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## **Minnesota, Wisconsin veterinary students receive National DHIA scholarships**

**FITCHBURG, Wis. (February 11, 2020)** – The National Dairy Herd Information Association (DHIA) Scholarship Committee selected three veterinary medicine students – Josh Brown and Mary Liebenstein, University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine, and Emil Wallerer, University of Wisconsin School of Veterinary Medicine – as recipients of \$1,500 scholarships. Selection committee members evaluated applicants on overall interest as a veterinarian planning to work in dairy, involvement in dairy medicine and extra-curricular activities, and interest in using dairy software and dairy records to aid in dairy management and in improving animal health. To be eligible for a National DHIA veterinary student scholarship, applicants must be third- or fourth-year veterinary medicine students and enrolled at a college that is accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Education.

Brown's interest in veterinary medicine ignited at a young age. The son of a mixed animal veterinarian, he witnessed his first displaced abomasum surgery at age 6. His innate comfort around dairy cows stems from the extensive hours he put into his family's dairy farm. In veterinary school, Brown participates in the Production Animal Medicine Club, Small Ruminant and Camelid Club, and Vetouch. These clubs entail doing wet labs on the weekends, providing pet health care for community members with low incomes and attending informational lunch meetings. During the summer of 2018, he worked on three research projects, which involved selective dry cow therapy, teat sealants and Johne's disease. Last summer, Brown interned on a 1,700-cow dairy in Wisconsin. His duties included assisting with calvings and herd checks, processing calves, treating fresh cows and sick cows, and entering data into DairyComp.

Attending the National 4-H Dairy Conference sparked Liebenstein's interest in becoming a veterinarian. Her dairy farm background provided a solid foundation, but she recognized the diversity among dairy farms, so she interned on a 1,500-cow dairy and a system of dairies with 8,000 cows each. Liebenstein did a bovine externship in Washington state, which provided yet another perspective of dairy farming. Before starting veterinary school, she spent a summer working with bovine faculty to collect data for research projects on calves and lameness. This opportunity showed Liebenstein the importance of accurate data collection and ongoing research to help advance the dairy industry. Armed with a Spanish minor, she communicated in Spanish with many farm employees and conducted trainings. Liebenstein serves as the Production Animal Medicine Club bovine vice president and belongs to Business Management Association and Christian Veterinary Fellowship.

A veterinarian's son, Walleser also experienced life on the farm. His family owns and operates a dairy, beef cow-calf, and crop farm. As an undergraduate student, Walleser majored in dairy science, focused on dairy management and delved into the data side of milk production. He worked in the dairy cattle reproductive physiology lab and worked with multiple dairies that used DHI testing and the KetoMonitor program to develop and implement ketosis testing protocols and treatment programs. Following graduation from veterinary school, Walleser will embark on a doctorate degree in data analysis, machine learning and production medicine. His research project will focus on using individual milk testing near-infrared (NIR) data to generate useful cow health models. Walleser has worked in multiple labs, researching calf health and developing a model for computer learning related to cow lameness, identification and hoof lesion scoring.

Money generated from the annual National DHIA Scholarship Auction primarily funds the organization's veterinary student scholarship program. Investments and donations also help build the fund. To donate to the fund, contact Leslie Thoman at 608-848-6455 ext. 108 or [lthoman@dhia.org](mailto:lthoman@dhia.org).

National DHIA, a trade association for the dairy records industry, serves the best interests of its members and the dairy industry by maintaining the integrity of dairy records and advancing dairy information systems.

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