Producers Association.

**Regular Scholarships****Brianna Armbruster,**

a senior in Animal Science from Elkton, has worked at a dairy farm and interned with a dairy equipment company. She is active in the Block and Bridle Club and the Dairy Club. After graduation, Brianna plans to pursue a role as a state inspector.

**Sadie Breamley,**

a junior in Animal Science from Portland, participates in the Block and Bridle Club and the Dairy Club while continuing to work on her family farm. She plans to work in dairy production or consulting after graduation.

**Ella Cloud-Schneider,**

an Animal Science senior from Midland, serves as treasurer of the MSU Dairy Club and participates in the MSU Agriculture Education Club. She interned on a dairy farm and has worked as a lifeguard. After graduation, she plans to work in agribusiness.

**Laken DuRussel,**

a junior in Animal Science from Munger, has interned at a milling company and with Michigan Farm Radio and worked in wheat research while at MSU. She has participated in FFA and 4-H, as well as on the dairy cattle judging team.

**Erica Holup,**

a sophomore in Animal Science from Ottawa Lake, participates in the Dairy Club and works in a swine research program at MSU. In her spare time, she runs a photography business.

**Mason Fielding,**

a sophomore in Animal Science from Ottawa Lake, participates in the Dairy Club and Dairy Challenge. He has worked in swine research and co-owns a photography business.

**Amy Kern**

is a first-year student completing the Agricultural Operations program at Delta College prior to transferring to MSU. In addition to working on her family farm, Amy works in a veterinary clinic, trains leader dogs and serves as a coach at sports camps.



**Callie Loew,**

a sophomore from Montrose majoring in Animal Science, has worked on her home farm and completed a dental internship.

**Avery Mays,**

a second-year Ag Tech Dairy Management student from Millington, has worked on dairy farms while at MSU.

**Clea Moore,**

an Animal Science senior from Fowler, has worked on dairy farms during her degree and participates in the Driving Club and the Pre-Veterinary Medical Association at MSU.

**Grace Brown,**

a sophomore in Animal Science from Reese, has worked on dairy farms and in dairy cattle research during college. She also participated in 4-H and FFA dairy judging.

**Bette Eggink,**

a second-year Ag Tech Dairy Management student from Deckerville, works on her home farm and participated in FFA. After completing her bachelor's degree, she plans to work in dairy nutrition consulting.

**Brielle Herner,**

from Bentley, is a second-year student completing the Agricultural Operations program at Delta College prior to transferring to MSU. She is working in crop sales and plans to work in agribusiness with a dairy focus after graduation.

**Kaylee Herrygers,**

a second-year Veterinary Medicine student from Hart, has worked on dairy farms, in dairy research and at veterinary clinics. Kaylee participates in the Food Animal Club and is on the palpation team.

**Kylie Weaver,**

a first-year Veterinary Medicine student from Goshen, has worked in dairy research, at a veterinary clinic and on her family dairy farm. Kylie participates in the Food Animal Club and is on the palpation team.

**First-Year Scholarships****Ava Mitchell,**

a first-year Animal Science student from Addison, has worked on dairy farms and participated in FFA. She completed an internship focused on crop management.

**Chloe Steiner,**

a first-year student in Animal Science from Mecosta, has worked on a dairy farm and in dairy nutrition research.

**Clarissa Hill,**

a first-year Ag Tech Dairy Management student from Gregory, has worked at an area dairy farm and at the MSU Dairy Farm and participates in the Dairy Club.

**Recruiting Scholarship****Elizabeth Hyman,**

a junior from Adams, New York, majoring in Animal Science, participates in the Dairy Club, Dairy Challenge and dairy judging. She plans to work in the dairy industry after graduation.



## SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS 2025-2026

## Named Scholarships

**Riley Baker,**

a senior in Animal Science from Coldwater, received the Glenn and Anne Lake Dairy Memorial Scholarship. During his undergraduate program, he completed internships at two dairy farms and a swine farm. Riley serves as the housing manager for FarmHouse Fraternity and participates in the MSU Dairy Club and Dairy Challenge. After graduation, he plans to work at the MSU Dairy Teaching and Research Center.

