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National DHIA names Erika Oosterheert and Alexandra Trulsen as veterinary student scholarship recipients

Fitchburg, Wis. (February 12, 2024) – The National Dairy Herd Information Association (DHIA) Scholarship Committee chose Erika Oosterheert, University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine, and Alexandra Trulsen, Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, as the 2024 National DHIA Veterinary Student Scholarship recipients. Each student will receive a \$1,500 scholarship. 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.

Raised outside of agriculture, Erika Oosterheert embarked on her veterinarian journey by shadowing a large animal veterinarian in her hometown. She discovered that she loved dairy cattle and started working on a local dairy farm to gain dairy husbandry experience. Oosterheert started by milking cows and learned about cattle behavior, milking procedures, cattle well-being and reported lameness, clinical mastitis and/or milk production drops to her manager. She advanced to managing the dairy's transition cows, which involved giving dry cow vaccines, moving cows into the fresh pen, assisting with dystocia cases, tubing neonates with high-quality colostrum and conducting twice-weekly checks on fresh cows. After earning her bachelor's degree from Northern Michigan University, she started veterinary school. At the University of Minnesota, she has worked with animal scientists Whitney Knauer and Sandra Godden on research projects. One study evaluated supplemental colostrum in dairy calves and behavioral data.

As a 4-H member, Alexandra Trulsen worked with a variety of livestock project animals. During high school, she worked on her 4-H leader's family farm – milking cows and feeding calves. She earned a bachelor's degree in animal science from SUNY Cobleskill. During her undergraduate years, Trulsen worked in the school's livestock pavilion – helping oversee care of the college's sheep, goats, swine and beef cattle. She completed an internship with River Valley Vet Services, an ambulatory clinic, which allowed her to participate in dairy herd checks, calf dehorning, sick cow visits and emergency calvings. At Cornell University, she became the student milking

chief/manager in the Teaching Dairy Barn (TDB). After her first year of veterinary school, she completed a show cattle internship at Duncreek Farms. The next summer, Trulsen interned at the Cornell TDB, where she worked as a veterinary student teaching assistant for visiting international veterinary students.

Money generated from the annual National DHIA Scholarship Auction primarily funds the organization's scholarship program. Investments and donations also help build the fund. Support the National DHIA Scholarship Program by donating \$15 or more and receive a copy of *The Big Book of Moo* by Leigh Rubin. *The Big Book of Moo* features nearly 300 cow-centric cartoons. To order, e-mail BookOfMoo@dhia.org. To donate to the National DHIA Scholarship Fund, contact Leslie Thoman at 608-848-6455 ext. 108 or 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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