



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Apply for the 2009 Michigan Dairy Ambassador Scholarship Program

EAST LANSING, Mich. – Students interested in promoting the state’s dairy industry are invited to apply to the Michigan Dairy Ambassador Scholarship and Leadership Program, a unique program open to high school and college students interested in pursuing careers in the dairy industry.

Now in its fourth year, the Dairy Ambassador Program offers young leaders an individualized opportunity to represent the Michigan dairy industry and the Great Lakes Regional Dairy Conference.

“The ambassador program is evolving into a rewarding and ongoing opportunity to develop lifelong leadership skills, begin focusing on career options, and network with potential mentors and employers,” says Sara Long, GLRDC executive board member and architect of the Michigan Dairy Ambassador Scholarship and Leadership Program.

“This program is designed to fill a niche for training future leaders of the dairy industry. It is for anyone who wants to invest a year of his or her time to learning about leadership, how to harness initiative and enhance team-building and motivating skills,” she continues. “It is fulfilling to experience the transformation in young people as they tap into their raw talents to pursue dreams and ideas and apply these to the dairy industry. Whether it’s teaching daycare groups about the dairy industry or speaking publicly in front of a community group or serving ice cream at a local festival, these projects develop character and offer a chance to gain experience by experimenting with various activities and audiences.”

In addition to representing the dairy industry at various functions held through the year Michigan Dairy Ambassadors are each awarded a scholarship. The senior

division winner, reserved for college students up to age 22, receives a \$1,500 scholarship. The junior division winner, limited to high school students in grades 9-12, goes home with \$1,000 that can be applied toward higher education or purchasing a dairy animal within the upcoming year.

“We would like to receive applications from all young people, male and female, who have a genuine interest in the dairy industry, regardless of their farming experience,” Long says. “Whether you want to be a producer, a food scientist or a nutrition specialist, we invite you to apply.”

Lynnae Slavik, Ashley, is the 2008 Michigan Senior Dairy Ambassador. Slavik, daughter of Jim and Doreen Slavik, grew up on her family’s dairy farm and is currently a junior at Michigan State University (MSU) studying animal science.

The 2008 Junior Dairy Ambassador is Brittany Westendorp of Nashville. Westendorp, the daughter of Doug and Louisa Westendorp, helps out on her family’s dairy farm and creamery and is a senior at Maple Valley High School.

Individuals interested in applying for the Michigan Dairy Ambassador Program can learn more at www.glrdc.msu.edu or by contacting [Megghan](#) Honke at (517) 353-3175, ext. 229. Applications must be submitted electronically to honkemeg@anr.msu.edu and will be accepted until Dec.15.

The 2009 Great Lakes Regional Dairy Conference takes place Feb. 5-7 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel and Conference Center on 28th St. in Grand Rapids. Organizers of the annual conference expect to draw more than 400 producers from the Midwest and Canada. For complete scheduling and registration information, visit www.glrdc.msu.edu or contact Megghan Honke at (517) 353-3175, ext. 229.

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