



Young Dairy Leaders Institute (YDLI) Fact Sheet

"Developing Dairy Leaders for Tomorrow"

Our Purpose

Young Dairy Leaders Institute (YDLI) is a dairy leadership program open to young adults, ages 22 to 45, who are involved in the industry as active dairy producers or members of allied industry. The program is unique, encouraging strong retention from the training and personal accountability. Utilizing interactive workshops and a hands-on learning approach, along with individual projects, YDLI takes place in three phases over a twelve-month period of time. Each participant develops top-tier skills and the lasting personal network needed to succeed in today's dairy business. YDLI seeks to attract the brightest and most engaged young adults in the industry, and boasts over 500 alumni since the program's inception in 1993. Up to 75 applicants are selected for each class from across North America, diverse in their backgrounds and roles within the industry. English-speaking international applicants are considered. Our most recent class included individuals from 18 states, as well as participants from Canada, Mexico and Italy.

With the challenges facing today's dairy industry, including unpredictable milk prices, environmental pressures, animal welfare concerns, and fewer young people remaining in the industry, just to name a few, the need for strong and effective leaders has never been greater. Young Dairy Leaders Institute addresses that need.

YDLI is a cornerstone program of the Holstein Foundation. The vision of the Foundation, a 501(c)3 founded in 1989, is "a dairy industry with vibrant leadership."

Our Program

Young Dairy Leaders Institute's three-phase approach ensures participants develop and retain essential leadership skills, apply those skills in real-life scenarios, and then focus on leadership as influence to benefit the dairy industry. Program content is designed to be fresh, relevant and edgy, hitting the hottest topics in today's industry head-on.

Phase I (four-day conference) focuses on individual leadership, communication and personal development learning objectives:

- Expand self-knowledge and personal relations skills, learning about personality types and temperaments
- Develop greater understanding of the consuming public and food industry concerns, and learn to address those concerns in an effective manner
- Learn and practice presentation and media communication techniques to present a stronger image for the dairy industry

Phase II occurs between the on-site trainings in participants' home communities. Class members commit to the following and report progress during Phase III:

- Identify a target audience and develop an action plan to serve as an agriculture advocate on dairy issue of their choice
- Write letters of introduction to local media, as well as local, state and national legislators, to develop a relationship and serve as a resource for agriculture-related issues
- Interview non-farm consumers to gain a greater understanding of their perception of and concerns about the dairy industry and U.S. agriculture
- Prepare and deliver a presentation about the dairy industry for a community organization

Check out video testimonials from recent graduates and learn more at www.holsteinfoundation.org/YDLI!

Phase III (four-day conference) is the final on-site YDLI training and focuses on advanced communications training, leadership skills, and the public policy process. Learning objectives include:

- Become a leader with lasting influence, effectively representing the dairy industry to all sectors
- Gain a greater understanding of how public policy is formed and how to impact it
- Practice advanced communication skills, debate current industry issues and learn to appropriately address opposing viewpoints on any topic

Recent Graduates Say...

- Andy Birch, YDLI 7 graduate and dairy producer from Vermont: **“YDLI was truly was a life-changing experience for me.** It is good to know that there are so many talented and energetic young leaders in the dairy industry and I am sure the connections we made will help us for the rest of our lives.”
- Katie Davis, YDLI 7 graduate and dairy producer from Wisconsin: **“I cannot describe how influential this program has been on my life.** I have gained the confidence to tell the story of the industry and lifestyle that I am most passionate about, dairy - and also have the support and friendship of over 40 other dairy enthusiasts from the U.S, Canada, Italy and Mexico. From media training, to a live debate with the founder of Farm Sanctuary, to learning how to participate in public policy - the knowledge gained has been priceless. Thank you Holstein Foundation for this wonderful experience!”
- Jared Franklin, YDLI 6 graduate and dairy producer from Tennessee : **“YDLI opened my eyes to challenges to our industry that I never would have considered addressing previously.** In my personal experience, finding the initiative to seek out an audience to tell our story to has been a challenge. YDLI helped me learn how to find people to hear our story, how to tell it, and how to counter alternative arguments. YDLI has only broadened my knowledge and skill set, and has given me more tools to use in the day-to-day contact I have with the general public.”
- Kathryn Walker, YDLI 6 graduate from Oregon : **“YDLI is a program that is all encompassing.** It is so much more than learning how to be an advocate for the dairy industry. It taught me how to be a better member for the organizations that I belong to, it allowed me to create a national network of colleagues and it gave me valuable tools and resources. All of this combined has allowed me to be a stronger voice for the dairy industry.”
- Emily Yeiser, YDLI 7 graduate from Pennsylvania : **“YDLI truly 'saved' me from leaving the dairy industry.** Prior to attending YDLI, I questioned my relevance to the industry at large, and I wondered how I might make a real impact on the industry that had so positively influenced my life. Fortunately, YDLI helped me to recognize that there is a future in the dairy industry and it's one that is extremely bright. I was surrounded with 53 classmates and a program that renewed my passion for making a difference in the dairy industry, and identified ways to do so. With the support of amazing classmates and advisors, YDLI has allowed me to find my voice in that pursuit. Thank you again to the Holstein Foundation and all of the supporters of this simply amazing, life-changing program.”

View more online at www.holsteinfoundation.org/YDLI!

Phase II: Having an Impact in Local Communities

As part of their Phase II experience, each class member must develop and execute a personal advocacy project in their local communities. Past graduates have achieved a variety of things, based on their personal interests and involvement, but following are a few examples of recent Phase II projects.

- Nicole Fletcher held an **open house** at her family dairy farm in MA, attracting over 300 consumers on a fall Sunday.
- Laura Pires provided 35 New Jersey elementary school teachers with **ag education resources** and invited them to hold local dairy farm tours.
- Raechel Sattazahn developed a **blog about her daily dairy farming adventures** in PA and encourages others to share our story. In the first few months, she had close to 2,000 visitors with peak viewing at almost 500 in one day.
- Kathryn Hohman hosted a booth at her local Illinois YMCA Open House **promoting the nutritional benefits of chocolate milk after exercising**, and handed out over 100 bottles of milk.
- Katie Davis organized a group of local dairy farmers to participate in a **Wisconsin Dells festival that touched 20,000 people**. They walked cows in the parade, handed out dairy products at an educational booth and answered questions. She said it was the best feeling hearing people cheer for the cows in the parade!
- Jenna Wegner increased agriculture education in the Sioux Empire with a **pen pal program** where farmers write with the students and works with the teachers to integrate ag in their curriculum.
- Chris Carpio teamed up with his FFA chapter in Colorado to hold a **“Taste of Ag” event**. While answering questions about everything from dairy farming to dairy products, he handed out 450 ice cream cups.
- Carissa Sauer built and installed a **video dairy barn** as part of the Dairy Women’s Ice Cream booth at the Oregon State Fair. The video barn will now travel to other events as well.
- Lacking dairy promotional programs like we have in the U.S., and sensing looming pressures from animal activist groups, Class 7’s Canadian participants founded the **Canadian Dairy Advocacy Group**. They started an educational web site, and continue working with political officials to encourage greater dairy advocacy efforts across Canada.