



Matthew Klein

When I first moved to California, I was aware that this was a prominent dairy state, but the scale of production never made an impact on me until I saw it firsthand. I started out my academic career as an entomologist, at Oregon State University, working on pest management in forage crops, a far cry from California dairy. However, in my work I consistently came across animals and found myself, in 2018 - 2019 collaborating with Oregon dairymen to study the impact of various invertebrates on their pastures. I always liked animals, but this exposure solidified my stance towards the necessity of dairy production in the global food market and is what inspired me to join the lab of Dr. Frank Mitloehner at UC Davis. I knew there was no better way to get involved with these topics while also continuing my career than by working at one of the most influential universities in the most prolific dairy state.

Becoming a part of the California dairy community is valuable for many reasons. As a new member of the team, I am looking forward to making contacts across the industry to see where my skills can be best applied but also to learn as much as I can in the process. From what I've seen, California dairy is a community of people striving to turn out the best product possible, that's a community I want to be a part of.

As a researcher with a background in entomology and crop production, I might not have the same vision that a veteran dairyman might, nevertheless, what I see in store for California dairy could be easily appreciated across the board. I envision dairy production that continues to exceed expectations with regards to product quality, but also with regards to environmental stewardship and animal health. California dairy will certainly continue to excel in these areas through increased outreach and education. Oftentimes consumers are averse to a product due to a simple preconceived notion or misunderstanding. I envision California dairy presenting their case on such topics astutely and in ways that help to alleviate any trepidation that people may have about consuming or supporting California dairy.

This successful future of California dairy will depend not only on outreach and education, but also on continued appreciation for sustainability. Sustainability, to me, means progress. I don't know of too many profitable systems that just stay the same and never change, and dairy is certainly one that's changed. Sustainability means training the next generation, ensuring an adequate revenue, assessing new production methods, new technology, and conducting research to uncover incompletely understood variables.

Sustainability also of course relates to the land, the people working that land, and the fruits of that labor. Dairy is an integral part of these interconnected aspects of agriculture, without cows, massive amounts of plant products would go unutilized, effectively leading to a decrease in sustainability through a loss of energy and nutrients from our food system. With cows, we can concentrate these nutrients, break down molecules that are indigestible to humans, and in turn produce a product high in healthy fat and protein, as well as nutrients such as calcium, potassium, and vitamin A.

Considering the future, I anticipate a continued appreciation for dairy and for the role dairy plays in sustainability and nutrition. I think with research and outreach we can effectively communicate our position to a diverse global community, improving the lives of many through providing delicious and

nutritious food, while also protecting the environment through our continued dedication to efficiency and conservation. I am excited at the opportunity to contribute to the conversation about the role of dairy in nutrition and sustainability, and I think with increased dialogue between producers, the public, and researchers we will be able to put our best into representing the quality and importance of California dairy.