

Dairy Science Club hosts record-breaking New York Holstein Harvest Sale

By: Rebecca Harrison (Submitted, though not published)

For the eighteenth year, the Cornell University Dairy Science Club (CUDS) hosted the New York Holstein Harvest sale, setting a new record of \$5,223 average auction sale for 102 animals throughout the day, with the high seller reaching \$32,000.

The sale was held at the Cornell Livestock Pavilion on October 27. Sponsored by the New York Holstein Association, the sale brought producers from around the New England and Upper-Midwest regions together to sell and purchase dairy cattle representing the finest the industry has to offer. For their work preparing and managing the cattle, CUDS received a commission to help support the club's mission for education.

According to club President Sara King '13, the goal of student participation in CUDS is to educate members with the resources Cornell has to offer, so they can in turn serve as intermediaries to educate the public about domestic and foreign dairy industries and what it is doing for consumers.

"Because a majority of us came from farms, it is our responsibility to come out and advocate for our businesses and dairy food production. Basically, we want to give back to our roots and families," King explained.

Supported by fundraising and public relations efforts, most vitally hosting the Harvest Sale, CUDS provides student members opportunities for a first-hand, educational enrichment of the dairy industry. Extension and outreach initiatives are strengthened through educational trips to Italy, Germany, California and other locations over University breaks.

"Most of our outreach here [at the sale] is typically with alumni and with the greater agricultural industry here in New York," CUDS Public Relations Chair Lauren Osborn '13 said. "Our goal is to try to keep that positive image of our club and University during sale week, make sure people have a great time, and that they want to come back to contribute, as the Harvest Sale is our big fundraising event for the year and a premier showcase for high quality cattle."

As a fundraiser primarily for the students' international trips, the Harvest Sale historically begins with a pie auction. This year, twelve pies and a few cheese baskets brought in between \$300 and \$550 apiece. David Rama and the Cattle Exchange auctioneered both the cattle and pie sales.

"Working with these cattle, their sellers and buyers helps us understand different strategies in the way we breed dairy cattle for a better product, better confirmation, and how they perform – and that's all technology that has been developed as part of the Land Grant university, and what we've learned in classes," Osborn said of the club's sale.

The sale, hosted by CUDS, was student-run with the guidance of Associate Professor of Animal Science Mike Van Amburgh. Animals — of all different ages and genetic lines — were brought to Cornell during the week prior to the sale, where club members were in complete charge of

maintenance and fitting of animals in preparation for sale. On sale day, select students were in charge of showing the cattle in the ring as the auctioneer interacted with the crowd of buyers; other students were in charge of hospitality of guests, such as interacting with buyers and running concessions.

“The sale is a great opportunity for the club to come together and engage some of our leading dairy producers through the interactions with the cattle, sellers and buyers. It was the most successful sale of its kind so far this year and is a very good example of the quality of cattle available in NY and the Northeast and also how technologies such as genomics are changing how the industry evaluates and values animals,” added Van Amburgh.