



For Immediate Release

July 22, 2010

OPEN HOUSE AT CENTRAL MANOR DAIRY IN LANCASTER COUNTY HOSTS NEARLY 250, SHOWCASES BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Center for Dairy Excellence to Host Two More Open Houses in Somerset, Mercer Counties

Harrisburg – Nearly 250 dairy producers and industry representatives attended the first of three July “Open House and Dairy Tours” hosted by the Center for Dairy Excellence. Held at Central Manor Dairy, owned by the Harnish family in Lancaster County, the event highlighted the farm’s best management practices.

“Pennsylvania’s dairy producers are a resilient group whose commitment to the industry – and the consumers they feed – is unwavering even in challenging times,” said Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture Russell C. Redding. “This event showcased a family that has done a lot of things right as they continue to grow to accommodate additional family members, and incorporate best management practices into their business, both from the dairy and from the environmental stewardship sides.”

“We believe one of the best ways to get new ideas for your farm is by touring other dairies, and we are pleased that so many dairy farm families spent the day with us at Central Manor Dairy,” said John Frey, executive director of the Center for Dairy Excellence. “We hope everyone who came was able to take something back that they could implement on their own operation.”

After the farm tour, Frey hosted a short program, which included remarks from Secretary Redding, the Harnish family, and Dr. Robert Stoltzfus, the Harnishes’ veterinarian.

“One area where the Harnish family has really focused is in the transition barn,” said Stoltzfus. “They set clear goals and work to meet those goals.”

Stoltzfus recommended that dairy farm families set herd health goals in several important areas, including having fewer than three percent of their cows suffer from milk fever, less than five percent with Ketosis, and fewer than two percent with left displaced abomasums, also called twisted stomachs. He recommended that the culling rate for zero to 60 days of lactation be under eight percent, with fewer than eight percent of the herd suffering from retained fetal membranes.

Stoltzfus said transition management was really a function of four key management practices, including:

1. Knowing the incidents of transition health events and comparing to goals;
2. Keeping dry cows comfortable, with at least 150 square feet per cow on a bedded pack and no more than 80 percent stocking density in the freestall barn. “Dry cows should have at least 30 inches of bunk space, and they need



fans and sprinklers for heat abatement,” he said. “You should also minimize pen movements to no more than once a week and locate your calving area where observations can be easy and frequent.”

3. Feeding dry cows a properly formulated total mixed ration. “Give serious consideration to high fill, low energy diets, and make sure you’re formulating the ration for metabolizable protein, not crude protein.”
4. Following the veterinarian’s recommendations for vaccinations.

Partners in the Harnish dairy include Jim and John Harnish, John’s son Steve and Jim’s son Andy. John’s youngest son Joel is also involved in the dairy. They detailed the dairy which includes a double-12 swing parlor and freestall set-up, a newer heifer barn, and a compost barn built in 2009 for 48 milk cows and 24 dry cows. They milk about 190 cows and farm about 230 acres.

Since 2008, the center has given Pennsylvania’s dairy farm families an opportunity to see other dairy farms, gain new ideas, and gather insight on resources available for their businesses through the open houses and tours. Each meeting also includes a review of center programs.

The last two events are in Mifflin and Somerset counties. Each runs from 10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., and the dates and locations are as follows:

- ◆ **Tuesday, July 27, at Woodedge Farm**, 7950 East Back Mountain Road, Reedsville, Mifflin County.

A Dairy of Distinction, Woodedge Farm is owned by Rod Kauffman, his wife Gloria, and their three children Dustin, Ashlee and Eric. Rod is the third generation on the farm, purchased by his grandfather in 1950.

Rod joined the partnership with his father in 1986 and took over the business in 1998. Last year, he expanded from a 62-cow tie stall barn to a 126-cow open front freestall barn, so his oldest son Dustin could work on the farm. To facilitate the expansion, Rod added an eight-cow, step-up, walk-through parlor in the old stanchion barn.

- ◆ **Thursday, July 29, at Zylstra Dairy Farms, Inc.**, 1161 Geiger Road, Friedens, Somerset County.

After growing up and dairying on a farm in California, Andy Zylstra and his wife Ronica, with their four boys, Tanner, Cory, Spencer and Riley, headed east in search of a better dairy infrastructure. They moved to Somerset County in 2008, where they now milk 480 cows on a 198-acre farm.

The cows are milked three times a day in a double-10, rapid-exit, parallel parlor and housed in freestalls bedded with digested manure from a



neighboring farm. Recently the Zylstras built a 75-cow special needs barn.

The “Open Forums and Dairy Tours” are open to anyone within the local dairy community. Pre-registration is requested by calling 717-346-0849. For more information about the events or the Center for Dairy Excellence, visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org. Click on “CDE Open House and Dairy Tour Events” on the home page.

Media contact: Jayne Sebright, 717-259-6496; c-jsebrigh@state.pa.us

###

Cutlines --

Photo 1: The Harnish family hosted the first of three CDE open house events.

Photo 2: The Kauffman family in Reedsville will host an open house on July 27.

Photo 3: The Zylstras in Friedens will host the final open house on July 29.

The Center for Dairy Excellence is a [non-profit organization developed by the Pennsylvania 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.