



The Center Spotlight

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THREE GRANT OPPORTUNITIES NOW AVAILABLE FOR PA DAIRY PRODUCERS

HARRISBURG, PA — The Center for Dairy Excellence has opened three grant opportunities for Pennsylvania dairy producers! If you're looking to invest in a project that boosts milk production, work one-on-one with a consultant on a key area of your dairy business, or build a team of trusted advisors to pursue a transformation or modernization project on your farm, these grants programs can help make your ideas a reality. Learn more about these opportunities:

- Dairy Productivity Grants:** Are you considering a project that directly impacts milk production on your dairy operation? From milking efficiency technologies and feeding-related technology to activity monitoring systems, apply for a Dairy Productivity Grant by January 5, 2026. If approved, you will receive up to \$10,000 for your project with a 25 percent match. This new Dairy Productivity Grant is focused on first-time investments in Milking Efficiency Technologies (pipeline, automatic milking technology, robotic milking technology, and direct load milking), Feeding Technologies (TMR mixer, feed tracking and inventory technology), or Activity Monitoring Systems (boluses, collars or tags). Don't see your project on this list? Email Melissa Anderson at manderson@centerfordairyexcellence.org or call 717-788-0296 to see if your project meets the requirements. **How to apply:** Visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/productivity-grants by Jan. 5 or call 717-346-0849.
- Dairy Decisions Consultants (DDC) Grants:** Are you looking to work one-on-one with consultants to help make decisions that will shape the future of your farm? Consultants can work with your farm in one of seven key areas, including employee management, business and financial planning, direct marketing and more. Receive up to \$4,500 in funds to work directly with an experienced consultant – we have a list of 22+ to choose from. Grants are available on a first-come, first-served basis starting December 3. **How to apply:** Visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/ddc or call 717-346-0849.
- Transformation and Transition Team Grants:** Are you considering a major business transformation or looking to start the farm transition process? Using a team approach through a Transition or Transformation Team Grant can provide greater insight into your business's decision-making process. Receive up to \$3,500 in funding, which could cover the cost of paid team members, discovery-related costs, lawyer expenses, and attorney fees. Grants are available on a first-come, first-served basis starting December 3. **How to apply:** Visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/grants or call 717-346-0849.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS ANNOUNCED FOR 2026 PA DAIRY SUMMIT

Purpose is your compass. Passion is your fuel. Find your True North and join us at the PA Dairy Summit on **February 4-5** where you'll join more than 350 forward-thinking dairy producers and industry professionals! Hear from more than 20 speakers, and learn how to control the chaos, commit to your purpose, and stay the course through the highs and the lows. Registration is now open, with discounts available for dairy producers. Visit www.padairysummit.org to learn more.

Hosted by the Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania and Center for Dairy Excellence, we have exciting keynote sessions planned for you this year. The following keynote sessions are included in the program: Owing Your Future Is Not DNA-Driven with Michael Hoffman; Forging Ahead with Innovation: A Producer Showcase with Brody Stapel of Wisconsin, the 2024 Young Dairy Farmer of the Year; Controlling Your Own Destiny: A Small Business Showcase with Painterland Sisters and Taylor Chip Cookie; Inspiring Pathways to Profitability: A Producer Panel with Jim Hertzler, Donny Bartch and Matt & Megan Fry; The Road Ahead: FMMO Reform & Dairy Pricing with Sara Dorland; and World Without Cows: A Deeper Dive Behind the Scenes with Michelle Michael, Brandon Whitworth and Dr. Holder Vaughn.

ATTENDING KEYSTONE FARM SHOW? JOIN US FOR THESE EVENTS

Are you attending the Keystone Farm Show in York, Pa. on January 6-8? Visit the Center for Dairy Excellence's booth to meet our team, learn about current grant opportunities, and vote on the Farmer-Made Ingenuity contest entries! The following events for dairy producers are also happening at Keystone:

- > HPAI & Biosecurity Resource Center on Jan. 7:** Drop in to the HPAI & Biosecurity Resource Center in Building 3 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Jan. 7 and start making biosecurity a priority with three easy steps. We will have signage and free PPE equipment, including wash kits, for producers who stop by.
- > Organic Dairy Lunch and Learn on Jan. 7:** Learn about the process of transitioning to organic, the benefits and challenges, and the differences in production practices in Building 1. Enjoy lunch, network with other organic dairy producers, and speak one-on-one with processors and service providers.



MARKETS SHIFTING AND LOWER MARGINS EXPECTED FOR 2026

Pennsylvania Dairy Industry Performance Scorecard Summary	October 2024	October 2025	Change from Last Year	Target Range
Milk Cows	465,000 cows	460,000 cows	- 1.1%	
Total Monthly Milk Production	802 mil. lbs.	798 mil. lbs.	- 0.5%	
Wholesale Milk Price	\$25.40 / cwt.	\$19.80 / cwt.	- 22.0%	
PA Daily Feed Costs (cost of corn, soybean & hay at 100 lbs. milk)	\$7.18 / cwt.	\$7.92 / cwt.	+ 10.3%	
Milk Margin (IOFC @ 100# of Milk)	\$19.05 / cwt.	\$14.85 / cwt.	- 22.0%	
Rolling 12—mo. Herd Production Avg.	23,662 lbs.	23,696 lbs.	+ 0.1%	25,000 lbs.
Average Somatic Cell Count	213,390	217,030	+ 1.7%	< 150,000
% Herds less than 200,000 SCC	55.3%	54.3%	- 1.8%	
Average Days in Milk	181 Days	181 Days	0.0%	165 days
Average Age at First Calving	24.9 months	24.9 months	- 0.1%	21-24 mo.
Average Days to First Service	87 Days	87 Days	0.0%	< 80 days
Average Pregnancy Rate	15.9%	15.4%	- 2.8%	> 20 %

HARRISBURG, PA. — As 2025 comes to a close, dairy markets look very different than they did at the beginning of the year. With heifer inventories at all time lows and the nation's dairy herd contracting, prices were fairly stable. Fast forward just twelve months, as of Dec. 18, many factors are impacting the state of dairy right now.

> Nation's supply up: A growing milk supply has pushed Class III and IV milk prices down significantly over the past few months. USDA announced November's Class III milk price at \$17.18 per cwt., up 27 cents from October but down \$2.77 from a year ago levels. This is the lowest Class III milk price seen since April 2024. Class III milk futures prices on the CME drop to \$15.38 in January 2026 before rebounding slightly to above \$16 in April.

> Milk prices at five year low: Class IV milk prices have fallen even more significantly, with November's Class IV price announced at \$13.89 per cwt., the lowest price since March 2021. It is 41 cents below October's price and \$7.23 under the Class IV price from November 2024. Class IV milk futures prices on the CME drop to \$13.70 in January before rebounding to above \$14 in March.

> Nation's dairy herd at recent record high: Part of what is pushing the milk supply up and milk prices down is a huge increase in the nation's dairy herd, with USDA reporting 9.545 million head of dairy cattle in the US in October. This number is up 208,000 head from a year ago. *With milk prices falling dramatically over the past couple months, now is the time to think about how you can prepare against the lower prices to come.*

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