



The Center Spotlight

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DAIRY PRODUCERS INVITED TO FREE ANIMAL CARE WORKSHOPS AT FIVE LOCATIONS THIS SPRING

Editor's Note: This is part of a bi-monthly series of timely articles and information from the Center for Dairy Excellence, a non-profit organization focused on strengthening Pennsylvania's dairy industry.

HARRISBURG, PA — As you and your dairy team work to enhance efficiency and cow comfort, we hope you'll join us at one of five animal care workshops happening across the state this spring. Hosted by the Center for Dairy Excellence, PA Beef Council, the Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania (PDMP) and Penn State Extension, the first workshop will be held on March 4 in Cumberland County. These workshops are offered at no cost, and they qualify as National FARM training. After rotating through the four training areas during the workshops, you'll get a physical certificate that you can save in your files to show your commitment to FARM standards. The training areas for the workshops include: 1. On-Farm Pharmaceutical Stewardship. 2. Calf Care and Nutrition. 3. Biosecurity and Premise Mapping for Dairy Producers. 4. Fitness for Transport and Quality Assurance. During the workshop, speakers from these training areas will help dairy producers and their employees answer the following questions:

- What Average Daily Gain (ADG) do you need to achieve in order to reach optimal growth targets by your desired Age at Calving?
- What are the critical control points on your dairy farm where disease transmission risks are highest?
- What are two of the conditions for approved extra-label drug usage in dairy cattle?
- How can you mitigate disease risk in your pre-weaned calves?
- How are animal movement and traffic flow managed within and around your premises?

The workshops will be held on the following dates and locations: Tuesday, March 4 in Cumberland County, Tuesday, March 11 in Lancaster County, Tuesday, April 1 in Crawford County, Tuesday, April 8 in Mifflin County, and Tuesday, April 15 in Bradford County. To learn more and sign up for a workshop, visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/animal-care, scan the QR code above, or call 717-346-0849.



PA DAIRY PRODUCERS ENCOURAGED TO SHARE INSIGHT IN 2025 SURVEY

PA dairy producers: please share your thoughts in the 2025 Dairy Producer Survey. The Center for Dairy Excellence and Penn State Extension are collaborating to study how the latest changes in the dairy industry impact your dairy business. Your input will help shape the grants and resources available to dairy producers in the future. Visit centerfordairyexcellence.org/2025-dairy-producer-survey to take the survey by April 30.

THE LATEST HPAI UPDATE FOR PA DAIRY PRODUCERS

Since the first detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in PA, there have been 11 total preliminary findings in commercial poultry flocks across various counties in the state. The Lehigh County control zone is no longer active. While this strain is being transmitted through wild geese in the Eastern Fly-Way Zones and is not the strain that has infected dairy cattle in other states, dairy farms in 3 Km Infected Zones around any infected poultry or dairy premise are required to conduct surveillance testing. This is part of the Department's quarantine order in an effort to exercise precaution for both dairy farms and poultry facilities. When a positive case is identified, the PA State Vet's Office is working on reaching out directly to any dairy farms within the 3 KM Infected Zones about testing.

If you would like to stay updated on the status of HPAI in Pennsylvania, and how it affects both poultry and dairy, you can stay connected in the following ways:

- **Get real-time HPAI email updates as new counties are affected:** Email Emily directly at eburge@centerfordairyexcellence.org and we will get you added to the Center's email list. We send out HPAI updates when there is news to report about the situation, new positive results, and new infected zones and required surveillance that affect PA dairy operations.
- **Join the next HPAI Monthly Conference Call on March 19 at 1 p.m.** Panelists from the PA Dept. of Ag. and other organizations will answer your questions in real time about PA's continued response to HPAI, transmission, and how to continue incorporating good biosecurity protocols across the animal agriculture industries. Visit centerfordairyexcellence.org/hpai-industry-call to learn how to connect, or text "Sign up" to 717-585-0766 to get text reminders about the calls.

2025 DAIRY MARGIN COVERAGE PROGRAM OPEN FOR ENROLLMENT

Pennsylvania Dairy Industry Performance Scorecard Summary	December 2023	December 2024	Change from Last Year	Target Range
Milk Cows	465,000 cows	465,000 cows	—	
Total Monthly Milk Production	821 mil. lbs.	821 mil. lbs.	—	
Wholesale Milk Price	\$21.80 / cwt.	\$24.20 / cwt.	+ 11.01%	
PA Daily Feed Costs (cost of corn, soybean & hay at 100 lbs. milk)	\$8.11 / cwt.	\$7.08 / cwt.	- 12.70%	
Milk Margin (IOFC @ 100# of Milk)	\$16.35 / cwt.	\$18.75 / cwt.	+ 14.68%	
Rolling 12—mo. Herd Production Avg.	23,569 lbs.	23,736 lbs.	+ 0.71%	25,000 lbs.
Average Somatic Cell Count	184,070	189,640	+ 3.03%	< 150,000
% Herds less than 200,000 SCC	65.6%	64.0%	- 2.47%	
Average Days in Milk	174 Days	178 Days	+ 2.24%	165 days
Average Age at First Calving	25.1 months	24.9 months	- 0.64%	21-24 mo.
Average Days to First Service	87 Days	88 Days	+ 0.89%	< 80 days
Average Pregnancy Rate	16.2%	15.4%	- 5.00%	> 20 %

HARRISBURG, PA. — The USDA announced that it opened the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) enrollment period for the 2025 Program Year from January 29 to March 31, 2025. Updated Feb. 21, 2025, the DMC Decision Tool forecasts January 2025's margin to reach \$14.32 per cwt, \$5.18 per cwt. over the \$9.50 trigger. Right now, current forecasts don't indicate any payments for 2025, but that can change.

Dairy Margin Coverage is a margin-based insurance program authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill and administered by the USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA). For farms that have never enrolled in DMC before, it is important to understand that the DMC program is intended to serve as a safety net against volatility in either your milk price or in the price you are paying for your feed. Farms can protect anywhere from a \$4 to a \$9.50 margin in 50-cent increments.

What type of historical impact has the DMC Program made? In 2023, DMC indemnities were the highest, with payments triggered in 11 out of 12 months. Prices in 2023 yielded a record low margin of \$6.70 per cwt. average for the year. For those farms covered at the maximum \$9.50 margin coverage level, DMC provided a net benefit of \$2.50 per cwt. in 2023, or just under \$25,000 for every 1 million pounds covered. In 2024, DMC indemnities were triggered in 2 out of 12 months, resulting in a record high margin of \$15.57 per cwt. for the year. With the unpredictable nature of our commodity markets, nobody knows for sure when indemnity payments will be triggered.

To sign up for the DMC Program for the 2025 program year, make sure to visit your local FSA Office by March 31, 2025.

Visit us at centerfordairyexcellence.org or call 717-346-0849.

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