



National Dairy Herd Information Association

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## **Kristalyn Benson, Emma Sells, Julia Young earn National DHIA veterinary student scholarships**

Fitchburg, Wis. (February 6, 2026) – The National Dairy Herd Information Association (DHIA) Scholarship Committee awarded \$1,500 scholarships to Kristalyn Benson, University of Wisconsin (UW), Emma Sells, Washington State University, and Julia Young, Purdue University as the 2026 National DHIA Veterinary Student Scholarship recipients. 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 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.

As a Colorado State University (CSU) undergraduate student, Benson gained valuable experience with production animals, including beef and dairy cattle, yaks and camelids, as a student technician in CSU's Livestock Hospital. At UW, the “cornerstones” of her tangible dairy animal skills include calf lung ultrasounding and pulmonary arterial pressure (PAP) testing. Benson spent more than a month in Peru, sharing her PAP testing skills, which helped support Peru’s ongoing measures for increased application of PAP testing to enhance its national dairy industry. In addition to her classroom and field experiences, Benson has taken on leadership roles, including Student American Veterinary Medical Association delegate and chapter vice president.

Through a variety of experiences, Sells developed a passion for research and the role a veterinarian can play on a dairy operation. This passion stemmed from an internship at Threemile Canyon Farms, a 30,000-head commercial dairy operation. During the internship, she gained clinical skills, such as calf and cow necropsy, dystocia management and embryo transfer. Sells also completed a research project that involved evaluating the treatment of respiratory disease in calves, which was the overall winning presentation at the 2024 American Association of Bovine Practitioners Annual Conference. Her extra-curricular activities include Ag Animal Club activities coordinator and vice president, and Theriogenology Club ag animal coordinator and secretary.

Childhood visits to a family friend's Wisconsin dairy farm inspired Young to embark on a career in veterinary medicine. She earned her bachelor's degree in preveterinary medicine animal sciences from the University of Findlay (UF). Along with her studies, Young worked as a student assistant barn manager at the UF Food Animal Barns. The UF barns housed sows, beef cattle, sheep, goats, llamas and alpacas. At Purdue University, she is involved in Food Animal Club, Theriogenology Club and Christian Veterinary Fellowship, and employed by the Purdue Large Animal Hospital. After gaining her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree, Young plans to go into private practice, working as a food animal veterinarian, or working on one large bovine operation as the designated veterinarian on staff.

Money generated from the annual National DHIA Scholarship Auction primarily funds the organization's scholarship program. Investments and donations also help build the fund. To donate to the National DHIA Scholarship 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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