

Cal Poly Dairy Science to Receive \$5 Million from Leprino Foods

Cal Poly's Dairy Science Department will receive \$5 million from Denver-based Leprino Foods Company.

The pledge will be paid over the next two years and will support an endowed faculty position, cover costs to remodel dairy science teaching laboratories, and provide initial start-up costs for a new master's degree program.

The first of its kind in the United States, the new Master of Professional Studies in Dairy Foods degree program will include classroom study, hands-on production and an industry externship. Graduates of the program will be well prepared to enter California's dairy foods industry.

Recognizing Cal Poly's hands-on program as an essential component in the training they seek for their employees, Leprino Foods believes this partnership is critical to the goal of developing the next generation of dairy industry leaders. Leprino Foods, which operates three plants in California, has, for many years, had great success hiring Cal Poly Dairy Science graduates. The company is also a research partner through the Dairy Products and Technology Center (DPTC) and buys milk from Cal Poly's dairy.

"Leprino Foods and Cal Poly have always been committed to innovation in the dairy industry, and Leprino Foods is excited about this opportunity. This investment will help develop the future talent in our industry," said Dan Vecchiarelli, Vice Chairman of the Board, Leprino Foods.

Cal Poly President Jeffrey D. Armstrong believes the partnership is a crucial accomplishment in Cal Poly's overall effort to attract the best talent possible and to address the needs of the growing dairy industry. "We are proud that Leprino Foods has selected Cal Poly as a long-term partner, and its commitment will inspire other industry leaders to join in support of the dairy," Armstrong said.

Valued at \$63 billion in economic activity for the state and nearly \$7 billion in dairy farm receipts, the California dairy industry was responsible for more than 443,000 jobs in 2008.

Dairy Science Department Head Bruce Golden says the pledge will help the university meet its mission to supply students to California's workforce. "With this contribution, Cal Poly will expand its dairy science programs, better support the dairy foods industry, and produce future leaders who are ready to work on day one," said Golden.

Dairy producers, processors, alumni, and other friends of Cal Poly have a long history of helping to ensure the dairy industry of the future will be led by trained graduates from Cal Poly. The Center was originally founded in 1986 through a three-way partnership between Cal Poly, the nation's dairy producers, and the dairy processing sector. Since that time, the program has grown from its infancy to a internationally recognized center of excellence in dairy foods to support the dairy industry of California, which has become the number one milk producing state in the nation and a significant provider of dairy products and dairy ingredients worldwide.

With tight state and federal resources to support university programs, new resources become increasingly important to ensure that Cal Poly continues to address future needs of the nation's dairy industry. "The dairy foods faculty and staff at the DPTC are committed to continuing the legacy of Dairy Foods excellence by securing the necessary resources to expand and improve its outputs from the dairy foods programs. Leprino Foods has made a very significant commitment to partner with us, and along with other dairy and allied industry partners, to enhance Cal Poly's ability to attract more of the very best students, staff and faculty; deliver greater industry service; facilitate innovation through the Center's outreach and research efforts; and support an increasingly complex and competitive global marketplace for US dairy foods and ingredients" said Phil Tong, DPTC Director and Professor of Dairy Foods.

Commenting on the joint effort between the university and one of the world's leading cheese and dairy ingredients producers, California Dairy Research Foundation Executive Director Joe O'Donnell said, "Cal Poly listens to the needs of the dairy industry, and continues to deliver."