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CENTER UNVEILS ‘DAIRY DECISIONS CONSULTANT’ PROGRAM

Program Offers Producers Consultations on Dairy Farm Viability and Planning

HARRISBURG – The newly-launched “Dairy Decisions Consultant” program aims to assist dairy farm families in the decision-making and planning processes that come in the wake of 15 months of low milk prices and negative margins. Developed by the Center for Dairy Excellence, the program will offer professional consulting resources to help producers make informed decisions to shape their farm’s future.

“The Dairy Decision Consultant program was designed because of increased requests by producers to the center for help in dealing with the ongoing equity erosion and changing balance sheets,” said John Frey, executive director of the Center for Dairy Excellence.

Funded through grants received by the center, the consulting program will cover a maximum of 15 hours, or \$1,500, of time for the Dairy Decision Consultant to spend with each individual farm business.

Participating farms can choose their consultant from a list identified by the center, and have a maximum of two consultations. In the first visit, the consultant will assess the farm’s current business status and financial condition, decision making process, and cost of production. During the second visit the consultant will offer observations of the farm business and provide a list of potential strategies and options for moving the business forward.

Together the consultant and producer will explore scenarios to strengthen the farm’s balance sheet and improve financial performance, and to identify strategies for making the effective future decisions.



“The past 15 months of negative margins have left many producers wondering what options they should consider and who they should contact to help,” said Frey. “Many of the short term decisions that need to be made are complex and require significant analysis to determine the right answer. Our goal is to provide help to these farms as they work through these complex decisions.”

To participate in the program, dairy producers must submit an application with a current balance sheet and income statement. All information will be kept confidential. A \$175 application fee must also be submitted with the application, which will be returned if the application is not approved.

Farms applying to the program must demonstrate a need for unique consulting services and show sincere interest in improving herd performance and financial position.

“These are challenging times for all dairy farms, and the center is focused on providing additional resources to help individual dairy farm families maintain growing, viable dairy businesses,” Frey said. “The Dairy Decision Consultant program, along with our On-Farm Dairy Resource Team program and other resources, can help families find solutions that will reap benefits, both in the short term and for years to come.”

To download an application or for more information about the Dairy Decision Consultant program, visit the center’s Web site at www.centerfordairyexcellence.org. Click on the DDC logo on the middle of the home page. Or call the center at 717-346-0849 for more details.

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The Center for Dairy Excellence is an initiative of the Department of Agriculture and was launched in January 2004 by Governor Edward G. Rendell. Bringing together people from more than 40 different dairy organizations in Pennsylvania, the Center’s mission is to enhance the profitability of the dairy industry by empowering people, creating partnerships, and increasing the availability and use of resources. Learn more about the Center at www.centerfordairyexcellence.org.