



3/11/2019

## **PRESS RELEASE: BADGER DAIRY CAMP UPDATE**

Badger Dairy Camp has been an important and active program in the Department of Dairy Science, created with the purpose of teaching youth the skills and techniques associated with showing and fitting of dairy animals. Badger Dairy Camp has allowed youth the opportunity to experience the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, its students, staff, and faculty, and connecting with industry professionals. Due to the success of this camp, it is important to our department that Badger Dairy Camp continues to take place and is organized and executed successfully. With that said, we regret to inform you that we will not be hosting Badger Dairy Camp in 2019, but we plan to offer the camp again in the summer of 2020.

One of the issues that we have had with scheduling camp is the busy summer schedule. Competing for a weekend in June has always been very difficult. This year, with the harsh winter causing multiple snow days for students, many youth who would attend camp will still be in school the week of camp with many districts extending the school year. Unfortunately, we are not able to predict these situations, and we do not see value in hosting a camp that youth are unable to attend due to their school schedules. We are unable to move the date to later in June, because we then the camp would conflict with FFA Convention, Area Animal Science Days, County Fairs, and more. This year, we plan to take our time with evaluating the best date for camp in future years.

For future camps, it is our goal to build on the program's past success in a way that also teaches youth about the science and business of the dairy industry. We want youth to see that there are many paths and career options in the dairy industry. Our hope is to broaden the demographics of participants who attend the camp. Our industry is becoming more diverse and inclusive and programming with that in mind will allow us to reach more rural and urban youth who do not live on a farm or have access to one nearby. These youth must be exposed to our industry to keep it growing and sustained.



Like the industry, our University is also going through many changes. Some of these changes affect us directly. As many of you know, UW-Extension has moved to the University of Wisconsin-Madison and has begun to make the necessary changes to be successful on a new campus. As some of you may not know, Yanna Williams, our dairy youth specialist, was on a limited-term fixed appointment within our department which ended this spring. Yanna is now in a permanent position in our department, however, not as our youth specialist. Although we do not have an official dairy youth specialist within our department, we know the value of our youth programs, and we are working diligently to ensure that dairy youth programs take place, even if they look a little different.

We ask that you bear with us during this season of change as your support will get us through this and to a better department! It is our plan to return Badger Dairy Camp in 2020 with a new look and more fun for all youth. We thank you for all of your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'KW'.

Kent Weigel

Professor and Department Chair