

PRESS RELEASE**SARAH LEHNER NAMED
2022 DISTINGUISHED SENIOR AT
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Sarah Lehner of Delaware, Ohio, has been named a 2022 Distinguished Senior at The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES).

“The Distinguished Senior Award is the most prestigious undergraduate award in CFAES, recognizing the top graduating seniors from each of the academic units on the Columbus campus,” said Steven Neal, CFAES professor and associate dean and director of academic programs.

Lehner, a double-major in animal sciences and agribusiness and applied economics, from Delaware County, was nominated by college faculty and staff who felt that she personified the award’s attributes of academic, disciplinary, and professional excellence.

“One of the hallmarks of our college is an emphasis on student success, and it is heartwarming to see it exemplified through the accomplishments of our students,” Neal said. “Recipients are our future innovators and leaders who have already made an impact within the academic environment at this university and beyond.”

Lehner, a first-generation college student, grew up on a small dairy farm and says she “always wanted to have the cows around.” It was during her time at Ohio State that she realized working in dairy farming was what she wanted to do.

“The more time I spent away from the farm, the more I was drawn back to it. In the past two years, I’ve sacrificed time with friends to milk cows, bale hay, deliver calves, rinse show heifers, and devote everything I have into helping my animals reach their full potential,” Lehner said.

As a sophomore, Lehner earned a spot on The Ohio State University Dairy Judging Team.

“No Ohio State team had won the national contest at World Dairy Expo in over 30 years,” she said, “but my teammates and I had been judging together since high school, and there was a sense that it may finally be our time to succeed.”

“Despite promising finishes earlier in the year, we had just suffered a major blow in the form of a lowly eighth-place finish at the All-American Dairy Show. We put in extra practices, held onto our lucky buckeyes, and just two weeks after our deflating loss, we pulled off a one-point victory at the National Intercollegiate Dairy Judging Contest. The moment we heard our names announced as the winners, we jumped out of our seats in disbelief, hugged each other and our coach, and held onto an unreal feeling of euphoria for the rest of the night. This



moment was by far the highpoint of my time at Ohio State.”

Lehner has been active in Buckeye Dairy Club since her freshman year and serves as president this year. She also chaired the Buckeye Classic Sale, a registered dairy cattle sale, in her junior and senior years.

She has completed five internships, including with New Generation Genetics, which Lehner said was the most important step toward a career in dairy cattle genetics. During her internship, she visited more than 100 farms in five states.

“I evaluated hundreds of Brown Swiss cows and built relationships with their breeders, equipping me with an elevated acumen for the art of breeding elite cattle,” she said.

A connection gained through that internship led to Lehner judging showmanship at the Wisconsin State Brown Swiss Show.

Since October, Lehner has worked for Select Sires, Inc., based in Plain City, Ohio, as a genomic testing administrator. After graduation, she plans to become full time at Select Sires.

“In this role, I manage the internal genomic testing program. The company tests around 12,000 calves each year, and it is my job to distribute these samples to the correct labs, record information accurately, track results, and communicate resulting genomic data to sire analysts. This role is preparing me for my ultimate goal of a career in semen sales or Brown Swiss sire analytics for an artificial insemination organization. Upon graduation, I also plan to continue developing my own elite herd of high type Brown Swiss and Holsteins.”

Due to persisting impacts of the pandemic, celebration of this year’s CFAES Distinguished Seniors took place during a by invitation reception at the Nationwide and Ohio Farm Bureau 4-H Center on The Ohio State University’s Columbus campus on Wednesday, March 23, 2022. At the recognition celebration hosted by CFAES dean and vice president for agricultural administration Cathann A. Kress and associate dean and director of academic programs Steven Neal, recipients were presented with special award packages. A YouTube video recognizing the award recipients on the Ohio State—College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences YouTube channel was also released on that same day. View the recognition video at go.osu.edu/CFAES2022DSA.

While this year’s recognition took on a varied format from previous years for the 2022 recipients, Neal said, “We were pleased to be able to acknowledge their commitment to their education and dedication to their time as a student in CFAES by recognizing them with the YouTube video, and via social media and professional networking platforms.”

In autumn 2021, there were 2,859 undergraduate students in CFAES pursuing 22 majors and 34 minors. Learn more about CFAES academic programs at go.osu.edu/B4V2.

2021 DISTINGUISHED SENIOR AWARD



SARAH N. LEHNER

DELAWARE, OH

ANIMAL SCIENCES - ANIMAL INDUSTRIES

DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SCIENCES

Photo available by sending a request to flood.13@osu.edu

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