



CENTER FOR  
**Dairy**EXCELLENCE

## **For Immediate Release**

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### **PROFESSIONAL CONSULTING GRANTS AVAILABLE TO HELP DAIRIES EXPLORE NEW OPPORTUNITIES**

*The Center for Dairy Excellence Has Dairy Decisions Consultant Grants Available*

**Harrisburg, Pa.** – The Center for Dairy Excellence is offering Dairy Decisions Consultant (DDC) grants to Pennsylvania dairy farms for the 2020-21 fiscal year. Leveraging funds provided through the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the DDC program works to provide dairy farm families with professional consulting resources to help make decisions that shape the future of their operation. Farms that are accepted into the program receive up to \$3,500 in funds to work with a professional consultant who has firsthand experience in the dairy industry.

Dairy producers who receive a grant can choose from one of 17 consultants who can help farms with New Business Opportunity Exploration; Business Performance and Reaching Financial Benchmarks; or Employee Relations and Development.

“We had several opportunities in front of us that ranged from real estate purchase and diversification to expansion or remodel [on our dairy farm]. We had a lot on the table at one time, so we were just trying to find a way to proceed and figure out our best options,” said Ron Wenger of Hollowacres Farm, LLC in Franklin County, Pa., a previous DDC grant recipient. “Having the DDC program pay for a consultant to really dig into the financial details and various options was very beneficial. It helped by taking the extra time to flesh out all the different positives and negatives of each option.”

In addition to the list of 17 Dairy Decisions Consultants, farms also have the option of naming a specific consultant within their grant application for approval by the Center.

“One of the most valuable parts of the DDC program is being able to work with outside experts, whether it’s a consultant who has experience in accounting, nutrition, herd management, or business planning,” said Melissa Anderson, Programs and Operations Manager at the Center. “We work closely to pair farms with consultants who they either have a personal relationship with or someone who has extensive expertise in areas that match their business goals.”

Using the DDC grant, dairy producers can work with consultants to review potential avenues of growth, analyze the financial rationale for each opportunity, and discuss the additional changes that would come along with it.

“Just because you have an idea in your head doesn’t mean it financially makes sense. Anytime you change one thing on the farm, there are a lot of other aspects to change along with it. You have to think through things like the labor and the taxes,” Wenger said. “For us, [the DDC program] really gave us time to think about all those other aspects. It helped us make sure we were thinking through the whole process, not just shooting from the hip.”

To apply for a Dairy Decisions Consultant grant, visit [www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/ddc](http://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/ddc) to complete an online application and submit a \$100 application fee. The application fee will be reimbursed if the application is not approved into the program. Grants are available on a first come, first served basis.

For more information, contact Melissa Anderson at 717-636-0779 or [manderson@centerfordairyexcellence.org](mailto:manderson@centerfordairyexcellence.org).

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The Center for Dairy Excellence is a non-profit organization initiated by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture in 2004. 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 at [centerfordairyexcellence.org](http://centerfordairyexcellence.org).

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**[www.centerfordairyexcellence.org](http://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org)**