



For Immediate Release

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DAIRY EXCELLENCE GRANTS TO OPEN FOR NEXT ROUND OF APPLICATIONS STARTING FEBRUARY 1

The Grants Help Support Improvement Projects Related to Cow Comfort, Efficiency, and Milk Production

Harrisburg, Pa. – The next round of funding for the Dairy Excellence Grant Program opens on February 1, and Pennsylvania dairy producers have until February 28 to submit a grant application. The program is ideal for Pennsylvania dairy producers who want to improve cow comfort, milk production per cow, or overall efficiency on their dairy farm. Leveraging funds provided through the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, this is a competitive grant program that offers up to a 50 percent, or up to a maximum matching level of \$5,000, to dairy farms approved into the program. Grant applications will only be accepted from February 1-28, 2023, with selections made and winning applicants notified by March 15.

“Pennsylvania dairy producers are laser focused on efficiency, but don’t always have the time or funds to invest in improvement projects on the farm. These grants allow us to support a wide range of projects that are improving efficiency, enhancing production and making a real difference in Pennsylvania dairy herds,” said Melissa Anderson, Programs and Operations Manager at the Center for Dairy Excellence. “This is a competitive grant with a limited window to apply, so make sure you submit your application by February 28.”

Improvement projects can include anything related to improving dairy farm efficiency, cow comfort, milking facilities, housing facilities, or feeding systems. The project should focus on improving milk production per cow and/or enhancing overall farm profitability and efficiency. Examples of applicable projects include fans, sprinklers or misters in free stall or tie stall barns; curtains or other ventilation improvements; mattresses or construction to move to deep bedded sand stalls; variable speed pulsation; new lighting; cow brush or foot bath installation and more.

“We installed new and efficient lighting in both our freestall barn and our flat parlor. It’s one of those projects that every year we’ve wanted to do, but it kept getting pushed down the priority list. But once we had the grant, it helped us make it happen,” said Lisa Royek of Royek Dairy Farm in Erie County, Pa., a previous grant recipient. “We can see the cows better, and they can see each other better. It makes everyone happier. Not to mention that we can now see bedding issues and overall cow health – especially in the winter. We can make sure there are no small issues in our facility and see when something needs attention.”

The Center has awarded a total of \$580,000 to more than 100 Pennsylvania dairy producers between previous rounds of the grant program. A total of more than 26,000 Pennsylvania dairy cows have been impacted by these improvement projects, and herd sizes have ranged from approximately 50 cows to

2,000 cows. Dairy producers who received the grants during previous rounds have used the funds to upgrade feed bunks, install new crowd gates, invest in new mattresses, enhance walkways and drainage buffers, and more.

“This project increased cow comfort by expanding year-round pasture and water access to our young heifer groups. We anticipate lower costs associated with raising our heifers due to expanded access to pasture and fewer health issues related to feet and legs,” said Jason Frye of Pleasant Lane Farms and Creamery LLC in Westmoreland County, Pa., a previous grant recipient. “This project also enabled us to expand available cold-weather water access through the addition of a new frost-free waterer.”

To participate in the Dairy Excellence Grant program, dairy farms must complete an application. A \$100 application fee is required upon submission but will be reimbursed if the application is not accepted. Individuals must have a dairy farm to apply. As part of the application process, dairy producers will be required to:

- Be compliant with the National FARM Program or a similar program
- Have a Conservation and Nutrient Management Plan in place
- List two consultants/advisors who work with their farm (nutritionist, accountant, veterinarian, etc.)
- Explain how the improvement will help their overall operation and aid in milk production per cow, efficiency and/or cow comfort

Grant recipients will be notified by March 15, 2023. Expenses/invoices must be submitted by June 30, 2023.

Dairy farm businesses or individuals receiving the Dairy Excellence Grant during the Fall 2022 round are not eligible to receive a grant in this round. Those who applied for a Dairy Excellence Grant at any point but were not accepted into the program are eligible to apply again.

To apply, visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/dairy-excellence-grants to submit your application online or download a printed application to mail back. Applications will only be accepted from February 1-28, 2023. Contact Melissa Anderson at manderson@centerfordairyexcellence.org or 717-636-0779 for more information.

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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.

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