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Niman Ranch Women in Food Scholarship to Advance Careers of US Farm and Ranching Families

Niman Ranch Next Generation Foundation Collaborates with Women Chefs and Restaurateurs and James Beard Foundation Women in Leadership Program to support women culinary careers

MINNEAPOLIS (April 29, 2019) - A new initiative was unveiled at the 2019 Women Chefs and Restaurateurs National Conference to support young women in the culinary arts. Niman Ranch announced a new scholarship opportunity for Niman Ranch farm family children to pursue a career in the culinary arts. The new Women in Food Scholarship program, in collaboration with Women Chefs and Restaurateurs and the James Beard Foundation's Women Leadership Program, will help support future women chefs and culinary leaders who will make it their priority to champion food produced sustainably and responsibly by independent family farmers in the U.S.

The new Niman Ranch Women in Food scholarship program will provide \$5,000 to dedicated and passionate young women to pursue a career in the food and beverage industry. This financial support can be used to support education in the food industry, including, but not limited to, covering living expenses while apprenticing with a chef or butcher, tuition at culinary school, or food service certification. The chosen recipient will also have the opportunity to receive professional mentorship by leaders in the field, through Women Chefs & Restaurateurs and the James Beard Foundation's Women Leadership Program, both being top organizations advancing women in the culinary industry.

"For far too long, women have not had the same opportunity as men to move into leadership roles in the food and beverage sector," said Kristen Lee-Charlson, Executive Director of Women Chefs and Restaurateurs. "The new Niman Ranch Women in Food program will help women get a boost in the culinary industry, changing the culture of the food sector one woman at a time."

It is an unfortunate fact that women are dramatically underrepresented in the culinary world. While women represent nearly 47 percent of the American workforce, less than 20 percent of chefs in the country are women, according to 2018 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and that number shrinks to the single digits when narrowed to head chefs. With this new scholarship, Niman Ranch is hoping to help remedy this imbalance, while simultaneously supporting future culinary leaders who can be champions for American farmers and sustainable practices.

"Young people today are keenly aware of the impact their actions have on the environment. The direct connection of this scholarship between sustainable farming practices and the food on our plates and in our restaurants cannot be overestimated," said Katherine Miller, Vice President of Impact for the James

Beard Foundation. “We are thrilled to be a part of this new program that will help foster the next generation of leaders in our fields.”

The Women in Food scholarship program will be a new initiative of the Niman Ranch Next Generation Foundation. Started in 2006 with just one scholarship, the Foundation has blossomed over the past 11 years, dispersing more than \$500,000 to the children of Niman Ranch farm families who are committed to furthering their education to support rural communities and sustainable agriculture.

This new scholarship is unique in that it will be open to women connected to Niman Ranch farm families. “We are thrilled to offer yet one more opportunity to support the families of our farmer network. Farm kids are raised learning the value of a hard day’s work and personal responsibility—skills essential to succeeding in the culinary industry,” explained Jeff Tripician, Niman Ranch Next Generation Foundation board member.

“Niman Ranch wouldn’t be the company it is today without the help of chefs who during our early days took a chance on a little-known company raising pigs the old-fashioned way,” said Drew Calvert, Executive Director of the Next Generation Foundation. “As a woman working in the culinary field, I have been heartened to see more female leadership over the years. This new program will further support this evolving field, helping young women lead in the food and beverage industry for years to come.”

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*With more than 40 years as an industry leader, **Niman Ranch** is a community of more than 720 independent family farmers and ranchers who raise livestock traditionally, humanely and sustainably to deliver the finest-tasting meat. All Niman Ranch pork, beef, lamb and prepared products are certified under the Certified Humane® program and available nationwide at both food service and retail locations.*

***Women Chefs & Restaurateurs** is an active resource for women seeking to advance culinary education and gain recognition in various areas of the food and beverage industry. This network of successful women focuses on the art and business of food and beverage, with the clear intention to support and promote their collective and individual career highlights. They support better practices, global sustainability, organic movements, equal pay, and balance in work and life.*

*The James Beard Foundation’s mission is to promote good food for good™. For more than 30 years, the **James Beard Foundation** has highlighted the centrality of food culture in our daily lives. Through the James Beard Awards, unique dining experiences at the James Beard House and around the country, scholarships, hands-on learning, and a variety of industry programs that educate and empower leaders in our community, the Foundation has built a platform for chefs and asserted the power of gastronomy to drive behavior, culture, and policy change around food. To that end, the Foundation has also created signature impact-oriented initiatives that include our Women’s Leadership Programs, aimed at addressing the gender imbalance in the culinary industry; advocacy training through our Chefs Boot Camp for Policy and Change; and the James Beard Foundation Leadership Awards, which shine a spotlight on successful change makers. The organization is committed to giving chefs and their colleagues a voice and the tools they need to make the world more sustainable, equitable, and delicious for everyone.*