



The Center Spotlight

Website: centerfordairyexcellence.org ♦ Phone: 717-346-0849

GRANT PROGRAMS NOW OPEN FOR PENNSYLVANIA DAIRY PRODUCERS

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 — On Pennsylvania dairy farms, growth and efficiency can mean a lot of things – it’s not a one-size-fits-all conversation. You may be looking to improve production, enhance cow comfort, invest in new facilities, or start building a transition plan for the next generation. The Center for Dairy Excellence has several competitive grant opportunities that are opening this fall for Pennsylvania dairy producers. Whether you want to invest in an activity monitoring system or work one-on-one with a consultant on a transition or transformation project, learn more about these four grant opportunities.

> **Dairy Decisions Consultant (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 farms in one of seven key areas, including employee management, business and financial planning, direct marketing and more. Farms can receive up to \$5,000 to work with a consultant. Grants are available on a first-come, first-served basis and opened September 1.

> **Transition and Transformation Team Grants:** Are you considering a major business transformation or looking to start the farm transition process? Using a team approach through these Team Grants can provide greater insight into your business’s decision-making process and get your trusted advisors around the table. Farms can receive up to \$4,000 to form a Transition or Transformation Team for your project. Grants are available on a first-come, first-served basis and opened September 1.

> **Dairy Excellence Grants:** Do you want to improve cow comfort, milk production per cow, or efficiency on your dairy? The Dairy Excellence Grants support improvement projects on PA dairy farms. If approved for the grant, farms will receive a 50 percent match, up to a maximum matching level of \$5,000. Applications for this competitive grant program will be open from Oct.1 through Nov.1.

> **Dairy Productivity Grants:** Are you brainstorming a project that directly impacts milk production on your dairy? The 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). If approved, farms will receive up to \$10,000 for the project with a 25 percent match. Applications for this competitive grant program will be open from Oct. 1 through Nov. 1.

How have these grants impacted PA dairy farmers? *“We definitely found out where our edge is. I would have hated to start this robotics project and then realized all of a sudden we need to cut out [certain aspects]. With the Transformation Team Grant, we learned how far we could go and how many extra things we could add to this barn. Especially for a farm our size, it’s invaluable just how far the grant money went and the information we got out of it. It helped jumpstart everything. It gave me the confidence I needed to move forward with a project like this. It went from a pipe dream to a reality,”* shared Donny Bartch of Merrimart Farms in Perry County.

Visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org to learn more about each grant. Email Melissa Anderson at manderson@centerfordairyexcellence.org or call 717-788-0296 with questions about the grants.

DAIRY PRODUCERS INVITED TO THREE WORKSHOPS THIS FALL

Dairy producers, are you looking for a solution to make managing your farm’s financials less overwhelming? This fall, let’s take some of the stress out of managing risk and finances on your dairy farm. During these free Risk Management and Financial Literacy Workshops on October 8 (Lancaster) and October 15 (Chambersburg), we’ll take complex financials and ever-changing dairy markets and break it all down to the fundamentals. We’ll decode milk price and market uncertainties, outline core financial metrics, and help you walk away with practical skills to make confident financial decisions for your farm. The free events will include lunch and three sessions. Visit centerfordairyexcellence.org/rm-workshop or call 717-346-0849 to sign up for a workshop today.

Transition plans can be another overwhelming topic for dairy farm families. But, it’s never too early or too late to start thinking about “passing the torch” and finding someone in line to transition ownership of your dairy business. You and your family are invited to the “Passing the Torch” Next-Level Transition Planning Workshop in Lancaster County on November 12. This workshop is designed to go beyond the basics, from business structures to pre-nuptials, post-nuptials and more. Visit centerfordairyexcellence.org/passing-the-torch to sign up today or call 717-346-0849.



Decoding Dairy Markets



Protecting Your Dairy's Margin



Understanding Farm Financials

Risk Management and Financial Literacy Workshops for dairy producers

✓ October 8
Lancaster, PA

✓ October 15
Chambersburg, PA

How to make my farm's financials less overwhelming



BEYOND MILK CHECKS: MANAGING BEEF INCOME STREAMS FREE WEBINAR

Pennsylvania Dairy Industry Performance Scorecard Summary	June 2025	June 2026	Change from Last Year	Target Range
Milk Cows	460,000 cows	455,000 cows	- 1.1%	
Total Monthly Milk Production	800 mil. lbs.	801 mil. lbs.	+ 0.1%	
Wholesale Milk Price	\$21.30 / cwt.	\$22.70 / cwt.	+ 6.6%	
PA Daily Feed Costs (cost of corn, soybean & hay at 100 lbs. milk)	\$7.77 / cwt.	\$8.77 / cwt.	+ 12.9%	
Milk Margin (IOFC @ 100# of Milk)	\$15.98 / cwt.	\$17.03 / cwt.	+ 6.6%	
Rolling 12—mo. Herd Production Avg.	23,681 lbs.	23,448 lbs.	- 1.0%	25,000 lbs.
Average Somatic Cell Count	207,380	199,750	- 3.7%	< 150,000
% Herds less than 200,000 SCC	58.2%	59.9%	+ 3.0%	
Average Days in Milk	188 Days	187 Days	- 0.8%	165 days
Average Age at First Calving	24.9 months	24.9 months	0.4%	21-24 mo.
Average Days to First Service	87 Days	97 Days	+ 11.6%	< 80 days
Average Pregnancy Rate	17.6%	17.9%	+ 1.9%	> 20 %

HARRISBURG, PA. — It has been a quiet summer for wholesale beef demand, but that could change. What’s the latest on the cattle market and opportunities to manage your risk on cull cows and calves? Join us on Friday, September 18 at 12 p.m. EST, for this month’s “Protecting Your Profits” webinar titled “Beyond Milk Checks: Managing Beef Income Streams.” There are a lot of recent cattle market updates that affect dairy producers. Join the webinar, and hear expert insight from Kathleen Noble Wolfley and Owen TeVelde from Ever.Ag.

During the webinar, attendees will get updates on:

- Mexican border opening to feeder cattle imports and its effect on US cattle prices
- Packer health and impact of persistent negative margins (JBS in Pennsylvania as an example)
- Retail beef demand dynamics and food service trends
- Why drought in the west could stifle potential rebuild in the cattle herd
- What all this means to dairy
- What producers can do to manage their risk on cull cows and calves.

To sign up for the free webinar on Sept. 18, visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/pyp-webinar. The webinar will begin at 12 p.m. EST. Connection details will be sent via email after you sign up. A recording will be shared after the live webinar is concluded. Email vmason@centerfordairyexcellence.org or call (717) 550-8720 with questions about the webinar.

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

Sign up for our email list at www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/newsletter