**James Link,**

a senior in Animal Science from Gregory, received the Russel Erickson Dairy Memorial Scholarship. While at MSU, he interned on several dairy farms in preparation for returning to his family dairy farm. James serves as social chairperson for the MSU Dairy Club and as president of the MSU Wrestling Club.

**Brielle Herner,**

a senior in Crop and Soil Sciences from Bentley, received the Donald and Valera Murray Dairy Memorial Scholarship. She completed her associate degree at Delta College. While at MSU, Brielle participates in the MSU Agronomy Club as she prepares to serve dairy producers after graduation as an agronomist.

**Grace Brown,**

a junior in Animal Science from Reese, received one of two John and Barbara Dilland Dairy Memorial Scholarships. She has worked on several dairy farms and in dairy health research and serves as historian of the MSU Dairy Club. Grace also participates in dairy cattle judging.

**Ava Mitchell,**

an Animal Science junior from Addison, received the second John and Barbara Dilland Dairy Memorial Scholarship. Ava has worked at a dairy farm and completed an agronomy internship. She plans to pursue a career in dairy nutrition.

**Sadie Brearley,**

an Animal Science senior from Portland, received the Archie Studer Scholarship. While at MSU, she has interned on a dairy farm and in dairy genetics and works at the MSU Dairy Teaching and Research Center. Sadie is pursuing a career in consulting and plans to return to her family's dairy farm.

**Rhianna Bruursema,**

a senior in Animal Science, is the recipient of the Nick Bellows Scholarship. She interned on a dairy farm, as a crop scout and with the United Dairy Industry of Michigan in industry relations. Rhianna serves as secretary for the MSU Dairy Club and participates in Block and Bridle Club, dairy cattle judging and Dairy Challenge.

**Laken DuRussel,**

a junior in Animal Science from Munger, is the recipient of the George and Shirley Hazle Dairy Memorial Scholarship. She has interned with Star of the West and Michigan Farm Radio and participates in dairy cattle judging. Laken also works at the MSU Research Farm in the wheat program.

**James Rejman,**

a senior in Animal Science from Scipio Center, New York, is the recipient of the Dan First Scholarship. While at MSU, he interned on a dairy farm and plans to return to his family's dairy farm after graduation.

**Abby Thelen,**

a second-year Ag Tech Livestock Industries student from St. Johns, is the recipient of the Velmar Green Scholarship. Abby has interned on dairy farms and in agronomy and manages her own beef cattle. She participates in dairy cattle judging and serves as treasurer-elect and education chairperson for MSU Block and Bridle Club.



**London Eldridge,**

a first-year Veterinary Medicine student from Stanton, is the recipient of the Red and Edna Cotter Scholarship. London works at a veterinary clinic and with her family's show pigs. She plans to work in food animal medicine with special interests in theriogenology and population medicine.

**Kara Mosier,**

a second-year Veterinary Medicine student from Indiana, is the recipient of the Harold and Lillian Gremel Scholarship. Kara has participated in HPAI research at the MSU College of Veterinary Medicine and works in the Large Animal Clinic. She serves as president of the Food Animal Club and as coordinator for the Palpation Team in the Theriogenology Club.

**Andrew Caldemeyer,**

a second-year Veterinary Medicine student from Evansville, Indiana, received the Gary and Carolyn Trimmer Scholarship for completing the Food Animal Systems Fellowship with the Michigan Milk Producers Association. Andrew serves as president-elect of MSU's Student American Veterinary Medical Association and as secretary-elect of the Veterinary Business Management Association. He has worked in research across animal science, wildlife science, agronomy and cancer cell biology.

**Regular Scholarships****Jonas Ahonen,**

a senior in Food Science from Rockford, has worked in food safety and microbiology research while at MSU. He interned in dairy quality assurance and plans to continue his education in graduate school. Jonas serves as president of the Food Science Club.

