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UW-Madison's Faith Baier earns DCHA scholarship

New Prague, Minn. (April 6, 2021) – The Dairy Calf & Heifer Association (DCHA) named Faith Baier, daughter of Ted and Sue Baier, Durand, Wis., as this year's \$1,000 scholarship recipient. The DCHA scholarship program honors an outstanding student pursuing a degree in agriculture, with a particular interest in calf health and future productivity. After earning her PhD, she plans to pursue an animal welfare/animal husbandry career in research and teaching.

In her youth, Baier raised livestock and worked at her father's feed store. This helped her learn about animal nutrition and form relationships with farmers. Baier earned her bachelor's degree in animal science from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, master's degree in livestock behavior and welfare from Colorado State University (CSU), and is pursuing a doctorate degree in animal welfare from UW-Madison.

At UW-River Falls, Baier took on a variety of jobs to help prepare her for graduate school. She served as a teaching assistant, undergraduate research assistant and animal welfare lab coordinator. As a research assistant, she conducted scientific research projects related to swine welfare, including on-farm data collection and dissemination of results at professional conferences.

While pursuing her master's degree, Baier facilitated beef cattle welfare research projects – from concept creation to data presentation. She also co-taught undergraduate courses related to low stress cattle-handling techniques in a hands-on setting. Furthermore, Baier coached undergraduate, graduate and veterinary student animal welfare judging teams.

Baier's current research involves providing simple brushes to post-weaned dairy heifers. Her study examines how the quantity of brushes per pen of heifers affects their brush use and competition, with practical implications for providing dairy heifers with simple and cost-effective environmental enrichments to enhance animal welfare. She will present study results at the 2021 American Dairy Science Association Annual Meeting.

Furthermore, Baier is preparing to conduct the second in a series of studies she is leading on feed efficiency and resource competition among lactating cows, including first-lactations heifers. These research results will provide practical insights into grouping strategies to promote feed efficiency, reduce competition and improve animal welfare.

In addition to her research, Baier is dedicated to teaching and mentoring agricultural science students. She helps coach UW-Madison's animal welfare judging team, serves as a guest lecturer for dairy management and lactation physiology courses, and supervises undergraduate research assistants who help her with on-farm data collection, processing samples and coding digital data in the laboratory.

The Dairy Calf and Heifer Association (www.calfandheifer.org) was founded in 1996 based on the mission to help dairy producers, calf managers and those professionally focused on the growth and management of dairy calves and heifers. With a national membership of producers, allied industries and research leaders, DCHA seeks to provide the industry's standards for profitability, performance and leadership, serving as a catalyst to help members improve the vitality and viability of their individual efforts and that of their business.

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