



## **For Immediate Release**

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January 29, 2024

## **DAIRY PRODUCERS TO SHARE HOW THEY ARE INNOVATING A PRODUCER-LED MARKETPLACE AT PA DAIRY SUMMIT**

*The PA Dairy Summit Will Be Held on February 7-8, 2024 in Lancaster, PA*

**Harrisburg, Pa.** – Three dairy producers will lead a compelling panel discussion, titled "Innovating a Producer-Led Marketplace," at the Pennsylvania Dairy Summit on February 7-8, 2024 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The keynote panel discussion will feature Joel Riehlman, Ken Smith and Jason Frye who will share how they are involved in producer-led efforts to market their products directly to consumers.

"We're looking forward to having these three dairy producers at the Dairy Summit this year and hearing how they forged opportunity for their family-owned business and created a producer-led market using creativity and persistence," said Andy Bollinger, the 2024 PA Dairy Summit Chair and a dairy producer from Lancaster County. "This is just one of many interesting and relevant sessions on the program at the Dairy Summit this year. I hope you can join us for the conference."

Joel Riehlman from Tully, New York was one of the 29 dairy producers who originally came together to establish Cayuga Marketing. He will discuss the process they went through to establish the organization and build the Cayuga Milk Ingredients plant in Auburn, New York.

Ken Smith operates Cool Lawn Farms with his family in Remington, Virginia. In 2010, Ken and his family established Moo Thru Ice Cream, which is handcrafted and slow churned and then sold in six Moo Thru Ice Cream Shoppes across the northern Virginia region.

Jason Frye and his family established the Creamery at Pleasant Lane Farms in Latrobe, Pennsylvania in 2020. The Creamery has grown quickly, with the family now processing a variety of artisan cheeses they market up and down the East Coast and co-packing products for other local dairy producers.

In addition to this producer panel discussion, there will be several other dairy producers who will share their insight and lessons learned in breakout sessions throughout the Dairy Summit:

- **The Key to Achieving Low Employee Turnover with Rod Hissong, Tom Barley and Pete Posner.** What are the five most important things you can do to hire, train and retain high quality, high performing employees? This panel of dairy producers will share their unique strategies for retaining employees over the long haul.
- **Who Should Be Part of Your Transition Team? with Tyler Rohrer, Lori Butler and Justin Risser.** As you navigate the farm transition and succession planning process, having the right family members, partners and consultants involved in the process can help you move forward and overcome hurdles. Hear from three dairy producers who will share how a team approach to transition planning benefitted their business.
- **Challenge the Status Quo: Balancing Profitability and Growth with Alan Waybright, Joseph Zug and Yvette Longenecker.** Being growth-minded often involves challenging the status quo and “the way we’ve always done things.” However, growth can sometimes hinder profitability without a thoughtful strategy in place. This panel of dairy producers will open up about what their process has been like to achieve both profitability and growth – and how finding this balance has strengthened their dairy operations.
- **Transitioning From a “Doer” to a “Manager” with Sarah Moag of Noblehurst Farms.** As dairy farms grow, many farm owners struggle to make the leap from carrying out all the day-to-day tasks on their farm themselves to managing and delegating to a diverse team of employees to carry out those tasks. How do you make that transition? Hear how one farm intentionally approaches employee management.

Registration is still open for the PA Dairy Summit. Visit [www.padairysummit.org](http://www.padairysummit.org) to register online for the conference or contact the Pennsylvania Dairy Summit Business Office at 814-355-2467.

Hosted by the Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania and Center for Dairy Excellence, the 2024 Dairy Summit is a nationally recognized conference for dairy farmers in all types of production. Thanks to grants and support from the Center for Dairy Excellence, Professional Dairy Managers of PA, and Summit sponsors, registration fees for dairy producers are set to be as affordable as possible. Dairy producers can attend the full, two-day Dairy Summit for \$100, with one-day rates available for \$50.

Individuals must reserve their hotel rooms by Thursday, February 1 to receive the discounted group rate of \$149 per night. To receive the Dairy Summit discounted hotel group rate at the Lancaster Wyndham Resort and Convention Center, call (717) 299-5500 and ask for the PDMP Dairy Summit rate by February 1. Rooms are available on a first-come, first-served basis. The

reduced group rate is only available as long as there are rooms remaining within the group block. After February 1, the group discount is no longer guaranteed.

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PDMP is a not-for-profit, farmer-driven organization advancing the State's dairy industry through improved productivity and economic viability with continued stewardship of our animals, environment, and community. Programs offered by PDMP are designed by dairy producers, for dairy producers. For more information on PDMP, visit their website at [pdmp.org](http://pdmp.org).

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).