**Julia Baker,**

a senior in Animal Science from Georgia, interned with the United Dairy Industry of Michigan and on a dairy farm leading day camps and consumer tours. She participates in the Dairy Club, Sigma Alpha and MSU club gymnastics. After graduation, Julia hopes to work in extension to bring dairy education to urban communities.

**Noah Boske-Smitherman,**

a junior in Animal Science from Perry, serves as new member educator for FarmHouse Fraternity. He plans to attend veterinary school with a focus on food animal medicine.

**Morgan Childers,**

a sophomore in Animal Science from Ortonville, works in dairy nutrition research and interned in a milk analysis laboratory. She serves as philanthropy chair for Sigma Alpha and on the Spartan Showdown Committee for MSU Block and Bridle Club and participates in the Dairy Club.

**Bette Eggink,**

a sophomore in Animal Science from Deckerville, serves on the executive boards for Block and Bridle Club, the Dairy Club and Student Senate. She interned on two dairy farms and works at the MSU Dairy Teaching and Research Center.

**Chloe Endreszl,**

a junior in Animal Science from Commerce Township, has worked at the MSU Tollgate Farm and the MSU Dairy Teaching and Research Center. She participates in the Dairy Club and dairy cattle judging.

**Erica Fielding,**

a junior in Animal Science from Ottawa Lake, participates in the Dairy Club and has worked in swine research at MSU and at an equine center. In her spare time, she runs a photography business.

**Maretta Finley,**

a junior in Animal Science from Howell, participates in the Dairy Club and dairy cattle judging. She manages her own beef business and has worked on dairy farms in her area. Maretta plans to work in dairy consulting.



**Clarissa Hill**

is a second-year Ag Tech Dairy Management student from Gregory. She has worked at an area dairy farm and the MSU Dairy Teaching and Research Center and participates in the Dairy Club. After graduation, she plans to work in the dairy industry while remaining involved with her family's dairy farm.

**Guimell Hernandez,**

a sophomore in Animal Science from Hartford, works in dairy and human resource management at a dairy farm and plans to work in farm safety after graduation. She participates in the MSU Rodeo Club and MSU's College Assistance Migrant Program.

**Amy Kern,**

a junior in Animal Science from Frankenmuth, works on her family farm, trains leader dogs and serves as a coach at sports camps. She has worked at a veterinary clinic and participates in Dairy Challenge. Amy plans to return to her family farm after graduation.

**Callie Loew,**

a sophomore in Animal Science from Byron Center, works on her home farm and has interned on a dairy farm and at Michigan Farm Bureau. She participates in Dairy Challenge and the Dairy Club and serves as vice president of programming for the CANR Student Senate.

**Chloe Steiner,**

a junior in Animal Science from Mecosta, works on her family farm and in dairy nutrition research at MSU. She participates in Block and Bridle Club, the Dairy Club, Sigma Alpha and dairy cattle judging.



**Isabella Stoutenburg,** a senior in Animal Science from Sandusky, works in dairy health research and runs her own magnetic field therapy business for animals. She also helps on her family's farm. Isabella plans to become a food animal veterinarian.

**Elijah Swyers,**

a junior in Animal Science from Dansville, New York, has interned on a dairy farm and works on his family's dairy farm. He participates in the MSU Dairy Club and plans to return to his family farm after graduation.

**Rebecca Vroman,**

a sophomore in Animal Science from Maybee, participates on a club swim team and in the Fisheries and Wildlife Club. She plans to work on a dairy farm after graduation.

**Levi Wascher,**

a senior in Animal Science from Frankenmuth, has worked on a dairy farm and in livestock hauling. He interned with MSU Extension last summer and has served in several leadership roles with MSU Block and Bridle Club.

**Nick West,**

a sophomore in Mechanical Engineering from Mason, has worked on a sugar bush farm and attended National 4-H Congress while completing numerous 4-H projects. He serves as a high school swim coach. After graduation, Nick plans to work in agricultural engineering.

