

Dairy Girl Network • National Conference

Forward Together



Mystic Lake Center
Prior Lake, MN

November 1 - 3, 2022



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dairy Girl Network Recognizes Forward Under 40 (+4) Award Winners

Prior Lake, Minn. – November 22, 2022... Dairy Girl Network (DGN) honored four dairywomen with awards of leadership achievement at the recent DGN Forward Together biennial national conference in Prior Lake, Minnesota. The four dairywomen recognized for the DGN Forward Under 40 (+4) sponsored by Compeer Financial were Julie Abrahamzon, Kansas City, Mo.; Amanda Freund, East Canaan, Conn.; Leaine Souza, Tulare, Calif., and Emily Yeiser-Stepp, Leesburg, Virginia.

The DGN Forward Under 40 (+4) Award sponsored by Compeer Financial, recognized four passionate dairywomen working to better our industry today. The DGN Forward Under 40 award is presented biennially at the Forward Together Conference. For 2022 only, women age 44 and under were eligible for the DGN Forward Under 40 (+4) award. Because the 2020 DGN Forward Together event was held virtually, award recipients were not honored. Therefore, the 2022 award criteria was modified to Forward Under 40 (+4) opening the door for women who may have missed the opportunity in 2020.

Julie Abrahamzon, Kansas City, Mo., was one of the DGN Forward Under 40 (+4) honorees of 2022 sponsored by Compeer Financial. Abrahamzon has experience in leading high performing teams, business development, strategy and financial management. She has a deep passion for delivering value to dairy customers and developing her teammates. Starting as an "only" in her early days as a management associate, she has risen to be an outstanding leader and enacted positive change for the Cargill organization along the way. Early in her career, she became one of the first, and youngest, female sales leaders within the Cargill Animal Nutrition business. Thanks to her incredible work ethic and key allyship—which she always is quick to mention— she became “the only” female on the Cargill dairy leadership team before she turned 30. She is currently the commercial director for the Cargill Animal Nutrition North America Dairy Business. She has been with Cargill for 16 years in a variety of leadership roles, all within animal nutrition and health.

Amanda Freund, East Canaan, Conn., was one of the DGN Forward Under 40 (+4) honorees of 2022 sponsored by Compeer Financial. Freund was raised on a multi-generational dairy farm, embracing responsibilities and privileges from childhood through her adulthood. She served in the Peace Corps in Zambia. Freund is involved with her family's farm market, nursery and catering operation, in addition to being a principal employee of CowPots. She is active with her Cooperative's Young Cooperators organization, served with Connecticut Farm Bureau, Connecticut Dairy Board and hosts her own podcast that focuses on connecting people to their food. She opens her farm and business to the public to encourage and improve

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consumer and neighbor perceptions and knowledge. Freund has been featured by Forbes, has engaged policy makers at every level from hosting the Undersecretary of the USDA to local and congressional officials. She lends her voice and talents as a speaker and panelist often, including at the DGN Forward TogetherHER Conference.

Leaine Souza, Tulare, Calif., was one of the DGN Forward Under 40 (+4) honorees of 2022 sponsored by Compeer Financial. Souza is making a difference in her local, state and national community. Her husband's family has a dairy farm in which she is active along with her husband and children, giving back to their local community and involvement in 4-H. She continually advocates for dairy producers to ensure their voice and specific issues and concerns are being heard. Souza also serves on the board of DairyCares and California Ag Council. She has volunteered to assist DGN in organizing events at the World Ag Expo for dairywomen to connect during the event. Souza has been a Land O' Lakes employee for over 15 years starting her career at the Tulare Butter Manufacturing Facility, holding several roles in quality and member and government relations organization. She is currently the director of the western region for member & government relations.

Emily Yeiser-Stepp, Leesburg, Va., was one of the DGN Forward Under 40 (+4) honorees of 2022 sponsored by Compeer Financial. Yeiser-Stepp has impressed many people by how she manages a team and the dairy farmers she serves. Through her professional career, she has always made it a point to uplift those around her. Her confidence and integrity have allowed her to always speak her mind and stand up for what she believes in - and who, she believes in. This has a domino effect because of her mentorship and sponsorship for other women, which in result they have been able to do the same for other women. Her confidence and open mind allow her to effectively lead the National Dairy FARM Program, that is creating a better life for dairy animals and a stronger trust between farmers and consumers. She has been involved in a lot of dairy organizations including, but not limited to, Dairy Girl Network, YDLI, WDE Youth Planning Committee, WDE Dairy Judging Contest Official, Maryland State Fair, PSU Dairyman's Scholarship Committee and her local bible study. Today, she serves as the Vice President of the NMPF FARM program.

Dairy Girl Network partners with organizations valuing personal and professional development for dairywomen. DGN national partners supporting all women in dairy by enhancing lives and creating opportunities are Undeniably Dairy, Cargill, Dairy Farmers of America, Diamond V, The National Dairy FARM Program, Farm Credit Services of America, Land O' Lakes, Merck Animal Health, Michael Best and Zoetis.

Dairy Girl Network connects all women of the dairy industry, encouraging ideas and camaraderie in an effort to achieve personal and professional development. Designed as a welcoming network of passionate women involved in dairy, relationships will grow through shared experience, support and inspiration.

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