**Lauren Yott,**

a junior in Animal Science from Waterford, plans to become a large animal veterinarian specializing in reproduction. She works at a veterinary clinic and an animal shelter and at the MSU Dairy Teaching and Research Center.

**First-Year Scholarships****Chloe Lawrason,**

a sophomore in Animal Science from Beaverton, has served as a Dairy Ambassador and as an office assistant for a dairy farm. She plans to build on her 4-H experience and her work as a sales associate for livestock feed to pursue a career in dairy nutrition.

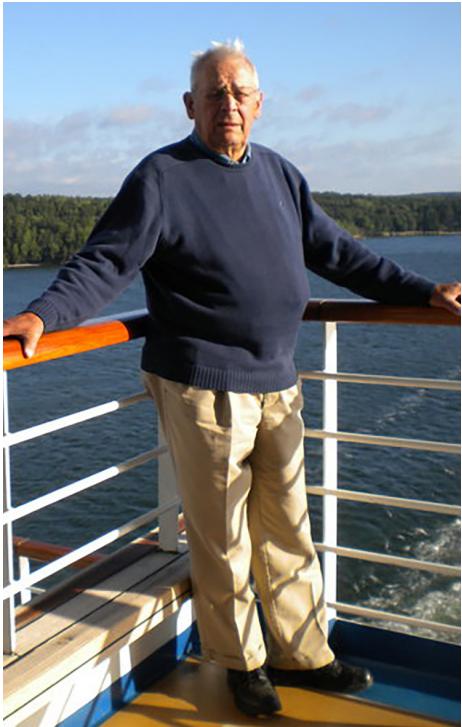


**Anna Swarthout,**

a freshman in Animal Science from Fulton, manages her own feeder calf business and has worked as a veterinary assistant and in her family's excavating business. Anna plans to pursue a career as a large animal veterinarian.

**Recruiting Scholarship****Elizabeth Hyman,**

a senior from Adams, New York, majoring in Animal Science, participates in the Dairy Club, Dairy Challenge and dairy judging. She plans to return to her family dairy farm after graduation. While at MSU, she has completed internships in agronomy and on a dairy farm.

**IN MEMORIAM OF DR. RUSS ERICKSON**

The MDMSF Board of Directors sadly acknowledges the passing of Dr. Russ Erickson on August 8, 2025. Dr. Russel Erickson devoted his career to teaching, research and student mentorship at Michigan State University, leaving a lasting impact on dairy education and experiential learning.

Erickson earned his doctorate in dairy management from MSU in 1972 and joined the faculty in the Department of Animal Science at MSU. He attained the rank of full Professor in 1985 while simultaneously managing the MSU Dairy Research and Teaching Center from 1972-1985.

A passionate educator, Erickson advised the MSU Dairy Club and dairy judging teams for many years and led numerous study abroad programs, providing students with valuable global perspectives on agriculture, particularly in South Africa. He also played a key role in revitalizing the MSU Draft Horse Program and enjoyed working closely with both the dairy and draft horse communities.

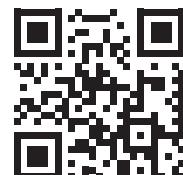
Dr. Erickson served as secretary of the Michigan Dairy Memorial and Scholarship Foundation for 17 years prior to retiring from MSU in 2001. At the time of Dr. Erickson's retirement, the MDMSF Board of Directors established a scholarship in his name in recognition of his dedication and commitment to youth in the dairy industry. The scholarship has been awarded annually since to youth who have an interest in a career in the dairy industry.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

September 27, 2026  
Deadline for scholarship applications



For application or more information about  
MDMSF Scholarships, visit [www.ans.msu.edu](http://www.ans.msu.edu)  
and click on the "students" link.



# A NEW ERA FOR MICHIGAN STATE'S DAIRY PROGRAM



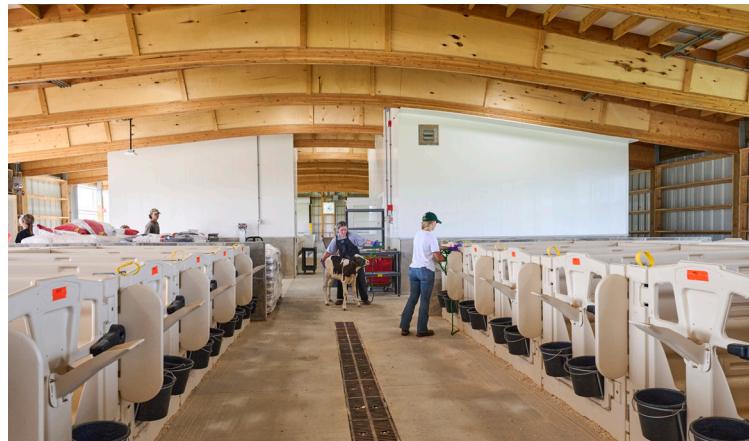
**Barry Bradford**, Professor and C. E. Meadows Endowed Chair in Dairy Management and Nutrition

After decades of anticipation and years of planning, the first cows moved into Michigan State University's new Dairy Cattle Teaching and Research Center in late July. In just the first four months of occupancy, the facility has already expanded the program's capacity and impact:

- The herd has grown from about 210 cows in milk to more than 570.
- At least seven courses in animal science and veterinary medicine are now using the center to blend classroom instruction with hands-on learning.
- More than 50 undergraduate students have been hired as part-time employees.
- More than 160 dairy industry members, along with MSU dairy faculty, staff and students, gathered at the center for the third annual Dairy Industry Tailgate.
- The facility has drawn coverage from local television stations, state and national trade publications, and numerous research sponsors.

While early progress has been significant, work continues to fully realize the vision for the new center. The first controlled studies are expected to begin in early 2026. An official ribbon-cutting, timed with the completion of the north site where the former barns were demolished, is planned for late spring. Public outreach efforts are expected to expand in summer and fall 2026.

The more than \$70 million project was made possible in part by a \$30 million investment from the state of Michigan. Additional support will be needed to sustain and enhance this world-class facility. To learn more about long-term goals and opportunities to contribute, visit MSU's dairy facility website at [canr.msu.edu/dairy-facility/](http://canr.msu.edu/dairy-facility/)



# TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE NEW TAX DEDUCTION FOR CHARITABLE DONATIONS

**Jeffrey Bushey**, Managing Principal,  
Nietzke & Faupel, P.C.

The One Big Beautiful Bill, or OBBB, passed by Congress this past summer and signed by President Donald Trump on July 4, 2025, brings good news for donors. Starting in 2026, a special deduction of up to \$2,000 for married couples filing jointly, or \$1,000 for single taxpayers, will be allowed for charitable contributions.

Before the OBBB, charitable donations had to be included on Schedule A with other itemized deductions. To gain a tax advantage from charitable giving, a taxpayer's total itemized deductions needed to exceed the standard deduction. For a married couple filing jointly, this amounted to \$29,200 in 2024. As a result, very few taxpayers were able to benefit from an added deduction for charitable donations.

Starting in 2026 under the OBBB, each couple can take an additional deduction of up to \$2,000 for cash donations. This deduction is in addition to the standard deduction. That means each taxpayer who donates to charity should consider maximizing their cash contributions to make the most of these new tax savings.

Be sure to consult a tax professional before making any decisions.



# DISPATCHES FROM THE ANIMAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

## Cathy Ernst, Animal Science Chairperson

The Department of Animal Science has been highly active over the past year. Enrollment in the department's four-year bachelor's degree and two-year Ag Tech programs now exceeds 700 students and continues to grow. The Dairy Industry Concentration curriculum is entering its fifth year and maintains an active presence on Facebook and Instagram, where student activities and achievements are highlighted. Participation also continues to rise, with 50 B.S. and 11 Ag Tech Dairy Management students currently enrolled. Since its inception, 25 students have completed the ANS Dairy Industry Concentration.

News and features on dairy research, Extension efforts and student activities can be found in the *Spartan Dairy Newsletter*, published three times per year. Of particular note this year is work from Adam Lock's lab on high-oleic acid soybeans in dairy cow diets, which has received considerable attention for its impact on the dairy industry.

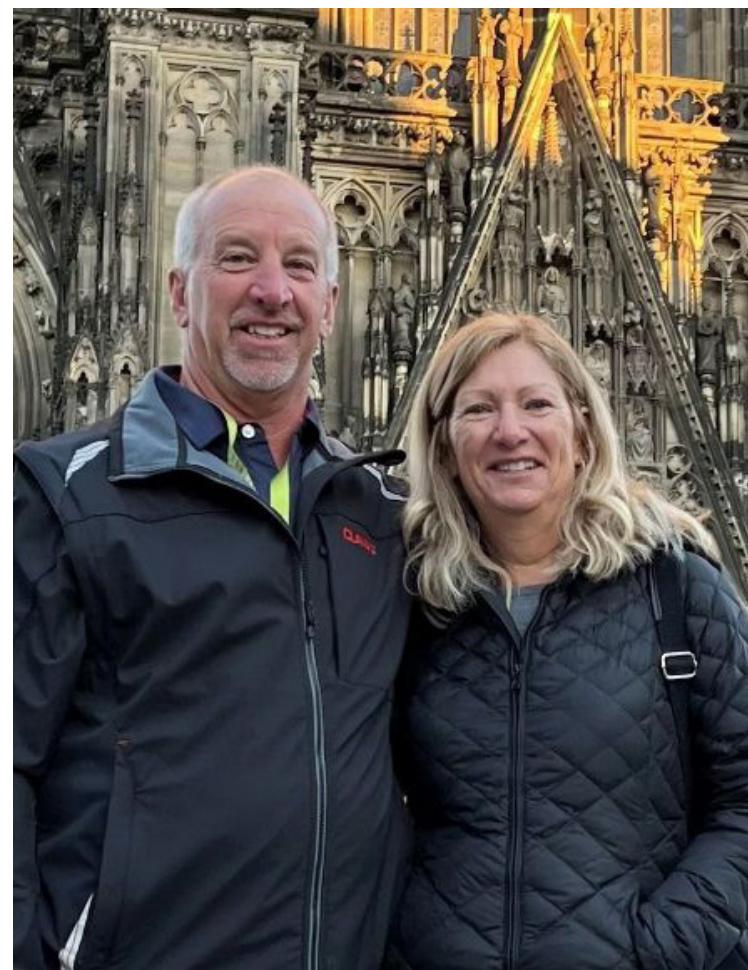
Faculty, graduate students and undergraduate students were active in professional conferences, with several earning top placings. At the Tri-State Dairy Nutrition Conference in April, Haylee Reisinger (advisor Barry Bradford) placed 3rd in the Ph.D. division competition, and Jose Norato (advisor Adam Lock) placed 3rd in the MS division competition. Undergraduates Brooke Seelenbinder (advisor Adam Lock) and Katie Doneth (advisor Adam Lock) placed 1st and 2nd, respectively, in the undergraduate division competition.

MSU Animal Science was also well represented at the American Dairy Science Association (ADSA) annual meeting. In student competitions, Maria Gojcaj (advisor Zheng Zhou) placed 1st and Edward Kolodzie (advisor Zheng Zhou) placed 3rd in the ADSA-USD Undergraduate Poster Contest in Original Research, and Brooke Seelenbinder (advisor Adam Lock) won 1st place in the ADSA-USD Undergraduate Student Oral Contest in Original Research. Adam Lock, Rob Tempelman and Mike VandeHaar all gave symposium presentations, and many graduate students and postdocs presented their research.

Members of the MSU dairy group also received several prestigious awards and honors during the past year. National awards from ADSA included Barry Bradford (American Feed Industry Association Award), Andres Contreras (Zoetis Physiology Award), Adam Lock (Nutrition Professionals Inc. Applied Dairy Nutrition Award) and Pamela Ruegg (ADSA Fellow). Ph.D. students receiving the ADSA Midwest Scholar Award included Ursula Abou-Rjeileh (advisor Andres Contreras), Madison Myers (advisor Andres Contreras) and Jair Parales-Giron (advisor Adam Lock). Two MSU alumni who studied with Adam Lock also received ADSA awards:

Jacquelyn Boerman (Cargill Animal Nutrition Young Scientist Award) and Jonas de Souza (Lallemand Forward Award for Scientific Excellence in Dairy Nutrition). In addition, Mike VandeHaar and Rob Tempelman received the CANR Impact Award for their work to incorporate feed efficiency into Holstein genetic selection programs.

We are deeply grateful for the support we receive from our alumni and friends. We were pleased to recognize Dutch Meadows Dairy with the 2025 Dairy Farm of the Year award from the department, presented at our dairy banquet in April. A significant highlight of the year was the opening of the new Dairy Cattle Teaching and Research Center, made possible through the tremendous support of many alumni, industry leaders and friends. This state-of-the-art facility will prepare students for careers across the dairy industry and support research directly relevant to industry needs. Students are already learning in the new barn, and we look forward to launching research projects there soon.



*The Michigan State University (MSU) Department of Animal Science named Tony Jandernoa of Dutch Meadows Dairy LLC in St. Johns as the recipient of the 2025 Dairy Farm of the Year.*

# 2025 DAIRY JUDGING REVIEW

The Michigan Collegiate, Ag Tech and 4-H Dairy Judging teams had a successful 2025 season.

In May, four MSU dairy concentration students traveled to Utah to compete in the Richmond Black and White Days Collegiate Dairy Judging Contest. Team members included Laken DuRussel, Maretta Finley, Chloe Steiner and Abby Thelen. The team placed second overall and second in reasons. Chloe Steiner placed 1st in oral reasons. Maretta Finley placed 2nd overall and 4th in oral reasons. Laken DuRussel placed 4th overall and 5th in oral reasons.

The collegiate team for the fall season included Olivia Black, Laken DuRussel, Maretta Finley and Chloe Steiner. The team placed in the top five in oral reasons at each of the three national contests, including 1st place at NAILE. The team also placed 2nd Overall at NAILE and won or placed in the top five in several breeds throughout the season. Individual highlights included Maretta Finley and Olivia Black receiving All-American honors at World Dairy Expo, Chloe Steiner winning oral reasons at NAILE, and several additional individual breed placings.

Abby Thelen represented the MSU Ag Tech team. Abby placed in the top five in at least two breed classes at every contest this fall and placed 8th overall at the All-American Dairy Invitational.

The Michigan 4-H Dairy Judging teams also had a strong season. Joey Arens, Katie Karboske, Hailey Mesbergen and Bryce Ritter represented Michigan 4-H at the All-American Dairy Invitational and World Dairy Expo, while Kelsey Gruner, Ross Kelsey, Austin Preston and Gracie Triick represented Michigan 4-H at NAILE.

At NAILE, the Michigan 4-H team placed 1st in Oral Reasons, 1st in Holstein, 1st in Guernsey, 2nd Overall, 3rd in Jersey, 4th in Ayrshire and 4th in Brown Swiss. Individually, Gracie Triick won the 4-H contest and Kelsey Gruner placed 2nd in oral reasons. All members of the 2025 teams placed in the top five in several breeds, demonstrating a bright future for Michigan 4-H dairy judging.

Thanks to the financial support of many organizations, including MDMSF, Michigan dairy judging students traveled to more than 30 dairy farms in six states and participated in an intensive practice weekend at the Maryland State Fair.

More information and full contest results are available on the program website at <https://www.canr.msu.edu/dairyjudging>



## DAIRY CHALLENGE RECAP

In April, the 2025 MSU National Dairy Challenge Team placed second in a highly competitive division at the national contest in Gainesville, Florida. The team, coached by Dr. Roger Thomson and Dr. Joe Domecq, included Brianna Armbruster, Jaylin Dilsaver, Elizabeth Hyman and Clea Moore. Throughout the week, team members visited several dairies, networked with students and industry professionals and traveled across Florida.

In mid-October, 13 MSU Dairy Education students traveled to Wooster, Ohio, to compete in the Northeast Regional Dairy Challenge Contest. The trip included visits to several Ohio dairies, panel discussions and networking with students from other universities and dairy industry professionals. Aggregate teams composed of students from multiple universities competed against one another. MSU dairy concentration senior Sadie Brearley and sophomore Amy Kern placed first and second on Farm 3, respectively. Senior Eli Swyers also placed first on Farm 2.

In December, more than 80 MSU dairy students competed in the MSU Internal Dairy Challenge Contest. Thank you to First Dairy and the many industry professionals who hosted and supported this year's event.

The MSU Dairy Challenge program is supported by MDMSF and numerous other sponsors, whose contributions allow students to travel throughout the country.

More information about the program can be found on the MSU Dairy Challenge website at <https://www.canr.msu.edu/dairychallenge/>.

## DAIRY ACADEMY RECAP

The MSU Dairy Education Program hosted the fourth annual MSU Dairy Education Academy on Oct. 3-4, 2025. More than 20 high school students and their families attended the event, where they heard from current dairy faculty, met with students and alumni, visited the new MSU Dairy Teaching and Research Center and learned about educational opportunities in dairy at MSU. Thank you to Swisslane Farms for hosting the group on Saturday afternoon.

Since the MSU Dairy Academy was established in 2023, more than 50 percent of participating high school graduates who were eligible to attend MSU have joined the MSU Dairy Education Program. The fifth MSU Dairy Education Academy will take place in fall 2026.

The Michigan Dairy Memorial Scholarship Foundation's financial support is greatly appreciated.



**MICHIGAN  
DAIRY  
MEMORIAL**

**& SCHOLARSHIP  
FOUNDATION**

# CELEBRATE DAIRY LEADERS WITH THE GIFT THAT KEEPS GIVING

One of the ways the Michigan Dairy Memorial and Scholarship Foundation (MDMSF) grows its endowment fund is by honoring individuals for their distinguished service to Michigan's dairy industry. More than 225 individuals have been named MDMSF Honorees since the foundation's establishment over 50 years ago.

A gift of \$1,000 or more to the MDMSF provides permanent recognition and honors a dairy leader for their service and contributions to the dairy industry. Foundation Honorees receive personal recognition from the foundation and their names are inscribed on a plaque in Anthony Hall at MSU. Honoree biographies and photographs are kept in permanent records in the MSU Department of Animal Science. In addition, photographs of MDMSF Honorees are displayed at the MSU Pavilion for Agriculture and Livestock Education.

The items needed for naming an MDMSF Honoree include: a \$1,000 contribution to the MDMSF, an 8x10 photo of the honoree and a one-page biography on the honoree. Many times the presentation to an MDMSF Honoree takes place at an industry or MDMSF event. At other times,

an individual is honored posthumously for their service to the industry through a presentation to the deceased honoree's family.

By honoring individuals through the MDMSF, donors are not only recognizing individuals for their accomplishments in the industry, but they are also investing and providing support to future dairy leaders. As the foundation endowment grows, additional scholarships can be awarded. With the increasing costs of higher education, scholarships often make the critical difference in the lives of students, enabling them to achieve their dreams for the future.

Naming someone as an MDMSF Honoree is a fitting tribute for recognizing someone who has served this great industry of ours. If you are interested in honoring someone through the MDMSF, contact:

- Any MDMSF board member
- Dr. Miriam Weber Nielsen at 517-432-5443 or [msw@msu.edu](mailto:msw@msu.edu)
- CANR Development office at 517-355-0284

## MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO MDMSF

**When the occasion suggests flowers, consider a living, growing tribute.**



## MICHIGAN DAIRY MEMORIAL AND SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

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### MAIL TO:

Dr. Miriam Weber Nielsen  
Department of Animal Science  
Michigan State University  
2265 Anthony Hall, 474 S. Shaw Lane  
East Lansing, MI 48824-1225



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